

THE ROLE OF TEACHER LIBRARIANS IN PROMOTING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper stresses on the role of teacher/school librarians in promoting national integration and development which will enhance the societal, cultural and political inclusiveness of the young ones and facilitate their access to rightful information that would impart greatly on them and as well help in the promotion of national integration and development. National Integration and reasons why National Integration is a failure was discussed. The paper also discussed the concept of education in the primary and secondary level which is very fundamental for national building. Emphasis was also made on national integration, school libraries and teacher\school librarians. It is stressed also that school library(primary and secondary) as a social-based information institution is rightly positioned to function effectively outside the box to meet the social and political information needs of the public which are very important in promoting national integration and development and also equip them to become better citizens that are politically and socially oriented. The varied access to pertinent information resources at the right time, library services, collection development, provision of internet services, etc. are also discussed.

Keywords: Education, school library, Teacher librarian, Library services, National Integration, Nigeria.

Introduction

Emphatically, the greatest challenges facing Nigeria today is the threat to national unity, resource control, ethnicity based identity policies and religious cleavages. Since in 1960, national integration has been a major priority of government in Nigeria. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, the Unity Schools, Federal character principle and state creation are examples of state policies intended to achieve this goal. The amalgamation of Southern and Northern protectorate 1914 was with the intent to unite the nation called Nigeria.

However, the success of this 1914 amalgamation has been called to question given the ever widening gap in unity and continuous disparity among people, cultures, ethnicities and tribe especially between those in the north and south where this fusion endeavor emanated. According to Eric (2016), the amalgamation of Nigeria spurred ethnic conflict, disunity in tribes, religions, and natural endowments which is hinged on politics of resource control and allocation. The fission of Nigeria into regions, states and ethnic groups seems to negate the original purpose of the nation amalgamated, hence the cravings for national integration which is a core determinant of peaceful coexistence and a viable structure for national development. In an attempt to bring about national consciousness, political integration is achieved.

Political integration is necessary, for it would trigger active participation among the students in primary and secondary respectively. According to Llievski,(2015), political integration helps to build political community by establishing rules, creating common institution with the power of decision-making, and projecting an identity of the integrated community. The development of any nation is influenced by the level of their political integration which is an integral part of national integration.

Unarguably, it is clear that the outcome of integration policy programmes in Nigeria, is believed to be below expectation, as primordial loyalties are still deep seated. Ethnic particularizm is seen as the major cause of failure. Integration is a process that can be achieved through; education, available pertinent information resources and value for life. It is thus important for teacher/librarian to make literature that would foster national integration readily available and accessible to students. This study therefore, seeks to examine the role of teacher/school librarians as information experts in promoting

national integration and development in Nigeria. In achieving this, the focus would be on national unity.

Religious, social and political matters in Nigeria are so sensitive and decisive that it calls for national consciousness and participation by all citizens. However, religion and political dichotomy have slowed down the unity and love envisaged among citizens of Nigeria. This could be due to the inadequate information resources that could foster national integration among young minds in primary and secondary schools, which have resulted to tribal killings, hate speeches and regional segregation. This anomaly can be addressed by school library awareness creation to the youth and the public in general. Therefore, the focus of the study is to examine the role of teacher/school librarians in promoting national integration and development in Nigeria.

Concept Of Education

The significant of education to the development for any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education is generally concerned with the transmission of worthwhile values such as skills, knowledge and planned activities that can develop learner's potentials for national development. Analguka (2013) noted that no development can occur at all without education. He stated that at personal level of development, education is one of the strongest weapons for averting poverty because it improves the quality and chances of the individuals to progress. The development of man to enable him create and recreate himself; the pursuit of a wider range of activities planned and managed for the benefit of society and its members, the systematic influencing of peoples knowledge, skills and attitudes; the transmission from one generation to another, the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the society.

It is clear that education makes man moral and ethical; inducts the individual into the shared value of society; develops commitment to societal goals in the individual; prepares the young members for the future; defines behavioral patterns of individuals and by extension the society. Education is the gateway to national integration, and the literature has adequately highlighted this. Formal education has a vital role to play in the development and social change of human communities. For development and change to place, education is a must. It creates the environment and conditions conducive for change to take place. Education is the builder and shaper of attitude and behavior of members of the society which lend support to the process of development and change.

It is expected that education will enhance the integration of populations that are divided by language, ethnicity and religion. Tunlong (2018) states that education is noted for three political roles-agent of political socialization into a nation's political culture; the training and selection of political elite, and the enhancement of political consciousness.

National Integration:

Integration is defined by Rex and Tomlinson in Rex and Singh(2003) as "not a flattening process of uniformity but cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance". Folarin et al(2014) states that national integration is a process of creating relationship between and among hitherto separate nations, after an understanding and reconciliation of the fundamental differences, and an establishment of an acceptable consensus that guide people for peaceful coexistence. Integration suggests a process of structural linkage between two or more parts of a system(s) or sub systems. Its essence can be discerned from the functionalist view of society.

Integration can be political, economic, cultural or social. However, it could be political when political actors of different ethnic nationalities or groups in a country abandon primordial ethnic loyalties, and embrace national identity. The essential features of a nation include homogenous cultural unit, share identity among members, deep attachment to a specific territory, intermarriage, and more especially collective belonging. It is clear that individuals are units of integration and members of a nation, integrated as they share a common identity.

Teacher Librarian

By the training and orientation, teacher/school librarians are facilitators of the myriads of information in our various school libraries. They are the intermediary between students and available information. Noticeable respect and approval from students in a competitive information field like ours can only be seen when teacher/school librarians excel in satisfying the information needs of users at the niche of time, more especially the young minds. Satisfying the information needs of students at the primary and secondary level of education is imperative, and teacher/school librarians should ensure that their information needs are met. A teacher librarian is defined as a person who holds recognized qualifications in teaching and librarianship. The teacher/school librarian is the one responsible for the day to day running of the libraries in pri-primary, primary and secondary schools. They are seen as curriculum leaders, information specialists and information service managers

Role of School Librarians in the Promotion of National Integration and Development In Nigeria.

The mission of a librarian in any library is to promote “access to information”. Access to information is common parlance in our society. We all have an idea of what information is, though we may be unable to articulate and access it. It is a universal concept with definitions influenced by

individual attitudes and experience. Access to information should be open to all. Zorga (2014) defines “access” as the ability or freedom to obtain or make use of something.

Equal access to information suggests that everyone, even those limited to financial resources, and the physically challenged have access to information at the right time. Access to information at the right time can foster mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among people. The school librarians are unarguable candidates for promoting access to information. This is because they are in constant contact with students preparing to become leaders of tomorrow. School librarians are involved in research through their duties at the reference desk. They conduct basic research, workshops and seminars, teach students on how to use the library and its resources for study and research purposes. School librarians promote access to information in the form of library services, current awareness services, collection development etc.

Furthermore, promoting and supporting access to information initiative, school librarians not only help the students meet their standards; but also fulfill their own ethical obligation as members of their professional association. When students get ready access to information be it legal, political, social and cultural they can participate fully in the affairs of their country.

Access to Information for National Integration and Development

Varied access to information services and **intuitiveness** of school librarians can provide support to national integration and development of a country.

i. Access to pertinent information: Informational professionals have an obligation to satisfy the needs, promote interest and respect the values of their clientele, firms, corporation, schools, religious bodies and government institutions and the general public have societal information needs that are best

addressed by professionals committed to be belief that serving these information needs is a calling and fostering the equal participation of diverse people in the library services.

In addition, in recognition of the need to establish methods of selecting, acquiring, preserving, maintaining and retrieving information in different forms, zealous service are provided using the most appropriate resources and implementing programme consistent with our institutions mission and goals

ii. Library services: Information provision is required from library and information professions to meet the challenges of Nigeria's political system and history, to influence political realities operational in the country. Okeke et al (2013) noted that libraries advocate the right of people to unfettered access to information. Libraries are th focal point for people's inquiry into the physical and social phenomena of their environment as it serves as a social instrument, a learning center and an open University for all class of people. Nevertheless, for political and social consciousness of citizens, information literacy is essential. Libraries, be it School, academic or public libraries also serve as trusted providers of information literacy programmes to citizens required to spur their collective contributions towards achieving national integration and development. The school library can also provide some type of public access to the community and require a pass from another library. School libraries that are open to the public(immediate community) typically provide reference assistance to public patrons, along with computers to free online resources, government documents etc.

Segments of School Library

A school library is a library established in pre-primary, primary secondary school by the school authority to support teaching and learning. They help both teachers, pupils and students in learning and

teaching. Teachers use the library resources for the preparation of lessons while the students use them for developing reading and study skills. The materials found mostly in school library collection are books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, with more emphasis on audio visual and graphic materials.

School library see to the following:

- ✓ Provision of relevant information materials required for the school curriculum
- ✓ Provision of research information materials needed by the students.
- ✓ Provision of improved services and specialized information to the wider community.
- ✓ Provision of security to information resources available.
- ✓ Creation of room for inter-library loan and cooperation among other school libraries.
- ✓ **Provision of internet services:** Informative materials are available on the internet for free. Both public and private academic librarians can help public patrons identify and access the best information resources by creating website for public users on free and low cost information research.
- ✓ **Collection development:** Collections that are geared toward serving the information and educationally needs of students can be achieved by librarians. These information need could be informational, educational, entertaining and recreational.

These services are made available through a qualify teacher/school librarian

Failure to this expected national integration and development in general was due to the inadequate rightful and timely information materials in school libraries which supposed to be the major institutions that should disseminate such information to the supposed(students) in the country that are lagging behind, people now result to any rumors that flies around, as a result

affect their judgment in political, social and cultural affairs of the country. The unavailability of rightful information materials at the right time to the younger minds in primary and secondary schools, have made students depend on information at their reach without validating the information sources. This information can come from the family, peer groups religious groups and the society in general.

Recommendations

- ❖ Inadequate information resources is a threat to the currency of knowledge imported on students. To be informed, every citizen must be abreast with the current issues on ground so as to foster mutual understanding and unit at large.
- ❖ State of the e-library should be improved. This will aid students, teachers and the school community to access information timely.
- ❖ Capacity building which involves the training and retraining of school librarians should be done at intervals in order to keep them informed of current developments in their field.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that education and training of school librarians can serve as a vehicle for national integration and development. School librarians play important role in making the information system more user friendly and accessible to students. School libraries are part of the access to rightful information without prejudice. The opportunity is for librarians to change themselves as leaders in providing access to timely and rightful information for all as part of their social responsibility. However, school libraries are faced with challenges in the provision of access to

information such as under-funding, dearth of information resources, inadequate current resources, e-library etc.

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