

INNOVATION IN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY: A CURSORY LOOK AT NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The indivisibility of the Nigeria nations is a major issue confronting successive administration of the nation. Her unity has in recent time come under serious threat by different socio-political religious acrimony from the six geo-political zone most of this opposition are religious and political incline, giving rise to lopsided structure, thus, integration becomes an herculean task that will require the spirit of true patriotism to achieve. Innovations in office technologies are some of technological advancement used in connecting and bridging gap among people and groups of varied culture, religion, ethnic and political affiliation in today's information age. The dichotomy created by partisan politics, tribalism, and the likes can be bridge though the application of innovative technology. The discourse examines innovation in office technology in relation to national integration in Nigeria. The paper highlights some basic office technology tools that can enhance integration. It was recommended that internet and other social media network should be provided by government that can link various groups and sectors of the Nigeria society for effective interaction and sharing of information; organization should endeavor to provide internet and intranet network to facilitate free flow of information among workers in different locations and there should be constant sensitization program by government on the imperatives of integration through various technological devices.

Keywords: National integration, innovation and office technology,

The Nigeria nation is a heterogeneous community confronted with several issues that seem to threaten its national unity right from pre-colonial era down to present day twenty-first century. Since independence in 1960, it has undergone many storms that almost rocked the boat called Nigeria; the outbreak of the civil war in 1970 was a big storms that threat end its indivisibility; others include ethnic clashes in various parts of the country, silent religious acrimony among major religion in the country, belief, politics, greedy and wicked leadership, corruption - a canker worm in all sectors of the economy even a small child in Nigeria wants to be bribed before such can be sent on an errand; and recent trends include but not limited in the list are resource control, revenue derivation sharing formula, militancy in the Niger delta region; agitation among members of varied ethnic groups; youth restiveness, insurgence in the north, true federalism and the much agitated sovereign national conference which was meant to put in place a restructured and balanced constitution that is a true representation of all ethnic nationality; these action have widened the scope of disintegration and are stumbling blocks on the wheels of its peaceful national coexistence among diversity of people and groups in the country. In a bid to resolve these issues, several policies - merging of regions which gives way for federalism by the colonialist, state creation, land use act(degree), establishment of unity schools, national youth service corps, federal character principle, revenue sharing formula, unifying national policy on tertiary education just to mention but a few were blueprints by successive

governments to integrate all parts of the nation; but these of course have not yielded the desired results as seen from current happenings in the country.

These happenings have not only hindered the development and growth of the economy but sent negative impression to the international community such that its citizens are confronted with varied degree of challenges within international community; therefore, if the nation must redeem its image and be fully accepted in the international community; then, proper integration of all people groups, value systems, religious affiliation and divers sectors of the economy is a precondition for peaceful coexistence and advancement. Integration stands for linkage, grouping and togetherness. It is an integral process of unity that links or connects several fragmented parties to form a whole. Morgan (2002), opined that integration is in three phase; - project, process and product integration. Project integration relate to a desire for unity and efforts directed toward achieving it; the process integration deals with practical actions taken to transform the distinct nationality groups into a single nation while product integration deals with the results of the whole processes of integration. In the light of this submission, integration in Nigeria context falls within the first bracket, there is a desire to bring all asunder as one in the country but this desire is only expressed by few within the ruling class.

National relate to a nation, thus in general term national integration is defined as the feeling of togetherness felt by certain people in any given landmass which give rise to nationality or that entitled their membership of such locality. According to Alapiki, (2000), "national integration is a process that attempt to erode the presence of micro-nationalities in place of a spirit of nationhood". To Duverger in Ojo (2009), national integration is the process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based upon an order its members regards as equitably harmonious". Harmony and understanding among diversity of ethnic nationalities can only be attained when those at the helm of affairs are people and progress oriented. the unifying instrument for achieving such harmonious state include equity, justices, fair play, and dialogue implore in the allocation of resources, revenue, and appointments designed to improve and sustain existing consensus while reorienting the populace toward new initiatives for the common good of all.

The need for new initiatives for fostering national integration could be derive from trend in innovative office technology which posed boundless opportunities for socialization, a catalyst for the rebirth of a new Nigeria governed by rules of law; populace interest are given first consideration, rights of citizens are respected, respect for law and order; responsive social, economic system; stable market; transparency, accountability and good governance. On a daily bases; people of varied cultural and ethnic idiosyncrasy relate and connect via innovation in office technology. Innovation is the creation and introduction of new and valuable ideas in the ever changing society of today. To Gontur & Davireng (2015), innovation is defined as the "implementation of new and improved knowledge, ideas, methods, processes, tools, equipment and machinery which leads to new and better products, services and processes".

Innovation centers on change and change is constantly taking place by the day; as seen from changes in cultural religious rudiments for example; marriages across different ethnic background are being contracted via technology network; (internet), the practice of English way of marriage (white wedding) by Muslims and intermarriage between the Igbo tribal people and other tribes in Nigeria is a testimony of the responsiveness to innovation in this age of technology. Office technology relate to the application, preparation management, and transmitting of ideas, information. It is the use of computer systems, software, hardware and networks for processing and distribution of data and communicating information in the organization (reference.com). The integration of technology in the

way of life of people as means of national integration depend on the perception of such people; while some will see the usefulness of learning and adopting the language of other tribes others may not welcome it or pay lip service; and according to Jaja & Agumagu, (2016), technological innovation influences peoples beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. It is imperative to note here that learning of one major Nigeria languages irrespective of location and mother tongue of the child as enshrined in the school system is avenue for cross fertilization of culture, style and knowledge via innovation in technology. Unfortunately, this is not the practice; as schools in the different geo-political zone tend to imbibe what suits them. Nigeria can be united in reality through the spirit of patriotism based on sincerity.

Innovative Office Technology Relative to National Integration

Office technology is the application of technological gadgets to improve work efficiency and relationship among workers. The office is a place where various activities are carried out by workers, who interact and relate regularly on a daily bases. Their activities are enhanced through improved technological tools which have put in place not just improved work performance but importantly interconnectivity between people of differ cultural and educational background. The interconnection of all boundaries of people is the focus of this work. Office technologies required for national integration are:

- Internet
- Intranet
- Web page
- Mobile garget
- Teleconferencing

The Internet: The internet is a network of computer networks, inter-linked at various points around the world, which can communicate with each other (Lehman, &Dufrene, 2005). It is a global connection of computer network that connect millions of people all over the world which permit the exchange of information through its interconnected networks. People in different offices across regions through the information broker model of the internet can access and share information ranging from organizational tenet to issues in politics, economic, social, values, culture, entertainment, music industry, fashion etc. The interrelated on a daily bases create a sort of bond among people that cannot be easily broken.

The Intranet: According to Goertze (2004) intranet is a hook up of all computers in a company to allow for the speedy delivery of messages and other information on a computer. It is one of the latest innovations in office technology where several computers are attached to a local area network known as internal website which allows easy access, free flow and sharing of information and data from any other computer anywhere at any time within the organization. The use of this tool make possible electronic mail publishing of organization principles, projection and expectation; social responsibility of the organization to host community, polices, ethnic nationality of employees – age, sex, religion, state of origin, local government of origin, marital status, etc. the gathering, processing and sharing of such information enhances the spirit of friendship which is key factor in bringing people together irrespective of background. In other word, it makes room for effective relationship of people and their work environment which tend to remove barriers to national integration.

Web page: The web page technology is an electronic platform where corporate organizations, industries, business organizations of all size advertise and sell products (goods and services) through the World Wide Web to prospective buyers. The beauty of this technology is that there is an effective synergy between traders and buyers, as no one asks 'what tribe are you from'. Or what region are you from. The focus is on sensitizing the public of the presence of such products, and so culture or belief of the party is not a barrier in this on-line marketing, - technology is not a respecter of artificial barriers posed by language, religion etc. this initiative in business activities has initiated a new dimension to integrating people of all works of life, such that creating and posting of web pages of varieties of products/service are on the increase, which create medium for interaction, and as more people interact, the more the closer they become and the lesser they suspect each other; thus sentiment of hatred, oppression, favoritism, nepotism, godfather, etc. which hindered true integration are reduced.

Mobile technology: The use of mobile device has brought new wave to communication among people. Mobile technology such as iPad, iPhone, tablets, android, luminal, allows connection and exchange of ideas, information and data via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc. this tools enable individuals to make and receive calls at any point in time and place; as well as send and receive short message services, send and receive e-mail, edit documents, and transfer document. This process of cross fertilization of ideas enhances effective collaboration among people group of varied language, custom and class which is good for proper integration

Teleconferencing: One of the office technologies that is making wave in business circle is teleconferencing, a method of conducting meeting via telephone or satellites in which several people at different location/site relate and interact without leaving their destination. The application of this device as agent of national integration is that organizations/companies have several branches scattered in the different geo-political zone of the country; each of these are manned by people of diverse backgrounds and affiliation who, as a matter of organizational principle must relate together for service accomplishment. This process of task accomplishment with teleconferencing especially with videoconferencing stimulate interest, create a discovering desire to know the terrain, way of life, custom, natural resources and other cultural peculiarities in such environment; exchange of these goes a long way in bringing people together.

Conclusion

Innovative office technology is one of the greatest devices that can be used in achieving integration in present day Nigeria politics due to the simplicity, availability and accessibility to all. It is true that Nigeria peaceful coexistence is being threatened by several factors, yet the benefit of establishing a concretized national integration through office technology is a sure way of eliminating religious intolerance, nepotism, ethnic dichotomy and political violence. In this regard, it requires government commitment to create the enabling environment for technology integration in governance that will link citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following are recommended

1. Provision of internet and other social media network by government that will link various groups and sector of the Nigeria society for effective interaction and sharing of information.
2. Organizations/companies should endeavor to provide internet and intranet network to facilitate free flow of information among workers in different locations
3. Government should constantly carry out sensitization program on the imperatives of integration through various technological devices.

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