

Information: An Undiscovered National Resource in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT--- *This paper reviews Information as an undiscovered national economic resource in Nigeria. It deals with those core elements of information behavior which are information need, information use and information seeking. It sees information as an essential ingredient that can upturneconomy of any developing country around especially Nigerian economy that is currently downswing. An overview of Nigerian information environment is carried out. The paper also views information as an important resource that must be enshrined in Nigerian constitution for national development within the context of globalization. The paper concludes that there is need for Nigerian government officials to recognize information as a resource and begin to use it in addressing some of the multidimensional economic problems that affect her national development.*

Keywords--- Information resource, Information needs, Information use, National development, National Information Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our world has gone through several transformations in terms if economic and social revolutions. Today the entire world is a global village due to the revolution of information technology. It began with agrarian revolution- when competitive edge by economies was defined by agricultural production. Next was industrial revolution - when mass production of goods with the use of industrial machines started. Today, we are in an information age-an age where what determines the place of an individual, an organization or a country is the amount of information at the disposal of that individual, organization or nation. Besides, Information is an essential part of a nation's resource vital to scientific and economic progress but also seen as a medium for social communication (UNESCO, 1978). As a general rule, the most successful nation in the world is the one with the best information (White, 1981 cited inAina, 2004). Accessibility and utilization of relevant information enables the economy of some developed countries in the world (e.g. USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada; popularly known as G7 nations.) to grow faster than the economy of the developing countries in the world.

In the late 20th century, information acquired two major utilitarian connotations. First, it is considered an economic resource, somewhat at par with other resources such as land, labour, material, and capital. This view stems from evidence that the possession, manipulation, and use of information can increase the cost effectiveness of many physical and cognitive processes. The rise in information-processing activities in industrial manufacturing as well as in human problem solving has been remarkable. Analysis of one of the three traditional divisions of the economy, the service sector, shows a sharp increase in information-intensive.

Besides, with the rise of information technology which allows vast amount of information to flow across an organization very quickly, many employees have been complaining about 'information overloads' and 'knowledge underload'. Companies in the past 10 years have 'recognized' the value of information. It is becoming a strategic issue to provide employees with access to the right information at the right time. Managing information and knowledge becomes a business critical agenda item discussed in the boardroom, the aim to apply global knowledge and capability to deliver highest quality solutions to their clients.

Consequently, the main goal of this paper is to examine information as an undiscovered resource needed for national development of any country especially the Nigerian economy that is currently downswing. To critically examine information as undiscovered national resource, subheadings such as information need, information use, information as a resource, information for national development, the Nigerian information environment and national information policy for a globalized economy are discussed.

2. INFORMATION NEED

Information need is the desire for a piece of information and lack of appropriate information on which to base choice that could lead to benefits or services that may improve people's well-being (Tester, 1992). Susan Tester's definition is a good starting point for a consideration of what we mean by information need. It emphasizes the fact that we seldom want- or need- information for information's sake. Information is a means to an end, something that enables us to make choice that may improve our well-being. That is everyone in human society need information for survival and growth. We play many different roles in our lives and each role has an information component. We absorb, for example, a great deal of information during our school years. Similarly at work, people need a steady flow of work related information to perform the functions allotted to them. Increasingly, however, people need social information- the information that will help them to live their daily lives. Thus, information according to Aina (2004) can be thought of as having six different dimensions, each of which can provide a basis for analysis, these are: **Function** - Why do people need information; **Form** - What kind of information do people need; **Clusters** - What do people need information about; **Agent** - Who initiates the information activity; and **Mechanisms- Which** mechanisms can be used to meet information needs.

However, a detailed consideration of these dimensions reveals the following: First, people need information to support them in the two roles they play as members of society – as citizens and consumers (Moore & Steele, 1991). Recently in Nigeria nation, citizens are called upon to make democratic choices on people that would lead them in various elective positions for the next four years. To do this they need a considerable amount of information about those candidates that are seeking the elective positions, about the choices that are on offer and about the consequences of choosing one course of action in preference to another. Here the issues are clarified or more precisely, clearly identified; at critical decision-points like elections or referendums. But there is an underlying expectation that we will all act as informed citizens, gathering, sifting and using information for the collective, as well as our individual benefit. This is a fundamental principle of democratic political systems- if citizens are not well informed then democratic processes are little more than a sham. One aspect of this is the need to hold organizations accountable for their actions. Such accountability is only possible if we are informed.

Moreover, people needed unhindered access to information to enable them play their statutory roles as active citizens of a nation, making democratic choices, holding organization of all kinds to account for their activities in the society and exercising their rights and responsibilities as members of the society. They also need access to information to make informed choices about the goods and services that they want to consume. Increasingly, Nigerian government required citizens to make choices about the public services that consume. Partly this is a result of the process of privatization that transformed many public services and utilities. People are now offered much greater choice of schooling, healthcare, housing, social care and other public services in the belief that this element of consumer choice will lead to higher levels of efficiency and quality. But for the choices to be real, they must be well informed. Thus we have catalogue entries in the library for its collections, hospital records to provide information of patients in the hospitals for doctors and other health workers to work with in order to provide effective health services; all in an attempt to provide people with the information on which they can base their consumption decisions. Without access to information, people will lack power to choose among the alternatives and, through their choices, to influence ways in which society is organized and goods and services are provided. Also, on daily basis people seek, obtain, process and absorb different kinds of information. They gather information from the social environment they inhabit and through this, become more or less well-informed. They also have specific information needs that prompt them to go in search of information. Everyone in the society needs active information to build up an understanding of the world he/she inhabit. We do this through absorbing large amounts of information in fairly random and unconscious ways. This information is then processed and added to what we possessed. Most of the understanding of our environment comes about through random and unstructured of information. We carry out this environmental scanning all the time by absorbing information from newspapers, broadcast media, social media, from family and friends, from overhearing something on the bus- in a wide range of different ways. All the information, once processed, goes towards building up our understanding of the world around us, leading to the ideal position where we are 'well informed' (Ryan & McCloughlan, 1999).

Therefore, a society becomes more complex, it becomes more difficult to keep abreast of all the information that one needs. It becomes easier to miss potentially important areas of information and thus to be unaware of issues that could have a bearing on one's life. The extent to which people are unaware of these issues that are important to them is one measure of their degree of social exclusion. The paradox is that the greater our awareness, the larger is the task of maintaining a state of 'well-informedness'. This seems to bear out the truism that the more information we receive the

more we realize how poorly informed we are. Hence, in looking at what people need information about, it is logical to look at various human needs that were beautifully developed by an American psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1948 (Isiaka, 2011). The author stressed that Abraham Maslow's message was simply stated that "people always have needs, and when one need is relatively fulfilled, others emerge in a predictable sequence to take its place" (Isiaka, 2011, p. 3). Abraham Maslow broadly classified human needs into five groups as shown in figure 1; these include: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Each of these needs is briefly discussed in turn:

- **Physiological needs** –These are biological needs which consist of the need for oxygen, food, sleep, sex, water, and a relatively constant body temperature. They are needs required by every individual to sustain life. They are the strongest needs because if a person were deprived of all those needs, the survival of such individual is not certain.
- **Safety needs** –When all physiological needs are met and are no longer controlling thoughts and behaviours, the needs for security can become active. These comprise of: living and working in a secure area, medical insurance, job security and financial reserves.
- **Needs for love, affection and belongingness** - When the needs for safety and for physiological well-being are satisfied, the next class of needs for love, affection and belongingness can emerge. Maslow (1954) in Nyameh (2013) stated that people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation. This involves both giving and receiving love, affection and the sense of belonging.
- **Esteem needs**- When the first three classes of needs are satisfied, the needs for esteem can become dominant. These comprise of self-respect, Achievement, due attention, recognition and reputation. The needs for both self-esteem and for the esteem a person gets from others. Humans have a need for a stable, firmly based, high level of self-respect, and respect from others. When these needs are satisfied, the person feels self-confident and valuable as a person in the world. When these needs are frustrated, the person feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless (Nyameh, 2013).

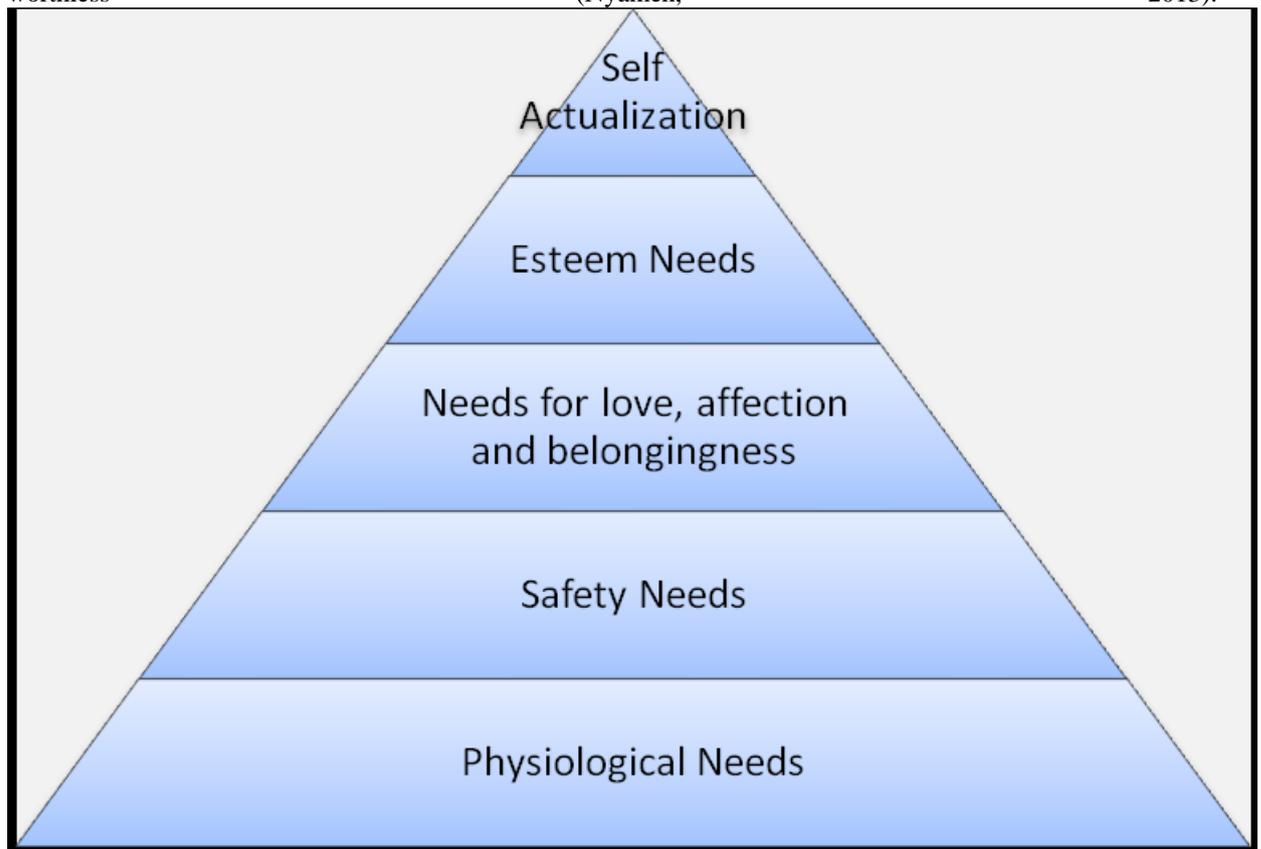


Figure 1: Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Source: Maslow (1954) adopted from Nyameh (2013). Available at <http://www.ijbmi.org>

- **Self-actualization needs** - When all of the foregoing needs are satisfied, then and only then are the needs for self-actualization activated. It consists of achieving one's full potentials including creative activities. Maslow describes self-actualization as a person's need to be and do that which the person was "born to do." "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, and a poet must write." Likewise, a librarian has to organize his collections in order to effectively disseminate relevant information to various information seekers. "These needs

make themselves felt in signs of restlessness. The person feels on edge, tense, lacking something, in short, restless (Nyameh, 2013).

For each of these levels of human needs, it is possible to define clusters of information that people need. The cluster of information associated with welfare benefits and income maintenance, for example, is an important contributor to the satisfaction of physiological needs. Clearly such a hierarchy of needs can throw light on the general structure of social information needs. It can also be used to identify the information needs of specific groups of user. Our model of information has to take account of three different agents, each of which initiates information activity. First we have the **users of information** who actively seek the information they require, or simply absorb it from the information that is around them in their environment. Then there are **information providers** who play a more or less active role in providing information to the users. The third category concerns the **intermediaries** who process information on behalf of users.

Besides, when developing a model of information need, it is possible to define an almost infinite number of groups of users. It is, consequently, difficult to prescribe a standard or general set of user groups that can be applied in a range of different circumstances- so much depends on the point of departure. If one is looking at patterns of provision, for example, geographical groupings might be appropriate, categorizing users according to whether they lived in urban or rural areas. A range of different mechanisms can be used to meet people's information needs. They do this by recording and storing information; by coping and reproducing it; by transmitting and communicating it; and by tailoring the information to meet the needs of the individual.

3. INFORMATION USE

People use information to create knowledge in the human society, but not just in the sense of data and facts but in the form of representations that provide meaning and context for purposive active (Choo, 2002). Surprisingly, information science often stops short of examining what people do with the information once it has been received. Information use is one of the three core elements of information behaviour, along with information needs and information seeking (Wilson, 1999). There is a long history of research into information behaviour and its constituent elements of information need, information seeking and information use. However, the three elements have been studied at varying degrees of details. Information needs and information seeking (and the narrower concept of information search) have been well modeled and studied (Marchionini, 1995; Wilson, 1999)

In contrast, information use has received less attention, and remains a poorly defined concept (Wilson, 1999). It is often linked to the concept of information need, in that information is needed so that it can be used. When discussed, use is often addressed at an abstract level, with reference to the general goal that the use of information will help to achieve. Early studies of information needs and uses by Menzel in 1966 and Paisley in 1968 basically focused on information systems, at the time consisting primarily of paper-based library collections of books and journals. In these studies, information use referred to the information packages (e.g., books, journals, indices, etc.). The concept of information use is therefore historically associated with the resource itself, rather than the information contained within. The emergence of self-serve searching and the web has changed the way we now view the object of use from those physical items to the information chunks. Dervin (1992) in his Sense-Making theory views information behaviour in terms of a situation, a gap and an outcome, with information being used to bridge the gap and achieve the outcome. This framework, with its recognition of the importance of understanding how the information helps the user "make sense" of a situation, highlights the role of information use. However, in subsequent discussions of Dervin's work (Wilson 1999), it is often the classification and articulation of information needs (i.e. the nature of the gap) that is emphasized. While need and use are clearly linked since information is needed to fulfill a use, there is a shift in perspective and emphasis depending on whether the focus is on needs or uses.

Furthermore, discussion of need tends to highlight the purpose for which the information is sought – the goal or objective – but does not usually extend to including how exactly the information is applied to achieving the goal. Often the more significant work is found in studies of browsing, as browsers meander down a path of seeking, finding and extracting, before moving on to the next episode. Marchionini (1995) in his model of information seeking argues that use includes instances of information extraction that consist of reading, scanning, listening, classifying, copying and storing information. Notably these are higher level conceptual skills that indicate how the information is handled. Taylor (1991) proposed taxonomy of eight classes of information uses, generated from the information need(s) perceived by users: Enlightenment - context information; Problem Understanding - better comprehension of a specific problem; Instrumental - what to do and how to do something; Factual - precise data; Confirmation - verify a piece of information; Projective - Future oriented; Motivational: Relates to personal involvement; and Personal or political: relationship, status, reputation, personal fulfillment. These classes of information use were developed from expressions of perceived needs rather than that of observation, report or discussion of actual information use. As such, they represent the objectives of the information seeking episode (e.g. precise data) rather than a set of uses of that information.

4. INFORMATION AS A RESOURCE

It was about a quarter of a century ago when the use of computers and telecommunications became interlocked and helped to form the information industry. The greatest feature of this industry being the increase in humanities thinking power, and the power to organize. This information industry is overlapping with other industries, and becomes a part of them as well. Information is a resource on its own, as well as an asset to others. It falls within the resource hierarchy which starts with data, leads to information, coming together as knowledge, and resulting in wisdom. Data can be defined as the undigested observations, unprocessed facts or unvarnished facts. Information follows as the organized form or data. Knowledge is then the organized information which is internalized by its user and integrated with other bits and fields resulting from experience, study, or intuition. The final step is the integration of knowledge into wisdom, which is information that has been made useful by theory relating the bits of knowledge to each other.

Thus, good information is relevant for its purpose, sufficiently accurate for its purpose, complete enough to solve a given problem, reliable and targeted to the right person. It is also communicated in time for its purpose, contains the right level of detail and is communicated by an appropriate channel, i.e. one that is understandable to the user (Johnstone, 2015). The author and other researchers further point out the following as the inherent characteristic of information as a dependable resource:

- **Information is accessible/available:** Information should be easy to obtain or access. Information kept in a book of some kind is only available and easy to access if you have the book at hand. A good example of availability is a telephone directory, as every home has one for its local area. It is probably the first place you look for a local number. But nobody keeps the whole country's telephone books so for numbers further afield you probably phone a directory enquiry number.
- **Accuracy:** Information needs to be accurate enough for the use to which it is going to be put. To obtain information that is 100% accurate is usually unrealistic as it is likely to be too expensive to produce on time. The degree of accuracy depends upon the circumstances. At operational levels information may need to be accurate to the nearest penny. Accuracy is important. As an example, if government statistics based on the last census wrongly show an increase in births within an area, plans may be made to build schools and construction companies may invest in new housing developments. In these cases any investment may not be recouped.
- **Relevance/appropriateness:** Information should be relevant to the purpose for which it is required. It must be suitable. What is relevant for one information seeker may not be relevant for another. The user will become frustrated if information contains data irrelevant to the task in hand. For example, a market research company may give information on users' perceptions of the quality of a product. This is not relevant for the manager who wants to know opinions on relative prices of the product and its rivals. The information gained would not be relevant to the purpose.
- **Completeness:** Information should contain all the details required by the user. Otherwise, it may not be useful as the basis for making a decision. Ideally all the information needed for a particular decision should be available. However, this rarely happens; good information is often incomplete. To meet all the needs of the situation, information should be collected from a variety of sources.
- **Information is expandable:** it is recognized that for specific purposes information may deplete, but in general, the more we have, the more we use, and the more useful it becomes. Information is certainly not scarce, and is available in profusion. This concept of "information-rich" may not necessarily be good, but may instead mean being "swamped". There are limits to the growth of information, but they lie in the time and capacity of people.
- **Information is compressible:** It is possible to concentrate, integrate, and summarize information for easier handling. In this information age, information has been processed, repackaged and stored in more sizeable formats such as: flash drive, external disc, compact disc, CDROMS and other technologies that make information to be readily available whenever and wherever it is needed presently or in future.
- **Information is substitutable:** Information can and does replace land, labour and capital. It is the use of computer and telecommunications that aids in this phenomenon.
- **Information is transportable:** Information can be acquired and taken to anywhere for use; this has led to the idea of being remote as much more difficult to achieve since people and information can be taken to the remotest of places. With the aid of mass and social media telecommunication technologies, information could be easily transmitted among large group of information seekers and users in any part of the globe in a moment without much restriction.
- **Information is diffusive:** There tends to be ability for information to leak. This leakage allows us to have more, and more of it both in fragment as well as in bulk for use to solve one information need or the other.
- **Reliability or objectivity:** Reliability deals with the truth of information or the objectivity with which it is presented. You can only really use information confidently if you are sure of its reliability and objectivity.

When researching for an essay in any subject, we might make straight for the library to find a suitable book. We are reasonably confident that the information found in a book, especially one that the library has purchased, is reliable and (in the case of factual information) objective.

- **Information is shareable:** No exchange transaction of information can take place, only sharing transactions, and this leads to an entire sharing environment. Information should be disseminated to diverse population of information seekers within and outside the library environment and it must not be censored for any reason.

It is evident from the above listed characteristics of information that information cause is not to be like any other resource that human beings have had previous experience with. It is not subject to the laws of thermodynamics that we are used to applying to resources in the past. Information users are also not able to own information like we are able to own other resources such as land and capital. Information is, however far more accessible than these resources, and has become our key resource. The quality, relevance, and usefulness of information depend on who uses it, how astutely, and for what purposes. Our entrance into the information age has had many impacts on our way of life. One of these being the changes in the work force. The jobs and functions performed by the workers are becoming increasingly information oriented. We are now working in an information economy – with information as the resource. But similar to other resources, information must be produced, consciously used, and effectively deployed. It is important to be aware of the characteristics of our newest resource, so that we are able to use it efficiently, and benefit from it, as well as not abuse it.

5. IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION AS A RESOURCE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Prosperity, progress, and development of any nation depend upon the nation's ability to acquire, produce, access, and use pertinent information. Information is the lifeblood and bedrock of any society and vital to the activities of both the government and private sectors. It is a solid foundation through which growth and development of any nation is built and maintained. Bell (1974) holds the view that the dependence upon information to create innovation and change, places a high premium on the ability of (developing countries) nations to access and use information to create advances in society. The rise in information-processing activities in industrial manufacturing as well as in solving human problem has been remarkable. Analysis of one of the three traditional divisions of the economy, the service sector, shows a sharp increase in information-intensive. The resources of the industrial age were tangible things that could be mined, processed, bought, sold, managed and easily understood. In the emerging post-industrial society, there is little understanding of the characteristics of information as basic to human development, yet abstract resource. Hence many countries of the world, most especially developing countries have not deployed this resource for national development as being done by the developed nations.

However, there are two approaches to ensuring that information becomes a national resource for development. The first approach is to put in place measures that would ensuring that the information needs of the diverse population of a community are met. Such measures include:

- Use of print and electronic mass media like newspapers, radio, television and internet connectivity;
- Face to face information programme in form of trainings, seminars and conferences for specific group such as artisan, traders and civil servants.

Development can only be effective if citizens have access to the relevant, diverse information for their day-to-day activities. Efforts must be made to give access to knowledge and information by non-literates in the society who constitute the majority. People in the community whether literate or not should have access to any kind of information which will help them to become capable and productive in their social and political obligations, to become better informed citizens generally. In the same vein, Diso (1994) holds the view that information must as a matter of policy, be seen as a basic resource for development if durable structures are to be provided for effective access and utilization, which entails information capturing, coordinating, processing, and dissemination. In the Nigeria context, accessibility to information by both urban and rural communities is stated in its development plans. But with emphasis to the support of government propaganda and many programmes that are not fully relevant to the information needs of the citizens. The information received by people is either not reliable or distorted in the process of transmission. This unhealthy situation constitutes a major impediment, which keep the communities in Nigeria and other developing countries far away from development indicators. The developed countries engaged in dissemination of relevant or beneficial information to their citizens to reduce the gap between the urban and the rural communities to the barest level. A report on a rural project in 2007 outlined that, "access to and the ability to use information and knowledge are not equally distributed. About seven million adults in England are judged to be functionally illiterates. Affluent families are far more likely to give information resources to their children at the tender age than the poorer families; at early age, their wards have access to books, computers, and the internet. This made them to be well informed or mentally developed than their counterparts from the poor homes or families.

Besides, the second approach hinges on the fact that the information age is made possible by the advent of information technology (IT). This approach is for government to provide information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. Such infrastructure may include community radio, viewing centres for cable television and Internet facilities. This will enable citizens to have access to the right information that will make them contribute positively to the national development of their country.

Unfortunately, it is quite evident that Africa at present lacks innovation and design capabilities. This notwithstanding, the continent has been and will continue to import and use a wide range of durable consumer electronics, computers and telecommunication equipment. It must therefore begin to accumulate the capabilities to repair and maintain these vintages. Indeed if Africa is not to be left behind in the global trade and development, it must be able to master certain basic capabilities in IT. In addition, the rate of technical obsolescence is likely to be much faster with IT, compared with the natural technologies (such as steel, textiles and petrochemicals). The technological followers in Africa may therefore face difficulty in sourcing for parts, components and peripherals, unless it begins to accumulate the capability for component manufacture. Hence, the roles of resource for national development can further be summarized thus:

- **Investment in people as the productive creative force of the economy:** National development implies a highly skilled, productive, creative and competitive workforce. Information is a basic requirement for the crystallization of such group. Information embodies and promotes the values of a culture of learning, information use and information literacy.
- **Acts as engine for sectoral growth:** Information can be collected, organized and used for research and development in science, technology, medicine, engineering, life science, art and agriculture. Information makes available social, economic and business intelligence to government, commercial firms, trades unions and other participants in the economy. Every great breakthrough in all sectors of the economy acknowledges organized information centres such as libraries attached to them as power house for each great feat.
- **Acts as an agent of social change:** Reading materials which have the force of inspiration and capable of positive mental reconstructions of the reader are made available by the information centres. These materials contain great ideas about life and conduct. They become standard reference for society. The presence of these information resources in the libraries is calculated to provoke thought and action. Reading them is aimed at absorption of new and modern attributes of civilization. Nnamdi Azikiwe confesses in his book, *'My Odyssey'* that his imagination was fired up by merely reading biographies of great Aggrey and Garfield in a library (Azikiwe, 2001). The perspective and a culture of a people can be altered by activities of information centers.
- **Crime Prevention and security strategy:** Information helps to combat crime by improving the quality of life of individuals. Information centres offer stimulating activities, media and reading materials that help keep growing people off streets. Opportunities are provided for community members to improve their skills and employability, thus expanding the alternatives to criminal activity. Moreover, legal information resources are essential facilities for the efficient and fair administration of justice.
- **National unity and stability:** Information centers (libraries) acquire and circulate information resources that seek to promote national unity. People read culture and sociology of other ethnic groups. This enables more citizens to understand themselves better and to interact more effectively with one another. Ethnic distrust will diminish and a more virile nation will endure.

6. INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA

The information environment of any nation has a great impact on issues bordered on information policies of such country. One way to capture the information environment is to consider how information activities take place amongst individuals and institutions that are involved in the day-to-day processes of information creation, dissemination and use in the society. Information broadly represented can therefore be said to be any message to be conveyed from one to another source or destination. Information created is embodied in different forms, which are structured and embodied the mechanism of the policy implementation and the action which is the effects of the policy on national programmes and events (Abu, 2007).

Moreover, the need for information policy in Nigeria in a globalized economy can be better understood when viewed against the backdrop of concern raised by anti-globalization movements. There has been a public outcry against the policies, treaties and agreements that underlie globalization. People have questioned the rationale of international bodies and organizations like the World Bank, IMF and World Trade Organization (WTO) which champion globalization, on the benefits of austerity, trade liberalization, and privatization measures underlying globalization. People have also questioned the impact of globalization on the commercialization of information (Iwe, 2005). IFLA has raised alarm on the negative effects globalization on the information industry (IFLA, 2001). The globalized information system brought about the use of internet have had a positive impact on world economic growth, but globalization has the potential to promote fierce competition and dumping, two issues which the information industry and the Nigerian economy may not

withstand (Quiang et al, 2004). It can be noted here that globalization which is a popular phenomenon among comity of nations cannot thrive alone without a national information policy; it is an invitation to further impoverish the already underdeveloped economy of such nation. Therefore, for any nation to gain economic independence there is need for the establishment and close adherent to functional information policy.

Unfortunately, Nigeria's information environment is a risky area, undiscovered, unstable, uncoordinated and easily abused by government officials who should have been the vanguard of information policy and its resources. Although Nigeria's information environment is open to all sorts of information and information generating products; however, not only are some of them irrelevant to the information needs of Nigerians, many are character-destroying facilities (Uhegbu, 2004). For instance, in a meeting in 2005, Association of Nigeria Authors (ANA) excoriated the pitiable state of information industry in Nigeria that it is no longer profitable to write and publish books in Nigeria because of low reward system, cheaper foreign publishers, poorly developed Nigeria publishing infrastructure and technology, high cost of publishing and piracy. While the Nigerian library and information sector is willing to join the globalization of information, the country should also reevaluate its poorly – developed information infrastructure, poorly –equipped information services personnel, underfunding of library and information institutions, inconsistent and even lack of government policies relating to the library and information sector, erratic power supply and almost non-existent private sector participation in the industry. For example, library automation, which facilitates globalization of information and has been adopted by most libraries in the developed parts of the world, has yet to take firm root in many libraries in Nigeria. In some libraries where automation is practiced, there is much to be desired. The library and information sector in Nigeria remains at the receiving end of information and information products.

Therefore, it is a widely accepted premise that globalization promotes a massive flow of goods and services across borders. It is necessary to develop a national policy that will encourage globalization and at the same time regulate its practice. A functional national information policy would ensure that information is provided to the right person, at the right time, and in the right format. It would ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Nigerians in all spheres of activities by properly-equipped libraries and information centers. It would also encourage the provision of minimum standards of operation in acquisition, accommodation, personnel, equipment, and quality of services. It would also ensure that the right technology, information-generating resources, publishing material, and facilities are allowed into the country.

7. NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY FOR A GLOBALIZED ECONOMY

With the emergence of globalization in a country's economy, there has been gradual transformation of the information sector to have easy access to foreign agencies which makes it possible for information resources and facilities find their way into the country, sometimes unsolicited. This has continued to undermine the development of the sector because resources from overseas are cheaper. A national information policy enhances proper packaging of information by determining the nature and format of information resources to meet local needs. Book and non-book educational material that violates local content specifications will no longer be allowed into the country. Internet service providers would no longer expose young Nigerians to inappropriate content. One way of ensuring maximum use of information is by packaging it in a form that the target audience will appreciate. This involves understanding the literacy level of the country, its ethics, norms, and values, gender and age composition, and numbers and kinds of physically-challenged persons (Nwokocho, 1998).

Besides, national information policy will complement globalization with guidelines that allows the benefits of globalization without jeopardizing internal security and survival of the economy. In this regard, publishers and other dealers in the information industry will be able to know and understand how to package their products to meet local conditions and sensibilities. With a national policy, pirated and adulterated materials, the dumping of useless and toxic publishing materials such as ink, paper, and equipment and facilities will be checked.

Contrarily, interlibrary cooperation and resource-sharing among libraries and information centres in the country may be greatly jeopardized if there is no policy to regulate it in the face of easy flow of resource across borders. Since globalization leads to interconnectedness of countries, local cooperation among libraries may suffer in preference for foreign counterparts. Even libraries overseas may see globalization as a way to offload their unwanted documents to unsuspecting libraries in Nigeria. It may lead to the abandonment of local cooperation among libraries in Nigeria. Therefore, National information policy will help in specifying how libraries in Nigeria will involve in cooperative resource-sharing either among themselves or with those overseas. Resource sharing is a delicate enterprise and therefore requires carefulness and caution. For instance, what kind of audio-visual accessories, equipment and personnel that should be shared between local libraries and those overseas will be streamlined. A national information policy (NIP) will also help to streamline both the nature and format of information resources that will be made available to Nigerians. An NIP will equally help to strengthen information infrastructure by specifying how resources will be organized and managed.

8. CONCLUSION

Nigeria and other developing countries must begin to use Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) to address the multidimensional problems of the rural communities. Diso(2005) asserts that the way to democratize access to ICTs is to give priority to education generally and literacy as well as mass education to growing adult population, especially in rural areas. Nigeria cannot do without globalization of its information resources. Though, the Nigerian government has spent millions of her resources on ICTs, mostly in urban areas. The national Information Technology Development Agency (NIDA) should design and implement programmes for rural communities.

Above all, it should be noted that globalization and national information policy complement each other. While globalization encourages commerce and industry without borders, so that goods and services move freely, national information policy facilitates order and minimizes the side effects of globalization. A committee on national information policy should comprise librarians, eminent Nigerians in both the public and private sector, and other practitioners in the information industry. The committee's responsibility will be to provide a framework that will encourage globalization of information and ensure that the end users of information are not being exposed to unwholesome resources and Facilities.

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