School Libraries' Roles in Promoting Religious and Ethnic Diversity among Nigerian Children for Evolving Global Information Landscape

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Abstract: *The issues of religiosity and ethnicity is one that calls for urgent attention the world over. Worse still, the Nigerian education system seems not to be giving much attention to encouraging peaceful coexistence among the citizens; thus, the role of school libraries in promoting learning geared towards appreciating religious and ethnic diversity in Nigerian schools. This study, a continuation of study done in 2021, assesses the need of school children for diverse learning resources that capture Nigerian religious and ethnic background and analyze documents (textbook contents) that could be used in the classroom for promoting religious and ethnic diversity among school children.*

Keywords: *Religious Diversity, Ethnic Diversity, Primary School Children, School Library, Evolving Information Landscape, Nigeria*

Introduction

The issue of religiosity and ethnicity in Nigeria calls for redress in Nigeria and the world at large. People continue to meet at different points, from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and with different religious orientation; giving rise to a challenge for the global landscape. The world over, the need to appreciate that people who gather together from different countries and nations for a common goal have different cultural and religious orientations, and to foster and harness a platform for understanding and appreciating other religions and culture calls for continuous attention. Worse still, some countries of the world are still holding on to religious antagonism and ethnic rivalry among themselves and even transferring the same to other nations around them; thus, endangering human lives and distorting international activities.

In Nigeria, there is a long standing, persistent tumult as it concerns religious and ethnic groups. This has been traced to the inability of individuals to appreciate those from other religious or ethnic background (Onwuatuegwu and Nwagu, 2022; Gubam and Nomishan, 2021). Since independence, and ethnic groups ranging from over 200 (Ogoanah, cited in Ojo, 2016) to about 250 (Sanni, 2021; Naijabiography, 2020; Uzoigwe and Nwadialor, 2013); 350 (Federal Government of Nigeria (Nigeria), 2013); and 371 ethnic groups (Athanasius, 2019); translating to four hundred (400) languages (Salawu, 2010) and with different religious sects, Nigeria has been a multi-ethnic and religious nation struggling with the issues that pertain to religiosity and ethnicity. This has given rise to many of these ethnic groups having their militant groups with their attendant persistent conflicts that have always greatly claimed lives and property. With such groups as O' dua People Congress (OPC); the Bakassi Boys; the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth (Salawu, 2010), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Islamic State of the West Africa Province (ISWAPS), Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Murabitoun, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram (https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria/terrorism). According to the U.S. Department of State, Boko Haram and its offshoots are responsible for the displacement of 2.5 million Nigerians, with approximately 200,000 seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Uzoigwe and Nwadialor, (2013) noted that the level of ethnic and religious unrest in Nigeria is intense that it has given rise to other socio-economic and political challenges; where each of the religious and ethnic groups is struggling to be recognized. In most cases, efforts towards peaceful coexistence seem not to be working.

The religious groups, including Christians and Muslims (in the majority), Indigenous and traditional, Hindu, Baha'i, and Buddhist, among other groups have always had a powerful influence in the nature with each group having much overlap between their beliefs and those of other traditions (World Faiths Development Dialogue, 2020). As noted by (Ekwenze, 2016)

> Religion is man's relation to Divinity, to reverence, worship, obedience and submission to mandates and precepts of supernatural or superior beings. It essentially connotes all forms of belief in the existence of superior beings exercising power over human beings, imposing rules of conduct, with future rewards and punishments.

Religion, being as old as the origin of man's discovery of the existence of certain events or phenomena beyond his comprehension, is a practice that promotes love among individuals of the community and beyond. One unifying factor of all religions is love and compassion towards fellow beings and peaceful coexistence. This factor overlaps with the general,

unifying factor of all cultural beliefs, of hospitality, love and peaceful coexistence (Uhunmwuangho and Epelle, 2011).

The three major ethnic groups: Hausa, dominant in the Northern region, the Igbo in the Eastern region and the Yoruba in the Western region; and other minority ethnic groups: Kanuri, Tiv, Bini, Isoko, Nupe, Jukun, Gwari and Igbira, Edo, Ijaw, Fulbe, Kanuri, Urhobo-Isoko, Ibibio, Ebira, Nupe, Gbagyi, Jukun, Igala, Idoma, and Tiv Pyem, Goemai, and Kofyar, Ibibio, Annang, Efik, Ijaw, and Ogoni, Agbo, Akaju-Ndem (Akajuk), Andoni, Anioma, Bali, Boma (Bomawa, Burmano), Buji, Burma (Burmawa), Chibok (Kibaku), Ebira, Egbema, Egede (Igedde), Egun (Gu), Eket, Ikom, Ikwerre, Kaba (Kabawa), Kafanchan, Kagoro, Kaje (Kache), Nupe, Kajuru (Kajurawa), Kaka, Kambari, among others (Wikipedia, 2022; World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, 2018; Uhunmwuangho and Epelle, 2011), have always existed and have gradually distinguished themselves as part of the nation. However, the struggle to be recognized has given room for tribalism and terrorism. This has also made way for insecurity and dearth in peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

Suffice it here to say that the Nigerian society has continuously encountered issues that pertain to insecurity with regards to religious and ethnic groups; and the forming of militant groups from some of these ethnic groups has wretched the peace and development of the country. Obiekezie & Timothy (2015) noted that one major factor behind the problem of religious and ethnic violence is prejudice, the "magnification and demonization of differences" (p. 55). This negative attitude are mostly nurtured from childhood and group members grow with it; escalating to more terrorist activities. The only way to curb these ills is by repositioning the activities of the members of different groups from a tender age, when they can easily learn to appreciate differences in individuals, religions and cultures. When the issues that pertain to culture and religion are addressed among children, prejudice would minimize (Onyebuchi, 2021); that way, children would live and grow with tolerance of all humans and their neighbours, ready to accept differences among individuals.

This work is a continuation of a study done in 2021 (the first stage) which sought to obtain the views of library professionals at the three major ethnic group areas, on the provisions of Nigerian Basic Education on issues of ethnic and religious diversity resources and programmes the school libraries could provide to address issues in Nigeria. The present study (the second stage) sought to assess the need of school children for diverse learning of Nigerian religious and ethnic background.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain ways of promoting religious and ethnic diversity among school children for sustainable peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess the need of school children and develop a programme for diverse learning opportunities and resources, and

2. analyze the document (textbooks) on issues that could trigger children's view and attitude on different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Nigeria Education and School Library

The provisions of the Nigerian educational system is one strategy for changing the orientation of children to become better individuals in the future; although building and inculcating appreciation for religious and cultural differences should start from the family. Akintayo (2021) stated that notable powerful influences responsible for childcare and upbringing in culture and religion in Nigerian traditional communities are the biological parents, the extended family, and the community. Children are brought up in their families to respect and practice their cultural values, and care for one another. However, this seems to be limited to an individual's immediate community; as elders and members of some communities may not find it necessary to inculcate values for mutual respect for other cultures among individuals of the various religious and ethnic communities.

Consequently, crisis continues to prevail among individuals of different religious and ethnic groups. This could also be traced to unavailability and lack of readiness on the part of parents and cultural groups to impart in children, orientation for ready acceptance of other religious and cultural differences when they grow up; thus leading to continuous crisis and terrorist attacks all over the nation. This leaves the school environment the next option for instilling the appreciation for religious and ethnic diversity among children for readiness to coexist in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic setting. As part of the nation's philosophy, it is believed that individuals should "live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principle of freedom, equality and justice" and for Nigeria's education in particular, one part of the philosophy is set on the belief that "education is vital for the promotion of progressive and united Nigeria" (Nigeria, 2013).

One of the goals to achieve through this philosophical belief is to totally build the individual who is well integrated into their immediate community, the Nigerian society in general and the world at large, in unity and equity. In agreement, Agnihotri (2017) noted that education

plays a crucial role in peaceful coexistence in any society. In an attempt to achieve this, standards are set in place including curriculum, policies, administration, teachers and learners to inculcate positive attitudes which will enable pupils to imbibe those practices which make for peaceful coexistence. It is worrisome that despite the provision of the Nigerian education (school environment) as a platform to help inculcate moral, religious and ethical values in children for peaceful coexistence in the society, there are still adults who ravage the unity of the Nigerian society by the various rampages they continue to cause in the society. Ogunlade (2019) added that;

> Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria primary schools is declining on
> daily basis. All forms of unwanted behaviour are on the increase
> astronomically virtually every day. Among deviant behaviours exhibited
> by school pupils include bullying, fighting, stealing, disobedience
> to teachers and other constituted authority, examination malpractice
> of various forms, raping and so on.

An explanation to this could be either poor provision of materials for positive attitudes towards other religions and cultures such as textbooks for subject areas (Social Studies, History, Civic Education and Cultural Values) or lack of adequate coverage of these texts provided for children. When the textbook materials provided for the school do not meet the goals of Nigerian education amidst religious and ethnic diversity, the expectation of building appreciation for religious and ethnic diversity among school children would also not be met and religious and ethnic related crisis will continue among different religious and ethnic groups; thus escalating into terrorist groups. The present religious and ethnic bigotry in Nigeria has therefore given rise to the need for reorientation from the foundational learning. United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF, 2022) continues to lament that Nigerians are facing continuous attacks against education from these insurgent groups; and with the continuous prevalence in crisis related to religious and ethnic groups, there is urgent need of promoting learning geared towards religious and ethnic diversity in Nigerian schools, and the place of the school libraries cannot be neglected.

School libraries play an essential role in realizing religious and ethnic appreciation among school children. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2015) affirmed that the school library, as "a school's physical and digital learning space where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity...central to students' information-to-knowledge journey and to their personal, social, and cultural growth" employs all necessary strategies to ensure that cultural, linguistic, indigenous, and other unique populations are welcomed to give a child identity, while preparing them to appreciate other children's ethnic and religious background. Considering the school timetable which is often busied with note copying and a lot of other passive learning activities, leading to a greater

percentage of school children who are not ready to welcome other cultures and religious beliefs when they become adults (Onyebuchi, 2021), school library allows opportunities for diversity of all types to be encouraged be it religious, cultural, social, political and gender identity, varying abilities and special needs. It develops in children, lifelong skills for ethical reasoning and effective functioning in the society (Onyebuchi, 2010).

As a space for fostering cultural appreciation, school library also creates a medium for supporting equal access to information for all persons; while addressing issues related to diversity in the immediate community that the library serves and beyond including cultural barriers, barriers relating to attitudes, racism, discrimination on the grounds of appearance, ethnic and religious backgrounds, among others (IFLA. 2015; American Library Association cited in Itsekor, 2012) for better acculturation and appreciation of other children's culture as well as more positive interaction with, mutual respect for and acceptance of other children's ethnic and religious beliefs. Children are formed in a very dynamic way and interactive more easily when provided with the opportunity and this points to the need for their learning to address cultural differences (Bournemouth University, 2018) and ethical values at that early stage. The best place to address all these is in the school library as it plays an important role in exposing school children and all learners to appreciate of religious and ethnic differences through the forum it creates as well as diverse learning resources and interactive programmes which are collaborative and practice-based and geared towards understanding of and passion for peaceful coexistence (Ngwuchukwu, Onyebuchi & Okonkwo, 2019; Ternenge & Agipu, 2019; Onyebuchi & Ngwuchukwu, 2013; Dike, Ngwuchukwu & Onyebuchi, 2011).

Despite being a centre for instilling understanding of ethnic and religious diversity for peaceful coexistence among children, the role of the school library seems not to be clearly understood; especially with the failure on the part of class teachers to actualize this goal of the Nigerian education system due to the dearth in time and space on the school timetable. Much more worrisome is the fact that texts provided in schools do not cover much on the heterogeneity of religion and ethnicity; and the ones included were meant to inform on the existence of those ethnic groups. The school libraries which could organize different resources and activities for upholding ethnic and religious diversity are side lined and not made functional in most cases.

Methodology

To achieve the aim of this study, an exploratory study was conducted, where a focus group discussion (FGD) was organized for 2 groups of 10 children one of each from 5 selected public and 5 selected private primary schools (Primary 5) (making a total of 20 pupils) in Nsukka educational area to elicit data on their need for resources that promote diversity with

regards to Nigerian religion and culture. The choice of one particular ethnic group (Igbo) was as a result of the need to study how the group under study sees other ethnic groups, coupled with the need to begin this second stage of the study with a particular group. The focus group discussion was held for each of the two groups at the Children's Centre Library on 8th April respectively. The discussion lasted between 1:45 minutes and 2 hours respectively. The quotes were coded in FGA^{A-J} and FGB^{A-J} (Where FGA represents Focus Group A; FGB represents Focus Group B and Superscript A-J represents the serial numbers of the 10 pupils for each group of respondents. Results of the discussion were analyzed in narratives where quotes were provided; since the discussants are in the best position to provide information on their learning of religious and ethnic differences as well as their attitudes towards children from other groups. The numbers were used, however, for easy identification of the discussants. To elicit more data and confirm the outcome of children's discussion, document analysis was done. The document analysis was used to find out the provision for learning about the different religious and ethnic diversity in selected Nigerian textbooks. The major aim here was to analyze the presentation and treatment of issues that could trigger children's view and attitudes (both positive and negative) towards children/people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. As observed by the researcher, the texts used for document analysis had varied background; the writers being from more than one ethnic group.

Analysis and Findings

The National Policy on Education has reiterated the need for peaceful coexistence among Nigerian schools and has continuously searched for ways of promoting ethnic and religious diversity for a progressive and united Nigeria especially at the foundation level. The school content is one of the ways of achieving this; through which the teacher uses the textbooks to achieve this. In these cases, the pupils are supposed to be familiar with other cultures and should start developing positive attitudes towards children from other cultural backgrounds. Thus the need to organize an interactive forum with them to elicit data on their awareness of and attitude to other religion and culture.

Objective 1: To assess the Need of School Children for Diverse Learning Opportunities and Resources

To achieve the above objective, the issue of awareness was raised for children to interact. Children were asked about different religious groups they are aware of. All the children agreed to having a knowledge of Christian, Islamic and Traditional religion. Five (5) of them (FGA^A, FGA^B, FGB^F, FGA^G, FGB^A) agreed that they are aware of Hindu religion; while seven (7) of them said they have children from other religious groups in their neighbourhood (FGA^B, FGA^E), classes/school (FGB^E, FGB^I, FGA^F, FGA^J, FGB^A). Of the ethnic groups in

Nigeria, children are aware of about 50 groups. However, the ones they could mention are Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Igala, Idoma, Efik, and Tiv. On having children from other tribe/ethnic groups who are resident in their neighbourhood/community or school, children who responded agreed that they have child(ren) from Hausa (FGA^E), Efik (FGB^A), Idoma (FGA^H) and Youruba (FGB^C, FGA^D). One of the discussants (FGB^F) noted that that though he doesn't have child from another culture in his class or neighbourhood, they (FGB^B, FGA^H, FGA^J, FGB^C, FGB^G) have many of the people from Hausa around their neighbourhood who ride motorcycle transport, repair shoes, sell jewellery or sell suya (peppered meat).

Again, children were asked what their parents say about people from other culture and a lot of them (FGA^I, FGB^D, FGA^F, FGB^I, FGA^G, FGB^C, FGA^J, FGB^E, FGA^C, FGB^D, FGA^B, FGB^H) said their parents do not tell them anything. Some (FGA^C, FGB^A, FGA^I, FGB^B) said their parents talk about other person's religion or tribe only when they fight with other children; while some (FGA^A, FGB^D, FGB^A, FGB^I) added that their parents do not say anything about people from other religion or tribe except when there is crisis among different religious or ethnic groups. Some of the discussants (FGA^A, FGB^D, FGA^C, FGB^I, FGA^G, FGA^D, FGA^I, FGB^J) agreed that when there is killing in some communities or states, they hear their parents discuss it. A topic was also raised on how children see children/pupils/neighbours from other religions or tribes. Some of the pupil discussants said; "I see children from other religion/tribe as my brother/sister" (FGB^D, FGA^G), "I see pupils from other religion/tribe just as a fellow classmate" (FGA$^E)$, "I see them as just people from other religion/tribe" (FGB^J), "I don't even remember that they are not from my tribe or religion" (FGA^C).

On what the teachers teach children about other people's religion or culture, children (FGB^D, FGA^B, FGB^F FGA^C, FGA^H, FGB^I, FGB^J) said they learn about the different groups (especially the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba). Children, during the discussion said that from what they learn, they have friendly interact with other children (FGA^B,FGA^D, FGB^C, FGA^I); but sometimes, they fight back with anybody that finds their trouble (FGA^A, FGA^C, FGB^H, FGB^C, FGA^I). They (FGB^D, FGA^G, FGB^B, FGA^E,) mentioned the fact that when they hear about crisis or rivalry or see any of such on the television, they see people from those religious or ethnic groups as children/people who easily find trouble and do not value human lives. In such cases, they do not want to live together with them or stay in the same classroom with them. One child (FGB^E) specifically stated that after his uncle was killed by terrorists, he disliked people from other groups. Further, he said he was ready to fight back if he could.

Finally, when asked the kinds of activities that are organized in class as it concerns different ethnic groups in Nigeria, some children said they don't have any particular activities in class (FGB^H, FGB^G, FGA^I, FGB^J); however, some agreed to having activities once in a while, like during Christmas part, graduation (FGA^A, FGB^C, FGA^H, FGA^D, FGA^B, FGB^I, FGB^B), and cultural day (FGA^F, FGB^G, FGA^J, FGB^B). Some (FGA^E, FGB^F, FGB^D) in their group said

they have a drama club and dance group. None of them agreed that they have such activities regularly for learning issues that pertain to religious and ethnic diversity.

Objective 2: To analyze the document (textbooks) on issues that could trigger children's view and attitude on difference religious and ethnic background

The document analysis was organized to find out the provision for learning about the different religious and ethnic diversity in selected Nigerian textbooks. The major aim here is to analyze the presentation and treatment of issues that could trigger children's view and attitudes (both positive and negative) towards children/people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Six textbooks with issues related to Social Studies, Civic Education, and Religious and National Values were assessed: Interactive Social Studies for primary schools, Book 6 by A D O Adesina, B A Adeyemi, A J Obadiora; Easy Way to Social Studies for Primary Schools Book 6 by Wisdom Jacob T., Danladi Makarfi, Onyeka Ikechukwu, Oladipupo Makinde 2013; New life Religion and National Values for Primary Schools Bk 6 by Chiawa E. O.; Bounty Religion and National Values for Primary Schools Bk 6 A. A. Adeyinka 2016; Basic Civic Education for Primary Schools Bk 6 (Learn Africa, 2010), B. J. Obebe, F. J. Muazu, H. O. C. Ambassador-Brikins and S. O. Koledoye; and Compendium Civic Education Basic 6 2011 by Ohms Publishers. Book Six was selected because it proves to treat the issues of religious and ethnic diversity more than the rest, coupled with the fact that they are textbooks approved and prescribed for pupils in Primary 5 (and are also written in Universal Basic Education compliance). The result is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Document Analysis of Provision for Learning capturing different Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Selected Nigerian Textbooks.

Subject	Social Studies		Civic Education		Religion and National Values	
Textbooks **General Issues**	**Easy Way to Social Studies**	**Interactive Social Studies**	**Basic Civic Education**	**Compendium Civic Education**	**New life Religion and National Values**	**Bounty Religion and National Values**
Nigerian Family	Inter-marriage	Culture			Inter-marriage	Inter-ethnic marriage
Religion	Religious Diversity	Religious Diversity			Religious Diversity	
Culture and Ethnicity	Peace education		Ethnic and religious violence	Cultural diversity		Culture
National Values	National unity		Nationalism and patriotism	Ethnicity	Living together	Tolerance and cooperation/ Crimes and punishment
Peace Education		Peace education	Concept of right and wrong; good and bad	Respect for other's views		Living together peacefully
Conflict Resolution	Group conflict	Group Conflict	Values that promote peace	How to respect other people's views	Conflict and cooperation	Conflict and cooperation

The data in table above shows common similarities of ethnic and religious diversity presented in the content of Nigerian textbooks. While **Interactive Social Studies** presented religious Diversity, culture, group conflict and peace education as general issues, **Easy Way Social Studies** presented religious intolerance in Nigeria, peace education, group conflict, national unity. As in the above, the **Compendium Civic Education** and **Basic Civic Education** equally has the same pattern of explanation, including attitude to cultural diversity, respect for others' views, meaning, causes and consequences of ethnicity, values that promote peace, problems that promote ethnic and religious violence, as well as the concept of right, wrong, good and bad. Also, the textbooks; **New life Religion and National Values** as well as **Bounty Religion and National Values** treated the issues of religious and ethnic diversity from the aspects of living together, inter-marriage, conflict and cooperation. However, considering the presentations of the texts as in above, points raised may not be able to make children contribute in the discussion without any resources or activities that are geared towards helping them appreciate and internalize what they have been taught. Examples of this

surface introductions of the issues from definition, characteristics and types of culture; causes of religious intolerance, e.t.c., may not be able to give the children a clearer picture of the need for peaceful coexistence, for appreciating religious, cultural, ethnic difference, respecting other people's views, how conflicts are resolve without any crisis or war and how children can work together to achieve these and become better individuals when they grow up. This raises the need for child-centered activities and resource-based learning that captures religious and diversity of all types.

Discussion

In an attempt to **a**ssess the need of school children for diverse learning opportunities and resource**s** on issues that concerns religious and ethnic difference of Nigerian children, the focus group discussion was organized to elicit information on the children's awareness of different religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria with regards to children in their schools and neighbourhood; and to find out pupil's attitudes toward children from other ethnic groups.

Assessment of the Need of School Children for Diverse Learning Opportunities and Resources

Data collected showed that the children agreed to have knowledge of Christian, Islamic and Traditional religion and Hindu religion. On their awareness of ethnic groups in Nigeria, children are aware of about 50 groups that exist in Nigeria; though they could only mention about 7 of them. Results also showed that children have people from other religious and ethnic groups around them: in their schools and neighbourhood. It was also gathered that they have many of the people (who are grown ups) from other tribes and religions around their neighbourhood who ride motorcycle transport, repair shoes, sell other items.

On pupils' attitudes towards children from other ethnic groups, it was gathered that parents do not play much role in building positive attitudes in their children towards other cultures and religion. In their classes, children's view was that they are taught about other people's religion or culture but on ways of living peacefully with children of other culture, it was gathered that children have friendly interaction with other children except when they need to fight back with anybody that finds their and that they are not happy with the rate of religious and ethnic crisis country. Again it was gathered that the schools studied do not have such activities like drama, dance, song, discussion, reading club, and other reading resources for the learning of religious and ethnic diversity in class though some of them have drama and dance groups in schools.

The University of Kansas (2022) suggested teaching people from different ethnic backgrounds how to show care and listen to people tell their stories for better understanding of people's life and culture. Again, Lumen Learning (2022) stated that learners can help other colleagues cope with ethnic prejudice. This can only be achieved in the school library where strategies and opportunities are put in place; and in which lifelong skills for ethical reasoning and effective functioning in the society are developed (Onyebuchi, 2010).

When resources and activities are put in place to build a peaceful atmosphere and appreciation for diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, children will grow up to become better individuals, ready to appreciate other people's differences; while working for peace and harmony in the society.

Analysis of the document (textbooks) on issues that could trigger children's view and attitude on difference religious and ethnic background

It was discovered that the textbooks analyzed focused on the preliminary aspects of religious and ethnic diversity and peaceful coexistence. Interactive social studies, easy way social studies compendium civic education, basic civic education, new life religion and national values and bounty religion and national values all treated the issues of religious and ethnic diversity from the aspects culture and ethnicity, religious tolerance, influence of religion on Nigerian family, peace education, conflict resolution and national values; however, the contents raised were definitions of, characteristics of, types of, importance of, and consequences of in any case they were raised. Considering the presentations of the texts, therefore, points raised may need more clear illustration and description to drive home the points. Children may not be able to internalize the content and appreciate the need to respect the differences in other people's culture and peacefully coexisting if there are no other resources, like stories, picture books, pictures of events, drama, dance, songs, discussions, e.t.c., that will make this learning permanent.

Onyebuchi (2021) and Onyebuchi (2010) noted that the best way to address children's learning issues of all types is through the programme and numerous resources and activities of the school library. In agreement, Onyebuchi & Ngwuchukwu (2013) Dike, Ngwuchukwu & Onyebuchi (2011) stated that the school library plays an important role in exposing school children to appreciate religious and ethnic difference through its resources and interactive programmes which are collaborative and practice-based and geared towards understanding of and passion for peaceful coexistence. This therefore raises the need for child-centered activities and resource-based learning that captures religious and diversity of all types.

Further Research in View

It is necessary to embark on future research on promoting religious and ethnic diversity among Nigerian school children for more peaceful coexistence in a global landscape; to build future youths who appreciate other people's religious and ethnic background, and could form groups that promote unity for sustainable development in Nigeria and the world at large. Thus, the third stage of this work will aim, on a larger scale, at assessing the attitudes and needs of school children in other ethnic groups and equally developing a programme for inculcating the appreciation of religious and ethnic differences in Nigeria.

Conclusion

To be able to surmount the problem of religious and ethnic rivalry in the nation, more work is needed in the area of learning resources and activities for school children. The textbooks being the only materials provided by class teachers for building in pupils, unity and appreciation for other people's culture and religion. Since the class teacher is left with the option of battling with numerous subject on the timetable; hence, not being able to meet up with the activities that are geared towards religious and ethnic diversity during the class period, there is need to develop programme that could help provide more interactive platform for internalizing the merits of ethnic diversity and peaceful coexistence in the society. Addressing the issues of ethnic and religious differences should begin from an early stage of a child, and with all the necessary strategies to avoid continuous religious and ethnic misunderstanding in the society.

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Appendix

Focus Group Discussion on the Need of School Children for Diverse Learning Resources that Capture Nigerian Religious and Ethnic Background

Awareness of different ethnic groups and religious culture in Nigerian schools

1. What are the different ethnic groups in Nigeria you know?
2. What different religious groups exist in Nigeria do you know?
3. How many people from different ethnic groups are resident in your community or are in your school?

Awareness of different ethnic groups and religious culture in Nigerian schools
Pupil's Attitudes toward children from other ethnic groups

4. Do you have any neighbours from another tribe?
5. If Yes, which tribe?
6. How do you see the person from another tribe?
7. What does your parent tell you about people from other cultures?
8. What does your teacher tell you about people from other cultures?
9. How do you interact with them (friendly or hostile)?
10. Do you have any friends that are not of your tribe or religion?
11. What different cultures have you learnt from them?
12. Do you see everybody as equal with you?
13. How do you see a child from another religion?
14. Have you fought with someone (a child who) is from your tribe and religion?
15. Have you been maltreated by a fellow child who is your neighbour but not of your religion or from your tribe?
16. Have you fought with your fellow classmate or schoolmate who is not not of your religion or from your tribe?
17. How do you reconcile your differences with them when you have issues?
18. How would you want the nation to be when you become an adult?
19. What kind of group would you want to join when you become an adult?
20. What kinds of activities do you have in class as it concerns different ethnic groups in Nigeria? Example;
    a. drama
    b. dance
    c. reading resources
    d. Discussion
    e. Reading club
    f. others

Biography

Grace Uchechi Onyebuchi is a school library professional with interest in information literacy development and a recipient of the 2020 Diljit Singh Leadership Development Grant from the International Association of School Librarianship.