

# **PROMOTING PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study looked at the primary role of library which includes the acquisition, organization, storage and dissemination of relevant informative materials that will enhance effective decision making in all academic activities and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Conflict resolution is more or less a means or processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and misunderstanding. Therefore, library can serve as a tools for achieving social and economic development of a nation. This paper is timely because of the occurring conflict situation in Nigeria. It also examines the rudiment of almost all the conflicts. The rapidly growing information and complex digital environment has increased people's dependency on information. With this library is an organ that is responsible for disseminating information, have role to play in promoting peace building and conflict resolution, not only in Nigerian but the world in large. Actually, information is a critical factor in conflict resolution which will enhance or help to reduce the level of uncertainty and better decision. The library should acquire information material on conflict resolution practice, one of the recommendation of this study is that the library should ensure that accurate information is timely made accessible in preventive or curative role in conflict management.

**KEYWORDS:** Libraries, Conflict, Resolution Development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study of peace and conflict has become a global issue due to the mere fact that the two relate to the conditions that define and shapes human existence and well-being in the present world. The conditions that threaten peace and security are increasing, making it necessary to understand those conditions and the means of transforming them. The conditions for conflict and insecurity appear to have taken grounds in most of West Africa countries and Nigeria in particular. Shadrach (2016) has observed that for a long time, African countries have faced different forms of conflict, which lead to backwardness, therefore library ought not to be only a depository for requisite resources, information materials be it books or non-books that may be consulted by users, it should also serve as an instrument for conflict resolution and promotion of peace. Libraries are preservers of information and custodians of human knowledge in which historical facts retained their status. The need for peace in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as the country has been suffering from the consequences of various degrees

of conflict at different times in history as a nation. Specifically, in Africa is probably as old as the continent itself. One of the major issues that matters to the whole world today is peace. Because, without it barely nothing goes on smoothly. In the light of this, Peter (2018) opined that conflict is universal, yet distinct in any culture, in conflict resolution, library and information centres like any other institution has role to play in resolving conflict and maintaining peace within a given society. The Library services generally have become vital component of human endeavour, the increasing accessibility of information have begun to create a sound relationship between individuals, group and societies and the expansion of social co-existence. The services have brought about information and knowledge to individual and group on the need for peace as a catalyst for sustainable development through the acquired knowledge from the library, it has make it possible for conflict resolution much possible and peace restoration easier

### **Concept of Library and Information Centres**

Library is now universally recognized as an important social institution in issues that relate to individual and the communities in resolving conflict at whatever level; because no community is considered complete without having a sound and functional library and information centres. Recently, the gradual spread of right to access and use of information through the democratic process, Literacy education, the intensification of search activities, the rapid increase in production of recorded knowledge, have led to the expansion of library and the development of the services Aina, (2004).

The general development of the information society is pushing re-evaluation of all the institutions which work with information data and knowledge indirectly also with culture. There is a clear need in the information society to maintain an institution which is concentrating in collection and organizing, information that is geared towards promoting peaceful coexistence and offering general access to conflict resolution strategy. Libraries are to acquire, organize information materials for the use of the public in every society in order to uphold peace and increase act of tolerance. Therefore, the main function of a library is the collection and preservation of knowledge for its dissemination to all. Its conservation for posterity is also an important duty of a library and all these when properly harness by the public it will help in promoting peace and resolving conflict in our society.

A library is a place where individuals access information and ideas that are of great importance as the main custodian of information that is always geared toward promoting peaceful coexistence among individual and the communities at large. Library and society are interlinked and interdependent with each other. Society without library has no significance, and library without society have no origin, library is a place where people can gather to meet new people, discuss social and historical facts and issues or read books or articles. Getting together with others is valuable component of successful community life and may increase people's need of tolerating each other regardless of our countless differences. It provides opportunities for people to interact and connect with others and create a sense of belonging in a community.

Indeed, library provide people with information they need to plan their lives, resolve disputes, work and be entertain, and access facilities that contribute to the moral, spiritual and cultural advancement of their members and intellectual development.

## **THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT**

Conflict develop when, one party's actions are seen to be hindering or blocking the goals, needs or actions of another. Conflict are typically associated with negative traits and situations that lead inventive issue solving and improving the situation for all the parties involved Adesanya el al (2018). It is quite obvious that the human resources of any organization consist of people with diverse cultural, religious, social, political, and economic background. This shown in their attitude to work, temperament and behaviours which certainly makes their control often complex for the people in position of authority Owan and Agunwa (2019).

The word conflict has been defined as a situation in which two or more parties strike to acquire some negligible resources at the same time. Scholars generally agree that there is need to be more than one party to have a conflict.

Gisesa (2008) revealed that conflicts are based on deficiency of information, that cases of misinformation conflict enhance disparity in opinions and social differences which may heighten conflicts.

Conflict arises when people or group are pursuing opposing interests or are engaged in competition to meet goals which are perceived to be or are in fact, incompatible. Conflict can become physically and economically damaging or it can lead to growth and productivity for all the parties. It all depend on how conflict is manage and resolved. Conflict is by no means negative, challenging, stimulating and creative, yet without conflict there is no evolution.

## **CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

In many situation conflicts can't happen on its self, with the people, situation, and phenomenon that, can prevail to cause such havoc to the people and the community. Peter (2018) outline the causes of conflict that are triggered by a number of factors to includes stealing, witchcraft, clash at the bush or grazing land, misunderstanding as a result of jealousy among wives belonging to a man, boundary disputes, injustice and insensitivity of king makers, government policy, abject poverty idleness, unemployment and poor or inadequate information access and use by the public through the library and information centres. However, Mutiullar (2013) mentioned few causes of conflict in Nigeria as: an agitation for resources control, religion, ethnicity tribalism, land disputes, trade related disputes etc.

## **CONCEPT OF PEACE**

What is peace? It has remained a challenging question eluding effort to arrive at an unequivocal answer. Therefore, peace is more or less a difficult concept to define but many

educationists and educators have tried to define it in order to enable people that are dealing with it as a course to know what they are doing.

Oche (2016) defined peace as a process involving activities that are direct linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific society and in the wider international community. He pointed out that there are philosophical, sociological and Political definition of peace. Many philosophers see peace as a natural, original, God- given state of human existence. sociologically, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms. Politically, peace entails political order that is institutionalization of political structure in a way that makes justice possible. Furthermore, in his own expression Francis (2007) opined that peace has to do with result from true order, that is to say order not imposed by forced, oppression, fear, threats blackmail and other similar negative tendencies.

Peace has been generally defined as absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence Mutiulla (2013). Going by the viewed of the scholars the researcher realized that peace can be defined as any action or activities that provide what is needed to sustain life and self-respect. We can attest to it that it usually come from reasoning nature of mankind, tolerance and self-control.

### **The Roles of Library and Information Centres in Achieving Violent Free Society and Peace Building**

Library is being described as a public institution or an establishment charged with the care of collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighbourhood into habitual library goers and readers of books.

Iyanda and Salawu (2016), on the other hand sees library as a building that contain information resources for development which operate as an integral part of the environment. Roberson (2015) defines a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products that individuals can gain access to readily. In other words, the library is a building or a room containing collection of books and periodicals and sometimes films and recorded music for use by the public.

Sidi (2019) defined the library as a place which literary, musical, artistic, or reference materials, books, are kept for use not for sale. Therefore, the unique function of library is to acquire, organize information materials and make it readily available for use irrespective of the form in which it is packaged in such a way that, when it is needed it can be found and put to use. Library services are needed to enable the individual to develop full potentials and widening the horizons of perception, interests, and skills. Library and information centres can be instrumental in conflict resolution in the following ways;

1. Library rendered services of selective dissemination of information, especially to security personnel.
2. Mostly special library acquired, proceeding of courts that can served as a reference for clarification.

3. The library facilitates delivery of information materials to all part of the country that enable citizen to be aware of what is happening.
4. It strengthens communication and collaboration between two or more communities.
5. Selection and acquisition of vital government publication such as constitution, government bulletins etc. and make them very much available to public for resolving some issues that may come up.
6. Acquisition of audio- visual items such as oral testimonies recorded speeches, cultural display that create tolerance among citizen.
7. It's usually organized seminars conferences, Library week and workshop for resource sharing

More over Haruna (2009) further identified some vital library services as an important tool in resolution of national conflicts, they include; current awareness service (CAS), selective dissemination of information (SDI), Indexing and Abstracting, Referrals, mobile library, Resource sharing, Exhibition of information resources.

### **Challenges of Libraries and Information Centres in Resolution of National Conflicts**

Library like every other organization is not exempted from a number of challenges faced in resolution of national conflicts. As a result, Ilora (2009) identified some of these challenges which includes:

1. Inadequate funds are major problem of the library, most libraries cannot adequately finance some special projects by acquiring needed information materials and programed that conform with the effective services libraries can renders to their clientele.
2. Over reliance on government as the only authority that could resolve national conflicts. Most people believe it is only the government that could fine solutions to conflicts, as the matter of fact library is neglected.
3. Clienteles find it very difficult to read some of the information materials due to language barrier.
4. Unavailability of current and relevant information materials is another challenge.

### **CONCLUSION**

The development of any nation is undoubtedly impossible in any environment of crises and political instability. Conflict is natural in any society and can actually have some positive effect and bring about positive change, creativity and better cohesion. This paper show that library and information centres have very significant role to play, when social conflict arises. Most conflicts now a days are based on deficiency of information.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

As factors leading to violent extremism are diverse, these measures are suggested to curb the menace. The current security situation needs a holistic approach that involves

collaborations among the key stake holders; state, the private sector, development partners and the civil society. The nation economy must also be diversified towards increased investment in agriculture, power, renewable energy, solid minerals tourism, and ICT. The government must provide basic human needs such as clean water decent shelter accessible healthcare services and functional education which are all integral to sustainable development, also social welfare programs should be provided to the poor.

**Proffered to Enhance the Effectiveness of Library in Conflict Resolution.**

- i. Library should use the limited resources at their disposal to ensure every community that it serves, has access to information
- ii. There is need to repackage information so that its benefits a wide spectrum of it users.
- iii. Despite the global economic meltdown, the government should fund library adequately.
- iv. Library personnel should demonstrate their genuine intentions to ensure that the sole objective of utilizing the library to enhance conflict resolution is achieved.

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