Education and Library for All: A Panacea for Meeting the Goals of the World Summit on Information Society

By

Ogar, Christopher Eje
Okenjom, Godian Patrick
Kari Hudron K.
ABSTRACT

This paper examined in a clear terms the concepts of education and library in the context of the World Summit on Information Society. A brief historical review of the world summit on Information Society, highlighting the idea and need for this development to some major events that lead to the foundation of the commencement of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) plan which later lead to the hosting of conferences that came up with some positive resolutions. The paper examined the role of some major organization such as UNESCO, IFLA, WALA, NLA, LIBRARIAN REGISTRATION COUNCIL, Libraries and others could play in fulfilling the goals of WSIS. The paper further highlights the role of education in partnership with library, in sustaining the goals of World Summit on Information Society. The paper concluded by recommending that each Country of the world including Nigeria should subscribe to be a member of WSIS, attend conferences hosted by this body and bring back to other respective countries, resolutions and decisions research to act as a background upon which policies and programs could be adopted and implemented at national, state and local level to sustain the goals of the World Summit on Information Society. To belong to such international body would enable participation of member nation at conferences and other important trainings that would be of immense benefit to the educational system, libraries and librarian of member nations for enhanced information society.

Keywords: Education, Library, All, WSIS.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of education and the immense contributions it offers to national and global development cannot be overestimated. Education has been and will ever remain the bedrock of any nation. The development and advancement of all nations of the world depend on it. To this end, it is generally considered as an instrument par excellence. No society can thrive to progress beyond its citizen’s knowledge that is acquired either formally or informally except through education. It is no more in doubt that education is considered as the greatest asset any nation can acquire and use as the most value tool for the survival of the nation. This suggests the reasons why most Countries of the world are investing so much on it to ensure that their citizens have access to quality education which has justification for this huge investment. In line with this school of thought, Akinsolu (2013) observed that globally, education has continued to attract attention with many countries of the world investing huge amounts on it, with the expectation of all concerned to make judicious use of it to bring about national, regional and international connection, relation and development. In the same vein, Ategwu and Ogar (2015) citing the work of Odioye (2009), opined that education is a socializing system which employs formal, informal and non-formal methods in transmitting knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less able members of the society. It is in line with this principle in educational development that some international, communities/organisation are making concerted efforts to ensure that every citizen of the world has free access to education. In article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, it unequivocally states that every citizen of the world has national right to education at least to a certain level. This statement was re-iterated in 1990 where almost two hundred (200) Countries assembled in Jomtien, a city in Thailand where the World Bank, UNESCO and UNNDP Organized a world conference on the need for education for all. The essence of this Jomtien declaration is for the benefit of citizens of member states to have free access to education.
The role of the library and information services is considered crucial to this declaration. It is pertinent to note that the libraries and the librarians would have the tasks of documenting and storing all correspondences, activities, decisions, regulations and other documentaries relating to all efforts geared towards providing information for all. Besides they have the noble responsibilities of transmitting to member states and other affiliation bodies in need of information on subjects. The role of libraries and information science in attempt to provide education/information geared towards the achievement of education for all cannot be overestimated. It is worthy of note to observe here that Nigeria had joined to be signatory to this declaration. The implication for this decision, therefore, is that Nigeria is ready and prepared to abide by all resolutions, activities and other declarations to further the course of actions of this body for the acquisition of relevant education as a member nation.

The Need for Education and Library for All

Using the goals for the world summit on information society as a yardstick to fulfil this aim is premised on the understanding that, the world is witnessing information explosion. This scenario has gingered information technology as one of the bases for enhancing information generation, storage, management and access to users. The relevance of information for all aspects, economic, political, social and cultural development and exchange have become inevitable. In fact, education and training has become very essential services especially from the 21st century that witnessed the emergence of information and technology in a global context. It is therefore not surprising that the developed countries had to take the initiative to propose a world summit on information society and passed a resolution to adopt this body to champion the course of providing information for all. The general purpose of this is to investigate how education and library and information services can adopt the goals of world summit on information society.

1.2 Objectives of this study

The specific purpose of this study is as follows:

1. Identifying and clarifying some basic concepts such as education, library, information society
2. Examine the philosophy behind the concept, education for all (Information society)
3. Review relevant Communities/Organizations that champion the call for education for all
4. Highlight a brief historical review of world summits on information society.
5. Determine the role of education and Libraries in meeting the goals of world summit on information society.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Under the review of literature, few basic concepts were defined to clarify issues relating to this study. These include: education, library, all and WSIS.

2.1 Education

As a concept, education has been defined by many scholars differently based on the way they understand the concept. Some define it from etymological view Educo – Educare, Educo – Educere – meaning acquiring knowledge. From a broader perspective, Lwehabura and Mugyabuso (1999) defined education as a process of turning information into knowledge. It is a long-life process, whereby an individual acquires new knowledge and skills through his/her life. Education is the development of character, knowledge, ambition and the mental powers resulting from such training. According to Afolabi and Alao (2009), Education is a form of investment in human capital development, which brings economic benefits and contributes significantly to the nation’s future wealth by increasing the productive capacity of its people. In recent times, many Nigerians tend to look to education for the realization of their aspirations, hopes, desires and ambitions in most aspects of life. These include getting a satisfying well-remunerated job, having enjoyable leisure, living a meaningful spiritual life and working towards self-actualization. This can only be achieved through the provision of quality education for all. Education is the most powerful and dynamic instrument for social, economic political, scientific, and technological development of nations (Aghenta, 2001 and Fadipe, 2000). As succinctly remarked by Nwagwu (1976), education is universally accepted as a form of investment in human beings, which yields economic benefits or returns and contributes to a nation’s future wealth and development by increasing the productivity capacity of its citizens. It is therefore apparent that education is an indispensable tool which would not only assist in meeting the nation’s economic, moral, social, cultural and political aspirations, but would also inculcate in the individual knowledge, attitudes, desirable values, skills, dexterity and character that would foster national development and self-actualization.
2.2 All

This refers to the generality of people in the entire world. In other words it is an inclusive term for membership. It may be referred to as embracing/incorporating everyone within member nation countries of Jomtien Declaration of education for all.

2.3 Library

The concept library over the years has been defined differently by many scholars. Osawele and Uzairue (2013) observed that, the word “Library”, is derived from the Latin word “liber” meaning “books” (also known in Greek and Roman languages as “bibliotheca”) which also means a group collection of books or other materials organized and maintained for use in consultation, reading, study, and research. According to Hornby (2010), a library is a building in which collections of books CD’s, newspapers, etc. are kept for people to read, study or borrow. In another definition, a library is a knowledge store that is indispensable to the success of any functional education Onohwakpor (2006). He further asserts that education without the services of a library is half-baked and can only produce narrow minded individuals who would not be productive to their communities or nation in general. This services and materials are properly harnessed and utilized with the aid of services of staff that are able to provide and interpret such materials as required to meet the information research, education and recreational needs of its users called librarians.

Libraries can also be:

(a) A building, an apartment, or a series of apartments containing such a collection, and
(b) A collection of books recreation or study belonging to private individuals.

In modern terms, libraries are considered as access point institution to global information, relevant for teaching, learning, research and development.

3.1 Brief Historical Review of the World Summit On Information Society

The growth of knowledge and information flow occasioned by the industrial revolution in Europe has lead to a rapid growth in social, economic, political and cultural development of nation states especially in developed countries. The relevance and uses of information has actually accelerated the development and advancement of information technologies to its new term: information and communication technologies, resulting to the emergence of terms now known as information society, information age, knowledge societies, etc. It was this expected growth of information and the value it would have for social, economic, political, cultural and social lives of the people, nations and the world that the developed Countries initiated a lot of ideas, events leading to series of conferences through international organization, agencies and institutions to come up with the World Summit on Information Society.

Ruth (2005) observed that, two major events laid a basic foundation to the commencement of the World Summit on Information society plan namely:

- A conference of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), held in Minneapolis in 1998, which came up with “Resolution 73 asking this partial question:
  “Is an agenda of the United Nations Administrative committee on co-ordinates, with a view to meeting the necessary conditions for holding such summit before the next conference?”

- The civil society held a conference in Bamako in the year 2000 and came up with Bamako Declaration 2000, preparing the organization of a World Summit on Information Society in the year 2003 in Geneva.

3.2 The United Nations Resolution

According to John (2006) the United Nations adopted a resolution (Resolution 56/183) at the United Nation General Assembly on the 21st of December 2001). This adoption was to be acted upon by the international telecommunication union with headquarters in Geneva. The action by ITU is the formation of the World Summit on information for all (WSIS) as a way to assume leadership in preparation for the summits. In a further statement, John (2006) posited that the first phase of the summit took place in Geneva from 10–12 December 2003 and the second phase took place in Tunis, from 16–18 November 2005. This summits invited countries to get representation at the highest political level with the aim of discussing and addressing pertinent issues that will lead to useful recommendation for a better educational reform among member states.

3.4 Goals of the World Summit on Information Society:

The role and position of the libraries were captured in the World Summit on Information society as are indicated in section references: Ruth (2005) state them as follows:
### Section References

(9e) All public libraries should be connected (to the internet) by 2006 and all cultural centres, museums and Archives by 2010.

(11c) To provide connectivity for institutions that are accessible to the public such as schools, universities, libraries, post offices, community centres, museum etc.

(16) All stakeholders should support the diverse networks of existing libraries and Archives and should support those Countries that plan to develop their own information and records management which is a necessary condition for good governance. A modest level of investment in new technology, training, and above all, content provision could kick–start the information revolution in many regions by broadening access and developing skills.

(16a) Creation and development of public library service, adopted to the digital one should be supported.

(20b) Design specific training programmes in the use of ICTs and revise (Library schools and other training programmes) Curricula for content (for) workers, (stakeholders and others professionals) such as Archivists, librarians, scientists, teachers, journalists and other media workers.

(41d) Develop national policies and laws to ensure that libraries, archives, museum and other cultural institutions can play their full role of (providing the needed)content. This includes (the roles played by) traditional knowledge – providers in the information society, more particularly by providing continued access to recorded information.

(41e) Develop an international framework for the preservation of digital heritage, including systems for ensuring continued access to archival digital information and multi-media content and support archives and libraries as the memory of human kind.

### 3.5 The role of Education in meeting the World Summit on Information Society.

#### 3.5.1 Role of Education for Information for All.

The relevance of education in Nigeria is quite evident in all aspects of a nation’s life. The federal government of Nigeria realized this when it stated that education is an instrument par excellence for national development as this is entrenched in her National policy of Education (2008). This is policy statement that needs a sound and firm anchor. From this statement, it can be deduce that at present, Nigeria has a firm background upon which Education for all can be achieved based on policies for proper implementation for national development. This can be achieved through the following:

a. Good political climate and Governance.
b. Good policy formulation and implementation.
c. Enhanced partnership among individuals, organizations governments, and all stakeholders in education business.
d. Shun all forms of bribery and corruption practices in all sectors of the nation’s life.
e. Exhibit a strong political will and commitments to improve on things that will improve the poor living condition of the people.
f. Aggressive campaign advocacy for education for all through programmes and activities that will sensitize the general public.
g. Integration of library policies in nation educational policies and practices with serious commitments and supports to promote enlightenments, education and training in all aspects and levels of education as it relates to information and communication technology.

#### 3.5.2 The position and Role of Libraries for Education for All

The role of library and education in facilitating education for all is complimentary to a great degree of application, while education provides the necessary background upon which institutions like the universities, colleges of education and polytechnics are established to provide services such as teaching, learning, research and general administration.

The Libraries occupy a crucial position and have a great role to play in the development, organization of information resources and dissemination, hence need to be given key roles to play. Librarians, Library association should be given the opportunities to attend World Summit on Information Society and other associated meetings related to this subject. This will create enabling opportunities to bring back to governments resolutions, suggestions and recommendations that will guide informed decisions on how to provide education for all based on the world best practices especially in this area of globalizations. Libraries and information science
professionals need government supports and encouragement to fulfil the role of libraries as key in the section of the World Summit on Education for All.

3.5.3 Challenges for the provision of Education and Library Services for All

The world view of education for all is based on the need to provide education for social, economic and political development of all countries without restrictions to race, religion and nationality. As noble as this aspiration is, this goal is faced with some clearly identified challenges affecting its realization. These challenges are:

i. **Poor Political Climate**: One of the main problems confronting African educational system is lack of good political climate. Onyemerekeya in Ategwu and Ogar (2015) observed that political instability does not promote effective curriculum implementation. Nigeria and most African countries are faced with political instability due to series of conflicts such as terrorism, cultism, ethnic and religious clashes that act as hindrances to education.

ii. **Poor Policy formulation and implementation**: This is one of the major problems affecting education for all. Nwaka (2013) observed that defective policy administration is one of the factors responsible for the falling standard of education in Nigeria in terms of policy formulation and implementation. This scenario is also common to other African countries and not restricted to Nigeria alone.

iii. **Observed Lack of Enhanced Partnership**: For an enhanced education for all as emphasized in the national policy on education (2004) to be realistic and productive, there must be need to enhance partnership among individuals, organizations and government of all countries to promote education for their citizens. This initiative is lacking and is an impediment to education.

iv. **Inadequate Fund**: Adequate funding of the education sector in line with education for all cannot be overemphasized as it serves as the mainstay of the proper running and realization of the programme. For basic education to be properly achieved by every one concerned, funds are required especially for the purchase of facilities, payment of salaries and allowances of staff as well as procurement of needed resources for the proper implementation of the programme.

v. **Bribery and Corruption**: Bribery and Corruption is another critical epidemic in all African countries which goes to the extent of abandonment of some countries that are part of the Jomtien Declaration due to poor execution of policy statement. Monies meant for education projects are embezzled or diverted to other projects.

3.6 SUMMARY

In the world over, education has been recognized as a sure way to human capital development. This recognition prompted the United Nation General Assembly to adopt the resolution of holding world summit that lead to the fostering of education for all in support of government at all levels and other organizations within member nations.

With the proper achievement and implementation of programmes like the universal basic education in Nigeria, individuals in various community and the society in general will be exposed to functional education programmes that will help in abating the high level of illiteracy and poverty in the society which will affect the overall growth and development of the nation.

The contribution of the library to the achievement of education for all cannot be overestimate as the library continue to remain a resource centre for materials like books, audio visual tapes and CDs that can be used for effective teaching and learning with the help of libertarians.

3.7 RECOMMENDATION

Bases on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be adequate provision of resources that will facilitate education for all.
2. Creation and development of public library services adapted to the digital should be supported to enable learners gain access to information that is relevant to them.
3. Trainers and teachers should be knowledgeable enough in their various areas of specialization for effective lesson delivery.
4. Government should develop policies that will ensure that libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions play the full role of providing needed content.
REFERENCES


