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LIBRARIES AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has changed in diverse sectors such as education, politics, agriculture, health, technology and so forth in view of development and modernisation across these sectors. Consequently, the diverse structure of Nigeria's federalism is discussed in terms of the various development plans put forward by successive governments. This paper particularly noted the various institutional and special libraries as contributing to these strides with a responsibility of developing a literate community of its patrons. Some of the roles that libraries play in the development of Nigeria have been buttressed through various writers relayed in this paper. The work concludes that there is no development or modernisation in practical terms without impacting on people directly, which has the major reason libraries channel their services toward people of all careers and background.

Introduction

The world is changing everyday providing means for easy life and getting day-to-day activities accomplished with ease, speed, accuracy and aesthetics. Positive change ought to be in developing rate and not retrogressive. Thus a nation that exists with stable community of people is expected to change/develop to a modernised state. Such a nation expected to develop gradually from her traditional or created level to a modern state.

Development does not come without efforts or factors responsible for the change. Chulu (2006) added that "in reality, development should be of things which the livelihood of the people can be better transformed. There are agencies shouldered with the direct and indirect responsibilities of seeing to the development of a nation such as Nigeria. Libraries are one of the agencies that play this vital role. Abu; Isah; Oyedum; and Bitagi, (2017) is of the opinion that libraries especially academic libraries are not only repository of knowledge but have an active role to play as a catalyst for national development. Whereas libraries render their services to people who are found in a nation as Nigeria being the most populous in Africa, it is therefore a necessity to buttress some of the roles libraries play towards national development.

Library is no longer a strange or new word to the public in general. It is a professional agency shouldered with the selfless responsibility of problem-solving and discovering new

knowledge in various career/profession, through the provision of information, which are carefully selected, acquired, processed, preserved and disseminated in diverse format to respective users. This can be actualised irrespective of their geographical location. Hence the concept of library has changed from what majority know it to be to a more professional meaning in terms of combining both the early traditional function of being custodians of books and other print materials, to technology-based resources. George (2010) defines library as ‘ a collection of resources in a variety of format that is organised by information professionals or other experts who provide physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole.’ Library is a platform where people meet to research and share ideas on critical issues affecting the society, thereby becoming a knowledge space that is both larger and more general than those shared by any single discipline or affinity group (Omeluzor,2013).

Modernisation and National Development Plan in Nigeria

Modernisation according to Kumar (2009) is the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. It refers to model of a progressive transition from a pre-modern or traditional to a modern society. According to online Cambridge Business English Dictionary, modernisation is the process of starting to use the most recent methods, ideas, equipment and so forth, so that some things become or seem more modern. It also infers the deeper change in man’ s way of thinking and feeling, a change in his whole attitude to life’ s problems, the society and the universe. It is a process which brings desired types of changes in the social structure, value orientation, motivations and norms in a given society. Modernisation brings about development with technology and contemporary means of communication as its thrust as buttressed by Dictionary of Sociology (Hogans, 2016). According to Adetiba (2013), development is not only a product of the individual’ s perspective but also of the particular period in time when it is being expressed.

Development means many things to many people depending on their perceptions and disciplines. Adetiba (2013) notes that the meaning a particular person (e.g. scholar) attaches to the term depends on the person’ s idiosyncratic view of socio-political and economic world. In Lawal and Oluwatoying (2011), development is an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the condition of human existence. Therefore, development could be attributed to mean the transformation of people's lives in various areas, from a low level to a more standard level. However, as pointed out by Adetiba and Rahim (2012), for real development to take place in a multi-ethnic political system as Nigeria, there is need to create an atmosphere of peace and stability which will boost confidence and faith in every individual and group in the government, resulting in the adoption and implementation of inclusive socio-political system, as has been done in some Latin American States. From the fore going, development therefore is associated with changes and transformation that result from improvement.

National development is a gradual advancement of a country in terms of technology, social amenities and research activities that could enhance the life of an average citizen. It is normally regarded as a mechanism to achieve a very good future for a country. It could also be referred to as a desire for gradual change from a certain situation to a better and effective way to tackle the country's challenges. National development could mainly be achieved by a well responsible and intellectual citizen, because all sectors of governance like, social-economic, human capacity, agriculture and health are supposed to impact positively on the lives of individuals facing a lot of challenges (Abu 2018). This involves enhancing the well-being and socio-economic capacities of the people. Nwogwugwu, Ezenekwe and Kalu (2010) defines it as “ a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.” It is viewed as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting or growing income (Salmon Valley Business Innovation Centre, 2011).

Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation of people with different cultures and background. It is presently the most populous African nation. It has 36 states, 748 local government areas and over 374 ethnic groups. Nigeria has had a relatively long experience in development plans. Earlier attempts in this regard were the Structural Adjustment Programme. Other strategic initiatives were the 7-Point Agenda and the rested vision 2010 by Nigeria's former military ruler Late Gen. Sanni Abacha. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy as well as Vision 20-20-20 was introduced by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo administration, later framed and planned by his predecessor former president Umar Yar'Adua. This was aimed to be executed by former president Goodluck Jonathan, as an aspiration for Nigeria to become one of the top 20 economies in the world by 2020. The development plan involved stakeholders across all levels of government and society (Commonwealth Governance, Nigeria online Newsletter 2019).

The vision 20-20-20 like previous ones was geared to achieve high standard of living for its citizens with two broad objectives stipulated as follows, to:

Make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth

Translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens

The above objectives as proposed indicates that in the process of achieving economic growth and social development, human factor alongside natural resources are of preference.

Libraries as knowledge entities are also concerned with human development; particularly it takes into consideration its community in gaining knowledge through available resources offered.

Development from the foregoing therefore can be associated with changes and transformation that results from improvement. <https://www.encyclopedia.com> Encyclopedia.com (2020).

Federalism and Development in Nigeria

Federalism has been operational in Nigeria since the former British colony was reorganised into a federation of three regions in 1946. Federalism can be seen as a system of government in which governmental powers that exist in a country are shared between central government and other component units i.e. state and local government (Adekoya, 2016). The author further outlined the major reasons for the introduction of Federalism in Nigeria as follows: cultural diversity, fear of domination by minority, geographical factor, economic factor, effective administration, and bringing government nearer to the people. It is a political arrangement which admits a relationship of multiplicity of interest that can be managed in a compatible, just and equitable manner (Madubuiké, 2007).

Political education programme is thereby necessary for Nigerians, particularly those below voting age, and public libraries being established in every state of the country, serve the generality of the residents of the community or town where they are located in this regard. This would ensure cognitive skills as a by-product and raise certain level of political consciousness and appropriate perceptions which regards to political system's institution and structure. This view is upheld by Dinneya (2006). Part of the role of public libraries is to provide information that can enhance federalism in Nigeria through books, newspapers, magazines, journals, audio-visual, and so forth. Political consciousness is closely related to the concept of political participation and idea of social contract between people and the government. Political participation connotes actions of citizens by which they seek to influence or support governance and government. People with more education, higher incomes, and white-collar jobs are more likely than others to participate in politics (Alex-Nmecha, Horsfall and Igbinovia, 2017). These are sensitive issues generally, which can be beefed up by libraries through awareness creation to the general public.

Library's Role in Nigerian Educational Development

It is of great importance to note that information cannot be separated from education and that the library is an information provider. This is to say that provision of accurate information by libraries, is the key to knowledge, which is a pre-requisite for holistic development in the contemporary age. The role of education in nation-building (Nigeria) is collaborated with the functions of libraries especially public libraries, which include primarily the collection, organisation and provision of information relevant to build the society' s knowledge base. For this reason, the value of any institution is by all standards, immeasurable for any nation in search of national development and modernisation. Schoenbrum (2017) added that libraries have the mandate to drive education for national development by implementing their core function, which is to provide a conducive place for citizens to access a broad range of information.

The quality of any manpower produced by any institution depends to a great extent on the strength of the information available in its library. Despite inadequate funding of some libraries

e.g. university libraries, have remained important catalysts that support the institutional objectives especially in training of manpower that are expected to contribute positively to national development (Abu, Isah, Oyedum, and Bitagi, 2018). Therefore the position of libraries in national development and modernisation cannot be over-emphasised. Furthermore, some libraries today in developed countries and some of the developing countries like Nigeria have gone beyond the services of physical building for reading and study even in schools and higher institutions. The libraries have modernised their services by providing electronic resources to support their user's information needs. In such instance, databases are accessed from personal devices and homes without going to the library building. This service could be referred to as one of the library's contribution to the development of students in the use and compliance to technology and as such plays a vital role in national development and modernisation of Nigeria. Also, human capacity is an important factor in the development of any country. For a country to be able to produce individuals who will contribute positively to its development, there has to be adequate training of such individuals. Libraries have in various ways supported this pedagogical role through library user-education and instruction services in the course of administering services. Librarianship as a discipline itself and 'Use of Library' as a case in point, is a credit earning programme for fresh students in tertiary institutions irrespective of their area of study.

The quality of academic libraries in Nigeria is also used as one of the major yardsticks in rating Nigerian tertiary institutions. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has the mandate of denying accreditation of academic programme(s) in any university that is found deficient in library resources (book and non-book), relevance of stock and up-to-datedness to support quality education. The role of libraries towards sustaining quality academic excellence in Nigeria makes it a point of call for every accrediting body to the citadel of learning.

Library Role in Nigerian Political Development

Information provision is required from libraries to meet the challenges of Nigeria's political system and history, to influence political realities operational in the country. The unique role of libraries as social institutions, is connected with the responsibility to ensure that citizens have access to information that will enable them function reasonably and make useful contributions in politics. A public library, regarded as the *people's university* and the custodians of knowledge, makes political information available publicly. People need to be able to find and use information in order to understand how the political system works, and participate in formal and informal political activities. Libraries make accessible reading materials (books and newspapers) that would both inform the public and promote civic virtues. There is a large literature in political science explaining trends and variation in political participation (Kevane and Sundstrom, 2016). Libraries provide such information in order to contribute to democratic ideals, as purveyors of information and knowledge.

Dinneya (2006) opined that without access to information, governance processes would lack transparency and government officials will be at pain to earn the confidence of an uninformed

citizenry. Whereas libraries play a key role in making information available to enhance political consciousness and participation in Nigeria, access to information enables the citizenry to make informed judgments regarding government performance.

The Role of Agricultural Libraries in Nigeria' s Development

Agriculture has been given much attention since the colonial era in Nigeria as the produce pertains to man' s basic needs including food. There is a growing consensus that food might be one of the most complex economic, political and moral issues of our time. Agriculture has made massive contribution to the economic well-being of most Nigerians. It has been given prominence among the sectors of the economy. The cognisance given to agriculture makes successive governments to establish agricultural research institutions to cater for the need of the information seekers in order to improve upon existing agricultural outputs. Agricultural education, research and extension are three of the vital services which an agricultural library provides for agricultural development.

There are special libraries that perform special tasks and focus their services on specific area of specialisation such as agriculture. These are agricultural libraries found in organisations or institutes with focus on agriculture such as International Institute of Tropical Agricultural Library in Ibadan, Nigeria (IITA library). In Aguolu (2000) the institutions and their libraries generate and disseminate agricultural information or knowledge to agricultural extension workers, researchers, students, farmers as well as to policy makers in government. Agricultural libraries have a lot of vital role to play in the transformation of agricultural education to enhance sustainable development in Nigeria. Agricultural libraries provides information services to farmers, students, livestock producers, agricultural business organisations, research workers subject-specialist teachers, this is in anticipation to meet the challenge of man, food and hunger and to make for sustainable development.

Agricultural institutions in Nigeria also had witness changes and they also need to improve on their agricultural education as this can also be achieved through improved roles of agricultural libraries. Ojo and Adeniyi (2015) stated that the following libraries were visited to get a glimpse of their role of these libraries in agricultural education and sustainable development in Nigeria. Most of these were situated in Ibadan as follows:

- International Institute of Tropical Agricultural Library Ibadan.
- Forestry Research institute of Nigeria library Ibadan.
- University of Ibadan Agricultural Library, Ibadan.
- National Horticultural research institute library Ibadan

In addition to the above, below are few other research Institutes that contributes to the development of agriculture Practically and through access to their agricultural information resources:

- University of Uyo Agriculture Resource Center, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
- National Animal Production Research Institute. (Research on food animal species and forages).
- Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research, Benin City, Edo State. (Research into genetic improvement, production and processing of rubber and other leather producing plants).
- National Root Crop Research Institute, Umudike, Umuahia, Ania State. (Generic improvement and production of rice, soybean, benniseed, sugarcane and improvement of productivity of entire farming system of central zone).
- Institute for Agricultural Research (AIR), Ahmad Bella University, Samaru Zaria.

For the agriculture sector to continue to grow, research-based knowledge of the existing agricultural practices, the potential of the sector, the approach for transforming the sector, and the impact of the transformation on the economic sector, and population is needed (Rhoe, Oboh and Shelton 2010). Agricultural librarians therefore play a vital role by providing relevant information services to farmers, livestock producers, agricultural business organisation, research workers, subject specialist, teachers, students and others who are actively engaged in meeting the continuing challenge of man in terms of food and hunger (Rhoe, Oboh and Shelton, 2010). Suffice to say, the quality and effectiveness of policy-making depend to a large extent on the quality of knowledge on which decisions are based (Hovland, 2003). Research-based evidence is also important to guide decisions that affect Nigeria's agriculture sector and its people.

Library' s Role in Development Nigeria' s Health Sector

Libraries are multi-disciplinary in nature have their uniqueness in diversity of specialised focus including medical/ health issues and promotion. Thus, one of the special libraries is a medical or health library. A health or medical library is designed to assist physicians, health professionals, students, patients, consumers, medical researchers, and information specialists in finding health and scientific information to improve, update, assess, or evaluate health care. The existence of special libraries has made library services to extend immensely and narrowed down to specific information users and career professionals.

Despite health being a topic that affects literally every community member, most materials on this topic are inaccessible because they' re written at a reading level that' s above the national average. Fargo (2018) notes that, libraries are embracing this as an opportunity to offer unique value to their communities. Others are extending their reach outside their walls, forging partnerships with medical/ health centers, in order to offer both traditional and non-traditional health programming. The study by Philip (2016) and Philip (2019) are related ones. According to Aiyebilehin, Onyam and Akpom (2017), libraries have played the role of combating HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases. They make use of audiovisual materials and move to communities especially the rural areas and sensitise them on these diseases. These diseases can be avoided through the provision of relevant information, especially in their native language. Hermann cited in Ugwuoke (2011) asserts that illness and deaths from infectious diseases can generally be avoided at an affordable price which is through relevant information.

Medical libraries: Medical libraries part of academic libraries attached to Colleges of Medicine, have enhanced medical services by practitioners. In addition, there are library associations and

institutions that promote health information. One of such is RUSA' s Health and Medical Reference Guidelines: This is spearheaded by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). It guides libraries of all types serving all communities in answering health and medical reference questions. Some Nigerian libraries and librarians connect with RUSA through library co-operation to get information on health related issues relevant to their patrons (The author of this paper has been a beneficiary).

Medical Library Association meant for librarians and information workers in health science libraries, is one of the sections under the Nigerian Library Association (NLA). The members of the association who are medical information professionals come together during conferences and workshops for re-training and acquiring of current skills and knowledge to aid better health services in the national health sector. In the year 2018, the body's national conference/annual conference was tagged 'Unhindered Health Information Access - Key to a Healthy Nation. They also generate articles in books, journals and bulletins e.g the Medical Library Association (MBA). These publications are made available in libraries for public awareness of current issues in medical sector.

Nigerian Libraries and Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has attracted many definitions. Kolawale in Odionye (2016) defines ICT as the technologies that help us record, store, process, retrieve, transfer, and disseminate recorded information. This implies interaction between the user and the data. Information and Communication Technology is therefore an umbrella term that includes any communication device for teaching and learning. Such device could be computer system, communication device, telecommunication, telephone, satellites, telex, facsimile, internet, e-mail, fax, video text and document delivery, electronic copiers, radio, television among others. Olakule in Esew and Ikyembe (2013) added that these systems facilitate teaching and studying and has brought about transformation in different aspects of human endeavour. ICTs are technologies used to communicate, create, manage and distribute information. Krubu and Osawaru (2011) stated that applications of ICT are numerous but mainly it is used in converting the existing paper-print records in the entire process of storage, retrieval and dissemination. ICT therefore presents an opportunity to provide value-added information services and access to a wide variety of digital based information resources to their clients. Nigeria libraries have in one way or the other embraced technology in carrying out their activities and services to their users. They have been able to contribute to national development through the application of technologies in service rendering. Furthermore, libraries especially academic libraries are using modern ICTs to automate their core functions, implement efficient and effective library cooperation and resource sharing networks, implement management information systems, develop institutional repositories of digital local contents, and digital libraries: and initiate ICT based capacity building programmes for library users (Krubu and Osawaru, 2011).

Most library users in Nigeria through library orientation and training on the use of ICT have been able to interact and use them in solving their problems and developing themselves. Despite the fact that Nigerian libraries still have a long way to go in the full automation of their libraries, yet have been able to automate some areas which have helped both library personnel and users to become (ICT) literate citizens. It also helps in making the society an information society. Information literate society comprises people of similar characteristics that are able to recognise their need for information, identify, locate, access, synthesize, evaluate and apply the needed information.

Lastly, Users in a particular library can access other resources materials from other libraries within and outside the country through inter-library loan and resource sharing. relevant ICT facilities. The exposure to IT-based knowledge by Nigerians has brought about gradual development to Nigeria in respect to technology and other areas.

Library and Literacy Skills as Tools for Sustainable National Development

Today information has been agreed to be one of the major sources of living, and as important to man as food is. Every society, whether developed or underdeveloped always seeks to attain a higher level of development. The attainment of a higher level of development is not an accidental phenomenon. No country can attain meaningful national development without enough information literacy skills (Edwin, Uzoagba and Nwebiem 2017). The role of libraries in enhancing literacy in Nigeria can be traced to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) which include the right to Education that in turn begets a literate society. Public libraries as case in point, reach out to areas to help in facilitating the planning and implementation of learning programmes to clients which equip them with necessary skills to enable them succeed in a changing society. Librarians sometimes extend services beyond their immediate community to engage in literacy activities. The design and development of such programmes often begin with identification of trainee's needs, strengths and weaknesses. An instance was literacy training by Philip (2014) which incorporated reading skills with library and information use skills at school level, and at sub-urban areas. Usman (2005) stated that it is generally understood to include knowledge of information sources in one's subject; ability to construct effective research strategies; ability to use information sources appropriately, cite and create references.

Libraries understand the above importance and design their services to suit and help people on how to identify information needs either in economic, social, cultural, or political matters. In this regard, information repackaging can be done through various forms to suit the targeted group such as field study by Philip and Udoh (2011). Additionally, to help and teach how and where to seek for needed information, evaluate the information, use the information effectively, is the ultimate as proven by one of the laws of librarianship which stipulates that information is for use.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Having provided details in the body of this work on the roles Nigerian libraries play in national development, it could therefore be deduced that libraries are the real and major agents to national development and modernisation that requires adequate and faster attention in the nation. Nigerian Governments should continually see to the standardisation of libraries, particularly libraries serving the general public by providing necessary facilities and resources, and ensuring the libraries are being managed by qualified professionals. This will help in ensuring quality assurance from the start. Suffice to say, that a relevant library run by an efficient organisation is in fact the soul of an educational institution.

Food has been the mainstay of human survival; for a sustainable development through agricultural libraries, there must be access to indigenous knowledge on agricultural information. Okore, Ekere and Eke (2009) states that developing countries are endowed with a wealth of indigenous knowledge but access to such knowledge is hampered by lack of an environment that permits free flow of ideas amongst members of the community. The authors indicated that libraries promote access to indigenous knowledge by creating an environment which permits face-to-face forum and network formation to discuss and debate on issues that might be useful to members of the community. For example the use of talk shows which promote intergenerational dialogue between the young and the old on different subject areas ranging from agriculture, ecosystem, Medicare and conflict resolution.

Stakeholders such as policymakers, educators, students, development partners, members of the private sector, and extension personnel, need high quality, relevant, and timely information to make good strategic decisions (Popoola, 2008). Understanding how information and knowledge are produced, disseminated and how policymakers use it, should be an vital piece of policy and development strategy. Essentially, libraries can utilise sources of indigenous knowledge, including indigenous expert, opinion leaders and community elders, for inclusive interaction and gathering towards sustainable economic, health, agricultural, educational and technological development.

Developing a nation is connected to developing a people. By extension, the role which libraries play in Nigeria' s development cannot be overemphasised as libraries channel their services toward people of all careers. As earlier discussed, librarians and libraries consequently organise resources that can transform people into responsible and intellectual citizens in areas which as follows:

Education/Literacy: to see that the people are enlightened in various profession/career and possess reading, writing and communication skills relevant for capacity building.

ICT: to see that the people are aware and skilful enough to make use of technology in their day to day activities for easy, faster and adequate results.

Health: to ensure that people are highly knowledgeable about health issues that can keep them safe and healthy.

Agriculture: to make certain that peoples' feeding either through crops or meat is attainable easily, faster, with technology including knowledge of the usefulness of natural resources.

Politics: to see that people know and exercise their civic rights and duties as citizens.

Nigerian Governments should continually see to the standardisation of libraries, particularly libraries serving the general public by providing necessary facilities and resources to ensure quality services.

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