12-1-2018

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN PROMOTING PEACE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Ebele Celestina Umeji
Department of Library and Information Science Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria, ebeleumeji@gmail.com

Charles Nwabueze Chukwuji
University Library, Federal University Gusau, Nigeria, charles.librarian@gmail.com

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IN NIGERIA

By

Umeji, Celestina Ebele
Department of Library and Information Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria
ebeleumeji@gmail.com

Chukwuji, Charles Nwabueze
The University Library
Federal University Gusau, Nigeria
Charles.librarian@gmail.com
08035414165

Abstract

The need for peace in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as the country has been suffering from the consequences of various degrees of conflict at various times in our history as a nation. Peace education initiative is seen as a welcomed development in both peace building and maintenance. This paper therefore, intends to discuss the roles of libraries towards promoting peace education in Nigeria. This paper reviewed literature on library, peace, and peace education, it also discussed the types and contents of peace education and then discussed the roles libraries should play in promoting peace education which includes support for education, provision of access to information, teaching of information literacy and study skills, outreach programmes (organizing seminars, talks, road shows, exhibitions etc,). The paper also, looked at some challenges which also include poor funding, high illiteracy rate and poor reading culture. The value of this paper is in its identification and discussion of the views and position on the concepts of library, peace and peace education and a breakdown of the types and content of peace education. The paper is expected to aid those in quest for knowledge and help create synergy between peace scholars and libraries and librarians.

Keywords: Library, Peace, Peace Education, Nigeria.

Introduction

Tranquility and harmony are important ingredients for a peaceful coexistent of any given people. Peace is a priceless asset any individual or people should love and cherish forever, yet, as important as it is, it has eluded mankind since the fall of man as recorded in the Scripture. In as much as conflict has been said not to be the absence of peace, because some conflicts are healthy, most conflict situations creates disharmony. Many conflict situations has been blamed on ignorance, misinformation, communication gap, greed, as well as sociological and psychological precepts – belief, value system, ego, interest, fear or perceived fear, alienation or perceived alienation, etc. Nigeria in its whole and bits have passed through one conflict or another over the years prominent among them are the pogrom, Nigerian civil war, various religious crisis, the Niger Delta Crisis, political thugrey, ritual killings, and various communal clashes like the Aguleri – Umuleri in the South East, the Ife – Modakeke in the West, the Zango Kataf in the North. The post-election crisis of 2011 and the heightened tension of pre 2015 elections. There are also pockets of agitation across the country, the OPC asking for Oduduwa Republic, the Niger Delta Militants asking for Resource

Control, Boko Haram insurgents asking for Islamic State, the MASSOB/IPOB, asking for Biafra. The tension created by the 2017 Arewa Youth quit notice to the Igbos in the north and the most recent one of October, 2018 among others too numerous and shameful to mention.

Regrettably, these crisis have kept the country under insecurity at all times. It appears that for a greater percentage of Nigerian nationhood, no year passes by without one crisis or the other. These crisis are between brothers, sisters, neighbours, friends and colleagues who are supposed to be living in harmony. Some of the conflicts could have been avoided if the people were rightly orientated and enlightened. Democracy is also believed to have the capacity to keep a people relatively peaceful particularly in a multi-faceted country like Nigeria. Unfortunately, as Kwaja in Tssuwa and Otsapa (2015) puts it, "in spite of the fanfare that greeted the return of democracy in May 1999, Nigeria has continued to witness a resurgence in high level ethic, religious, communal and citizenship conflicts with devastating consequences". This is in line with the thoughts of Sule, (2003) in his speech in a conference on curbing political violence in North-West Nigeria, that "Nigerians love peace and Nigeria needs Peace, but that a clique amongst our elites, who have turned politics into brigandage and crooked money making ventures, are the ones denying Nigerians and Nigeria a well-deserved peace."

In all these, education has the capacity to eliminate or at best reduce the influence of the elites on the youth to a tolerable and self-manageable level. It is a strong tool for knowledge which in turn liberates and enlightens man. In line with this, Mustafa (2018) quoted Dr. Nasir Isa Fagge, former ASUU National President and current Director Centre for Renewable Energy Research Bayero University Kano as suggesting that:

> *"the solution to conflict and the key to peace is education, and that citizens must force the political class to avail the opportunity of education to the people by ensuring that at least 26% of the national budget is devoted to education and its proper application too".*

The role of education is not complete without a functional library. Library provides the needed information/knowledge carrying materials, known as information materials or resources, which comes in different formats and ranges from books to audio/visual materials and lately e-resources. The library of all ages and types (national, public, academic, special, school and private) have been in the business of acquiring, processing, preserving and disseminating these recorded human knowledge from inception of human civilization to date.

Peace Education initiative came to educate citizens of the world towards ensuring a peaceful world. This initiative seems to be a good one as it is intended to "catch them young" by inculcating the message of peace to the children starting from primary schools to tertiary institutions and also through the informal learning sector. It is intended to inculcate necessary conflict and peace management related skills, knowledge and attitudes to the people. If properly implemented, it will inculcate the culture of peace in the people and the result will become evident in the near future because it is not supposed to be an immediate solution efforts.

However, through education, a man is prepared for socio-economic well-being by acquiring the knowledge the simple truth, that, we all have different behaviours and attitudes, thinking, cultures, beliefs, value system thereby imparting on him the dire need to tolerate one another. Libraries will help drive and teach peace education in their various communities by providing information/knowledge resources on peace and conflict both directly and indirectly. When this is done a great deal would have been achieved overtime having a broad minded and enlightened individual who now have better thinking and reasoning ability, who will uphold national identity rather than ethnic identity (indigeneship) which our leaders prefers. They can now understand and resist the urge, inducements and instigations to start violence, know how to negotiate, mediate and

manage conflicts in the worst case scenarios, thereby promoting peaceful coexistence in the society.

It is therefore, the concern of this paper to attempt identifying and discussing various pragmatic roles libraries plays to promote peace in Nigeria. The paper did briefly reviewed literature on library, peace, and peace education, and then discussed the roles library should play in promoting peace education, it also, looked at some challenges the library encounters in supporting peace education.

Review of Related Literature
Library
Library can be defined as a collection of professionally acquired, processed and preserved information materials of various kinds and formats for dissemination. This makes libraries of all types service and user oriented. As varied as the libraries are, so are their community of users. Jabo and Bayero (2014) opined that libraries are to provide free access to information and should also uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, and ensure that information resources representing all points of view, or at least opposing points of view on any given issue are made available, not succumbing to political and religious persuasions. Okoye, Imo and Igbo (2008) sums the opinion of some scholars like, Link (2004), Roosevelt in Kotanga (2008), Hossfield and Nyamogo (2008) as showing that the library is an institution that promotes democratic ideals by protecting intellectual and scholarship integrity, freedom of the mind, free and open access to information and survival of culture, including societal cohesiveness. In the light of the above in fostering peaceful co-existence in Nigeria through peace education, provision of relevant materials is a must for the library.

In addition, Echezona (2007), Obachi (2008), Malesi (2008), and Namande (2008) in Okoye. Imo and Igbo (2008) identified such resources as cultural literature, materials dealing with peace and security (such as books, magazines, newspapers, journals, audio-visual materials) and internet resources needed in the library for conflict resolution. Gisesa in Okoye, Imo and Igbo (2008) says that researches regarding conflict and peace have also revealed that conflicts are based on deficiency of information, stressing that cases of misinformation, wrong information or missing information enhances disparity in opinion and social differences which may lead to as well as heighten conflicts. This is where libraries come in as they collect/generate, process and disseminate right information through their balanced collection. As the conscience of the society libraries strive to eliminate possible bias in the collection through deliberate policies.

Peace

Peace according to the Encyclopedia Americana (2006) has neither been acceptably defined nor is there any agreement on how to achieve peace. However, it says that the Pacifists sees peace in terms of brotherhood and as a result they preach universal love. Peace is defined by Encyclopedia Britannica (2011) as a state of quiet or tranquility; freedom from disturbance or agitation; calm, repose; state of reconciliation after strife etc. Habu (2017) sees peace as the absence of any hostile or antagonistic relationship that may degenerate into a state of distorting a harmonious existence that could lead to war. For the purpose of this paper, Habu's definition subsists. This is so, as the author rightly says it is the kind of definition that is suitable for most plural societies like Nigeria, India, Rwanda among others.

For Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009) peace is one of the humanity's highest values; a state of mind in concourse with serenity, a state of harmony, tranquility, concord and a balance of equilibrium of powers. Peace abhors violence and war. It is a state of justice, goodness and civil government.

Ibeanu in Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009) sees peace as 'not' a condition but as a process. According to him peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community.

Peace education

UNICEF (2011) defines peace education as "the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level". This approach is in line with the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework of Action which calls for the promotion of an education that helps children and young people to acquire skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict as well as social and ethical values.

Gumut, (2006) says that the history of peace education dates back to anti-war activities of the inter-war years in Europe. According to her, after World War I, an international movement for peace education emerged and was aimed at increasing international understanding of peace education. The League of Nations, Some NGOs like the American School Citizenship Leagues, the International Bureau of Education, all of them contributed to the emergence of international peace education (Van den Dungen in Gumut, 2006). Peace education is learner centered and should be localized according to climes for it to yield fruitful results. The scope of peace education is vast as it covers or touches all spheres of human existence ranging from politics/governance, environment to human rights, economic development, religion to culture etc. Kajom (2015) argues that mankind needs to learn some lessons from its past so as to be able to build a new and better

future. One of the lessons to be learned is that the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance, human rights and democracy need to be inculcated in all humans, young and old, so as to prevent re-occurrences of our violence-ridden past, while Adeyemo and Ndulue (2015) concludes that the teaching of Civic Education to our children enable them to know that the success of whole lies with the integration of its components, that is to say that the country cannot develop without the various sections of the country developing. They therefore argued that it will go a long way in creating the needed atmosphere of ethno-religious tolerance and the spirit of unity in diversity in the children.

Types and content of peace education

  According to Gumut (2006) education for peace is in two forms, the formal and informal.

Formal Peace education

As the name suggests, this type is the one that is incorporated in a society's formal education system. A well-articulated peace education programme should be incorporated in our educational/school curriculum and taught at all levels of our education cutting across various subjects and disciplines. Gumut (2006), gave the following as areas of emphasis in formal peace education, knowledge on (Ourselves and others, Inequality -rich and poor, our environment and the World tomorrow), Attitude on (Human dignity, Curiosity and appreciation of others culture, Empathy, Justice and fairness) and Skills (enquiry, Communication skills and tools, Grasping concepts, Critical thinking and Political skills, negotiation).

Informal Peace Education

According to Gumut (2006) much peace education takes place in informal settings where people gather for work or leisure. This is done through socialization and initiation process within the community and the families just as it is in the formal sector-school, this one primarily addresses attitudes and aims to have a direct impact on individual's personal behavior. Peace education here

requires a more relaxed atmosphere, a more open and welcoming setting that encourages people to engage in the important but tasking issue and reflecting on their very own behavior, attitude and ultimately working out better alternatives for the future. It has the capacity to make people become aware of their bias and prejudice and of course that of the society too.

Obviously, peace education is deliverable in the informal sector in quite a number of ways. It can come in the form of workshops, talk shows, road shows seminars, conferences and the likes. Also publishing of peace story books for children, designing, producing and distributing peace promoting posters, badges, caps, T-shirts, banners, billboards etc. Promoting peace education through mass media – radio, tv, newspapers and social media platforms, text messages etc. all agents of socializations, family, worship centers apart from school which is of the formal sector must be involved in informal peace education processes. If all concern teach peace and tolerance amongst one another, the country would be better for it. Efforts should be made not to politicize the peace education to score cheap and unnecessary points and or popularity.

The Role of Library in Promoting Peace Education

These roles covers and supports the types and content of peace education as presented in Gumut (2006) above. The roles are:

1. **Support for Education**

As the levels of education differs so are their levels of teaching and learning. The main role of library in education is provision of access to recorded knowledge/information to its community especially the formal education sector. Education will help enlighten the people from the primordial sentiments/thoughts that encourages ethno/religious identity consciousness and enthrone national consciousness and identity. Therefore, libraries at the various levels of education provides information materials to support the curriculum of its parent's school, starting from

school libraries that provides learning resources for both primary and secondary schools to academic libraries that provides tertiary materials for post -secondary/tertiary or higher institutions as it variously called. Universities have additional mandate of research, so University libraries provides current primary and secondary research materials to advance the course of research in the university. The public library is not left out here as it is sometimes referred to as the "peoples' University" this is because it provides materials for the education of almost every segment of the society as it is holds sway in handling lifelong learning. Libraries provides materials on peace and conflict studies, civic education, sociology, psychology, religion and other general reading materials that helps in enlightening and moulding citizens character, teaching them the right societal values etc. Academic Libraries and librarians should also conduct researches on peace and conflict issues to generate new knowledge and direction in peace education towards the promotion of peace in their community both immediate and the wider community.

2.   Provision of Free Access to Information

Information is key to advancement in the life of an individual or a people. It is one of the major difference between the haves and have-nots. Right information has the capacity of liberating a person from the shackles of ignorance and poverty, as it helps you make or take the right decision per time. This information come in the form of human knowledge collected/generated, processed, preserved and disseminated in the right format to their various communities of service. Peace education entails passing on relevant information that will help prevent, manage and build peace in the world. People need to know what leads to conflict and the possible things to do.

 Libraries provide various reading materials (information) that will enlighten the people thereby creating an informed society with little or manageable conflicts like ethno-religious conflicts witnessed mostly in less informed (developed) societies like Nigeria. Nelson Mandela as reported

by Igwela and Nsirim (2018) says that "the more informed you are, the less aggressive and arrogant you are."

Access to public information would go a long way in bridging communication gap between the Government and its citizens, thus reducing agitations, protests and restiveness even when some selfish elites are fanning the embers. This gave rise to enactment of Freedom of Information Act by several countries of the world over the years, with Nigeria joining on 28th May, 2011. But whether the Act is serving its purpose is not clear as the popularity and awareness seems to have died down. Against this backdrop Irwin in Omagbemi and Tomori (2016) posited that Nigerians will have some of the following questions bugging their minds: What is freedom of Information?; What is privacy act?; How do they make FOI request?; What type of information can they request?; Can they access agencies records?; How can they submit requests?; Are there charges attached to requests?; How quickly can response be made?; Is there time restriction to request?; Are there specific compliance officers to contact?; Is it meant for the elites only? And how can the non-literate people benefit?

Nigerian Library Association and the National Library of Nigeria, according to Omagbemi and Tomori (2016) can facilitate the libraries taking up the role of providing answers to these questions. This can be done either by creating Request Service Centers or Desk Officers in libraries or designating some libraries across the country to handle them.

3. Teaching of Information and study Skills

Peace education is a global effort at creating a united and peaceful world through knowledge/information, it therefore entails handling with all seriousness. This is why libraries teach certain learning skills like information literacy and study skills to its users to enable them identify, access, evaluate information, develop skills and competencies in reading, writing,

summarizing, paraphrasing, comprehension, critical thinking etc. The two skills are as discussed below:

-   Information Literacy Skills

Information literacy is a relatively new concept in the world of information. Bill and Tony (2005) described Information literacy as a series of logical steps or stages involved in the process of acquiring and using information. Information literacy is not narrowed down only to the formal education system but rather as Bill and Tony submitted, has substantial relevance outside the formal education system, particularly in the workplace and in terms of democracy and citizenship. Every worker, trader, artisan always needs one information or the other to stay afloat in their chosen careers or vocations, ranging from health workers to engineers, lawyers to politician, market men and women to small scale entrepreneurs among others. Across the world libraries teach information literacy to users. The place of information in peace cannot be overemphasized. Adeogun (2006) was of the opinion that the value of information services in the present information dispensation is not possessing information but in providing access to it and more importantly in developing the organizational and technological capabilities in the end-user to be able to identify, access, sift and determine the validity of information., hence, libraries teaching of information literacy.

-   Study skills

Study skills are generally regarded as strategies and methods of motivated learning and it is often centered on reading and writing. According to Bill and Tony (2005) the term 'study skills' refers to the conscious and deliberate use of the processes of learning to achieve effective study practices. The set of skills implied is large. The most obvious are: reading, writing, note-taking, time-management, working with others, engaging in critical and analytical thinking, revising and

remembering. It is a response to the notion of an 'information society' and provides potential frameworks and objectives for learning (Bill and Tony, 2005). All these areas of study skills are all part of the content of peace education and are very important in good communication, both personal and inter-personal. When people have good skills they can live peacefully with their neighbours.

4. Current awareness service/Selective Dissemination of Information

This service is used by libraries to keep busy scholars and researchers abreast of latest information materials in their chosen field(s). Peace and conflict studies researchers and other interested scholars who identifies with their libraries are meant to give their profiles, indicating their areas of interest and the type of information and or materials they need as well as the mode of notification and delivery of the materials. This is a specialized library service. The library staff involved in this must be up and doing in conducting literature search especially from newly arrived library materials and deliver same to the researcher.

5. Preservation of cultural heritage

Preservation and conservation of cultural heritage had been the prime function of libraries especially, public and national libraries. Jabo and Bayero (2014) say that culture is a complex whole which include knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, custom and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. They argued that because of the place of culture in the society that sustainable democracy cannot be attained without preservation of the society's cultural heritage. Libraries especially public and national have direct charge to collect and preserve works/materials embodying the cultural heritage of their communities in all available formats and also make them available as at when needed, whether solicited for or not. The libraries can reach

out to the public informing them of the existence of various materials of their cultural heritage which has the capacity to enlighten their minds on the norms and values of their society.

6.   As agent of change in the society

Change is about the only thing in life that is constant. Societies have evolved over the years of which Nigeria is not an exception. This change cuts across our national life to include political, social, economic and even cultural among others. For Jabo and Bayero (2014) the objective of every social change is to establish a new order, where all citizens can hope to obtain justice, liberty and equality. According to Olayemi, Olayemi and Abolarinwa (2018) by providing a wide variety of materials to support the educational and social needs of their community irrespective of their race, nationality, age, gender, religious and political inclinations , language, disability, economic and employment status and educational level libraries perform social change roles.. Materials on social justice, human rights, gender equality, politics, civic education, corruption, good governance, poverty eradication, national consciousness etc. and other related materials that will awaken the consciousness of the readers to a rebirth giving way to the old order that is dividing and deepening our conflict should be provided by libraries. These materials would help our democracy to be rooted thereby guaranteeing peoples freedom, improved well-being and paving way for sustainable peace.

7.   Cultivating reading culture/habit

This is particularly in the purview of school and public libraries, through the soft and entertaining reading materials they provide for children. One of the major format information can be documented on is paper and the only way to decode that information or knowledge is through reading. Reading, therefore, is a very fundamental skill in learning. The state of literacy of any individual is usually measured by the person's ability to read and write. For Nwabueze and

Iwekpeazu (2012) reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built because through reading, information can be acquired which bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance. Some conflict are caused by ignorance as well as wrong information. School libraries (libraries in primary and post primary schools) should make sure that their collections should cover various good soft materials on social studies - cross culture, literature, peace, value system, patriotism, national integration among other. They should also ensure that library hours are inculcated in their school curriculums. That way they can have the opportunity to tutor the children on benefits of reading as well as guide them on how to study.

8.   Outreach- community services

This will serve the informal sector mostly. Libraries should play the role of extension workers, reaching out to the outside community. They should take the message of peace to the citizens outside the confines of the library by organizing seminars, talks, conferences (with pictures and in slide presentation- for effective assimilation as the audience will be a mixed one covering people of divers age of understanding), walks/road shows, concerts/drama, cultural exhibition, book exhibitions, workshops etc. A sustained outreach for peace would keep the people in constant consciousness of peaceful coexistence. National, public, academic and the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and some conflict/peace, citizenship and political oriented special libraries should galvanize stakeholders like Federal Ministry of Information, National Orientation Agency, National Human Rights Commission, Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Government officials, traditional rulers, religious bodies, orgainized private sector and different registered associations among others operating in their various constituents/communities to carry out this tasks for it to have desired impact. Whatever programmes they adopted should cover well prepared and delivered peace related issues like human rights, political education, national integration, national values, tolerance, and societal values among others. Through this, the library imparts

knowledge, skills and attitude of which will equip the people to be peace builders. This process of peace building sees them through practical issues of conflict and deeper issues of relationships, human development, structural realities and re-orientate them by teaching them the right attitude to life and issues of life. Conflicts must be played down, giving its unacceptable and devastating consequences.

Challenges of Libraries in Promoting Peace Education

From the foregoing it is obvious that there are many challenges that works against library's performing their role in promoting peace education. Some of these challenges include:

1.   High illiteracy rate:

According to UNESCO, 65 million Nigerians are illiterate and 10.5 million children of school age are out of school. Achitabwino (2007) said that the greatest barrier to information provision in Malawi by libraries for the promotion of democracy and socio-economic issues is high illiteracy rate, noting that most of the information is in print and over half of the population of Malawians cannot read and write, and that affects their national development. This situation is not quite different from what we have in Nigeria. In a lecture titled "youth, security and national development in Nigeria" delivered by the Emir of Kano , Muhammad Sanusi II, he blamed the Boko Haram insurgency and other security challenges across the country on poverty and poor ideology among youths due to lack of access to quality education, owing to bad governance and corruption. He warned that Nigeria may not be able to overcome certain threats to national security, unless the authorities address the twin issues of ideology and lack of access to quality education (Madugba, 2018). This explains why country's with high literacy rates have very low rate of the kind of tolerable and avoidable crisis we have been experiencing all this years, whether religion, ethnic, or political. It therefore suffice to say that with continuous high illiteracy rate in the country

getting people to read or comprehend concepts, tolerate others, communicate effectively, critically analyze information will not yield good results.

2.   Poor Funding:

Nigerian educational system have been poorly funded over the years. Various Nigerian Governments have failed to allocate the minimum 26% budgetary allocation of the national budget to education as advised by UNESCO. This makes funding of libraries in various school nothing to write home about. It is obvious that so many things in Nigerian schools are contending with the little fund allocated to them. For example, there is NUC policy that 10% of every universities budget should be allocated to the university library, but this is not done. This affects the libraries provisions of current and relevant information materials, including materials that will promote peace education. The poor funding of the education, could be as result of government's unacceptance of education as being a major enabler of any nation's development or lack of political will power.

3.   Non impactful Government:

Government and its agencies including religious bodies, and other stakeholder in the promotion of peace are not doing enough to preach the message of peace through the libraries. Perhaps, they did not see what libraries can do to promote peace. The message of our core national values are not well taught to all Nigerians as it ought to be because of failed agents of socialization. The library can actually help in promoting peace education, if they are carried along by relevant stakeholders.

4.   Poor Reading culture:

There is this popular saying by the white man that, "if you want to hide anything from a black man you put it in a book". This implies that we don't read. Poor reading culture has in the recent past become a disheartening issue in Nigeria. One thing is providing the needed materials as the

libraries do and another thing is optimal utilization of these materials. Scholars have advanced some factors responsible for poor reading culture, among which are poor home environment, poor implementation of government policies, poor funding of education sector, poor library facilities including reading materials, change in value system among the youths, inexperienced class teachers, inexperienced library officers, absence of library hour in curriculum, non-teaching of use of library especially in primary and post primary schools among others. Worst situation is this era of ICT where everybody is on the go with internet enabled devices. Social media is taking lots of productive times of our youth who engage in chats where cut and paste abbreviations are used. They find it difficult these days to sit down and read fairly voluminous books, if libraries acquire relevant peace promoting materials and they are not read by the patrons, this will certainly affect the libraries effort of promoting peace in the society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, tranquility and harmony evident in peaceful co-existence of people were identified as important features of peace. It was also seen that democracy has the capacity to keep a people relatively peaceful particularly in a multi-faceted country like Nigeria, but despite our new found love (democracy), the conflicts, crisis, insecurity, break down of law and order between 1999 and now is unbearable. The crisis situation across the world necessitated the Peace Education initiative to educate citizens of the world towards a united and peaceful world by inculcating necessary conflict and peace management related skills, knowledge and attitudes to the people. It was also shown that in promoting peace education libraries could play roles like, support for education, teaching of skills, current awareness services, preserving of cultural heritage among others were discussed. However, libraries face some challenges in performing these roles like, poor funding of libraries, high literacy rate etc.

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