

Winter 2-18-2013

Exploiting the Values of Indigenous Knowledge in Attaining Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The place of the Library

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Makinde, Omwumi O. Mrs and Shorunke, Oludare A. Mr, "Exploiting the Values of Indigenous Knowledge in Attaining Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The place of the Library" (2013). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 908.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/908>

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Abstract

Since independence Nigeria has been making concerted efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development under the aegis of various development programs, but little success has been achieved, since development is based only on the utilization of the western systems of knowledge. This paper therefore explores ways of achieving sustainable development by harnessing the untapped benefit embedded in the indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge which we see as the knowledge systems held by traditional communities and is based on their experience and adaptation to a local culture and environment is relevant for development especially in agriculture, medicine, crafts, theatre, natural resources management arts and music. This paper discusses the prospects and challenges for Nigerian libraries in documentation and communication of indigenous knowledge and recommends that libraries should play a key role in indigenous knowledge organisation and preservation as well as promoting access and sharing to enhance sustainable national development.

Key Words: Indigenous knowledge, Knowledge, Library, Sustainable development

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Abstract

Since independence Nigeria has been making concerted efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development under the aegis of various development programs, but little success has been achieved, since development is based only on the utilization of the western systems of knowledge. This paper therefore explores ways of achieving sustainable development by harnessing the untapped benefit embedded in the indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge which we see as the knowledge systems held by traditional communities and is based on their experience and adaptation to a local culture and environment is relevant for development especially in agriculture, medicine, crafts, theatre, natural resources management arts and music. This paper discusses the prospects and challenges for Nigerian libraries in documentation and communication of indigenous knowledge and recommends that libraries should play a key role in indigenous knowledge organisation and preservation as well as promoting access and sharing to enhance sustainable national development.

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Introduction

Globally, libraries are established to provide information resources in the areas of teaching, learning, research, information literacy and recreation to support the activities of their parent institutions as may be applicable. They also support community services of their parent bodies. In performing their unique responsibilities, libraries acquire information resources in diverse media, organize, preserve, create original information, repackage information and disseminate them to users through a numerous user oriented services which can be summed up as circulation and reference services.

The extent to which the libraries can provide services in meeting the information needs of their numerous users depends on a number of factors that include funding; staffing; quantity, depth, and recency of the collection; general support and goodwill of the management of the parent body; and environmental factors(Nwalo, 2008:9). Literature suggests the new role of libraries is in the documentation, storage and dissemination of indigenous knowledge in their host communities, and this is seen as requisite for development (Okorafor, 2010:10 & Mouahi, 2012:549).

Development is almost certainly one of the most often used words though its meaning can be remarkably difficult to pin down. Sustainable development, though it undeniably includes economic components, is actually best described in terms of the enhancement of human choices and attention to the range of human needs (Paran and Williams, 2007:1-3), The formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 highlighted even broader criteria for development, including gender equality, eradication of poverty and hunger, primary education, reduction of child mortality and maternal health, control of disease, environmental sustainability and global partnerships for development (United Nations Development Group, 2003).

However, it is undeniable that a great deal of sustainable development activity is sited among the target rural populations themselves; when it is successful, these local populations have the on-going ability to make choices and to influence their own circumstances for the better. The focus on such activities as health provision, education provision and enhancement of individuals' ability to make use of their surroundings to meet their own ends, is based on this understanding of effective and sustainable development. Nevertheless, our focus will be on sustainable development which facilitate successful indigenous knowledge capture, storage, sharing and use with the ability to evaluate new ideas and alternatives. These parameters of successful development in turn speak strongly to the importance of library in documenting the knowledge generated at a local level for local decision making, this therefore reveals the library as an essential component of the development process.

Indigenous knowledge' (IK), IK is also known as 'traditional knowledge' (TK) 'traditional environmental knowledge' (TEK) and 'local knowledge' (LK). IK is seen as knowledge that an indigenous (local) community accumulates over generations of living in a particular environment (www.unep.org/IK). IK also connotes the knowledge systems held by traditional communities and is based on their experience and adaptation to a local culture and

environment. We however define IK as the knowledge systems held by traditional community that is based on their experience and adaptation to a local culture and environment is relevant for development especially in agriculture, arts, crafts, medicine, music, natural resources management and theatre.

Indigenous knowledge is used to sustain the community and its culture. Placing value on such knowledge could strengthen cultural identity and the enhanced use of such knowledge to achieve social and development goals, such as sustainable agriculture, affordable and appropriate public health, and conservation of biodiversity. Jabulani (2007:117) averred that Indigenous knowledge is an essential resource for any human development process.

Indigenous Knowledge and its Marginalization

Indigenous knowledge has defied common definition, and as a result connotes different things to different people. It is widely recognized as knowledge that is possessed by local people used for local level decision making in agriculture, culture transmission health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities, food preservation, According to Dei (2000:5), IK is about the common sense ideas and cultural knowledge of local people concerning day-to-day life. IK is critical to the way communities regard and live in their environment and presents communities with ways of managing their environment – be it natural, cultural or political.

However, Dei (2000:5) citing Castellano (1999) identified three broad aspects of IK:

- (1) traditional knowledge which is inter-generational knowledge that it passed from generation to generation;
- (2) empirical knowledge which is based on observations of the surrounding environment (nature, culture and society); and
- (3) revealed knowledge which is provided through dreams, visions and intuition.

Clearly therefore, IK is holistic and encompasses the physical and spiritual aspects of life. Tella (2007:186) states that IK is important for a number of reasons:

- (1) it provides problem solving strategies for communities;
- (2) it contributes significantly to global development knowledge;
- (3) it is relevant for the development process; and
- (4) it is an under-utilized resource in the development process.

The vast applicability of IK was captured in the work of Tella (2007:186), on this premise we aver that IK encompasses all human interaction that can be captured shared and used for developmental purposes.

However, Ocholla (2007:239) stated that IK continues to be marginalized in development plans, and that this has resulted in its limited use in the development process. One of the reasons that IK is marginalized is because of the tacit nature of IK. It resides in people's memories and is largely transmitted through word-of-mouth, this means that it is in many senses endangered as its custodians (who are mostly elderly) die and those that remain

do not have the whole story or look down upon IK as backward. IK is also viewed in some quarters as the knowledge of the poor and illiterate. An effect of colonialism was the adoption of a different way of knowing that devalued most of the indigenous knowledge present in communities. Dei (2000) posited that the colonized were encouraged to enter formal education and to abandon their traditional ways, and integrate instead the Western modern ways that relied on science to explain phenomena where they could, and invoked religion where they could not. IK is marginalized in the conventional processes of knowledge

However, Dei (2000:6) points out that the problem arises from separating traditional and modern knowledge as though they have no relation or impact on each other. Many writers tend to invoke the differences between IK and Western system of knowledge in order to explain what IK is. For example, they will state that IK is holistic, orally communicated, and experiential in nature and very much linked to spiritual and social values. Western system of knowledge is said to be compartmental, written, theoretical and value free. IK is affected by and affects other forms of knowledge, thereby emphasizing the collaborative dimension of knowledge, which would seem to point to the need to merge or synthesize the two systems of knowledge.

Areas of Application of Indigenous Knowledge in Africa

It is unfortunate that IK has largely been marginalized, neglected and suppressed due to ignorance and arrogance, politics, and the dominant ideology of a particular historical period (Ocholla & Onyancha, 2005:248 However, a cursory look at literature (Chakravarty, 2010; Mawere, 2010; Arunachalam, 2007; Kargbo 2006; Briggs, 2005; Pidatala & Khan, 2003) revealed the following areas of Application of indigenous knowledge

- Agriculture,
- Chastity in marriage
- Education,
- Environmental Conservation
- Food preparation,
- Health care,
- Natural disaster management,
- Natural-resource management,
- Poverty alleviation and
- Transmission of culture

Indigenous Knowledge and Health Care Practices

The importance of traditional medicines for humans as well as animals in Africa both now and in the past is enormous. Traditional medicine takes on a diverse and complex definition and though it involves some aspects of mind-body interventions and use of animal-based products, it is largely plant-based.

Conventional medicine focuses on experiment and disease causing pathogens. Traditional medicine however postulates that the human being is both a somatic and spiritual

entity, and that disease can be due to supernatural causes arising from the anger of ancestral or evil spirits, the result of witchcraft or the entry of an object into the body. It is therefore not only the symptoms of the disease that are taken into account, but also psychological and sociological factors. Thus the holistic nature and culture-based approach to traditional healthcare is an important aspect of the practice, and sets it apart from conventional western approaches.

Vilakazi (2006) posited that more and more often, Western-trained African doctors are looking toward traditional medicines for cures. Medical practitioners have been working successfully throughout Africa with traditional medical practitioners (TMPs) regarding HIV/AIDS treatment, thereby validating traditional medicines and practices. Professor Vilakazi (2006) listed African doctors doing important traditional medical work that is proving to be successful in dealing with serious diseases, including HIV/AIDS

Studies in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and South Africa, as is the case with most of Africa, revealed that traditional medicine is the only affordable and accessible health care. African traditional medicine thus plays an almost inestimable role in the health care delivery, and the pharmacopoeia of indigenous prescriptions traditionally used in Africa including the communities studied is colossal.

Moreover, African traditional medicine practice includes diverse health practices, remedies, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral products, spiritual therapies and charms. Traditional healers utilize a variety of approaches to diagnose, treat or prevent illness.

Furthermore Chakravarty (2010:5) submitted that Indians have an age old tradition of using herbs and spices with medicinal value, like amla (*Phyllanthus emblica*), black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), etc. Amla (Indian Gooseberry) is the most potent natural source of vitamin C, which is an excellent anti-oxidant and contains as much vitamin C as two oranges. He further opined that ginger, perhaps is the most sought after spice in most of the Indian foods, provides relief from sweating, vomiting, dizziness, nausea, arthritic pain, ulcerative colitis, headaches, fevers from flu and colds, sore throats, and chemotherapy. This traditional knowledge about the uses of herbs, better known among Indians as 'dadi maa ke nuskhe' (Grandma's treatment), has been handed down from one generation to another and forms an inseparable part of Indian culture.

Traditional knowledge is being exploited continuously by a number of pharmaceutical organizations. In South India, the medicinal knowledge of the Kani tribes led to the development of a sports drug named Jeevani, an anti-stress and anti-fatigue agent, based on the herbal medicinal plant *arogyapaacha*. (World Intellectual Property Organisation)

Arunachallam (2007) had also examined the activities of multinational pharmaceutical companies, which send out scouts to the Amazon and the jungles of Africa in

search of plants that have been used in traditional pharmacopoeia and to learn about their use from indigenous medical practitioners.

Makinde (2007:188) citing Fakinlede (2001) posited that among the Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria, the practice of traditional or alternative medical practitioners is established, Makinde further highlighted the presence of specialists in gynecology and absterics (isegun alaboyun ati isegun ajemabo); sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (aarun Ibalopo), rheumatism (san-an-gun-san-an-gun); typhoid fever (iba jefunjefun); tuberculosis (jedoledo) cholera (onigba-meji); hookworm aran jagbaya); whooping cough (iko lile omode); small pox (olode) among the Yoruba's.

Increasingly, Multinational Corporation, universities, research institutions and private firms are harnessing local knowledge systems and resources. A typical example is the activities in traditional medicine at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, which although retaining local content and methodology operate alongside their modern knowledge system counterpart in the same institution through the validation of herbs used by trado-medical practitioners(Nwagwu, 2009). There is also an observation of increasing transformation of many traditional activities, such as processing and packaging of some health care and food products, into small-scale firms, with their products retaining local content while gaining significant international standards.

Indigenous knowledge and Education

Every community has its own knowledge system, which enables it to survive, relate and make sense of its context and environment. As such, indigenous knowledge is not only the preserve of the African continent and its people. However, the fact is that Africa has a lot to offer in terms of its IK and studies have shown that IK is used and applied by a majority of communities in Africa in the areas of health, agriculture, arts, education and so on. However, much of IK is disappearing and is also not in any way considered as an integral part of the knowledge economy as we know it. Generally, Africa is said to only contribute less than 2 percent of the knowledge within the knowledge economy, indeed, Africa is known to be a knowledge consumer, rather than a knowledge generator. To be fair, efforts do abound within the African continent to document, promote and harness indigenous knowledge for development. The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) has recognized the fact that Africa has a rich knowledge base and technologies that have played a major role in “biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and prospecting”. NEPAD also recognizes the potential IK may have for “increasing food products, fighting HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and stemming environmental degradation”. But there is also recognition that IK and technologies are not adequately promoted and protected in most African countries (NEPAD).

Moahi (2012:540) succinctly averred that the importance of indigenous knowledge to development has been established over the years. African scholars (Sithole, 2007:122 & Moahi, 2012:544) have consistently call for African universities to take indigenous

knowledge into account in their teaching and research, and to view indigenous knowledge as valuable and as a way of addressing the view of Africa as a consumer of knowledge rather than a generator and contributor of knowledge. However, whilst there have been some initiatives in academia and in libraries to integrate indigenous knowledge into their activities, it has not been enough. The reasons are many and varied and stem largely from the globalizing and unifying nature of the world education system. However, this system does also offer an opportunity for African universities to distinguish themselves as African universities that have something different to offer the world.

Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Conservation

Environmental Conservation refers to the conservation of natural features, including geographical and geo-morphological features, flora and fauna. Osunade (1994) explained that in Swaziland, touch is an important process for farmers in deciding soil fertility, as well as identifying the presence of fauna and flora; for example, earthworm casts are found on nutrient-rich soils, but never on acidic soils.

In Nigeria, farmers are also aware of the link between soil texture and the differential deposition of river sediments, as well as the 'feel' of soils and their moisture content. Indigenous knowledge is used in classification of soil and such factors used, Soil color and texture emerge as key common factors in indigenous soil knowledge. The most common of these practices are shift cultivation, mixed cropping, intercropping and transhumance. Some of these innovations are peculiar to certain environments and cannot be replicated elsewhere. Many times, conservation measures are intuitively hazard prevention measures. For example, conservation of indigenous trees and vegetation along river banks which serves to protect water catchments and also serve as an effective measure for reducing flooding and soil erosion.

The use of indigenous knowledge for conservation tends to affect all aspects of the environment. For instance, in many communities certain forests are designated as shrines. These forests are in effect considered protected areas. These protected forests have multiple functions because they also influence other elements of the environment such as biodiversity, forest conservation, land use and management. Therefore, they serve as important frontiers for regeneration of flora and reproduction of fauna.

Conservation practices are very vital to indigenous communities as they ensure the sustainability of natural resources in order to guarantee their availability for generations to come. More so, maintaining the delicate balance present in the environment warrants that other practices that rely on the environment will continue to flourish, such as weather predictions and traditional medical practices.

However, the majority of Africans including Tanzanians rely on traditional agriculture, small land holdings, with little or no conventional inputs, and they depend on locally available resources for their livelihoods (Lwoga & Ngulube, 2008). Nonetheless, it is

estimated that they produce as much as 20% of the world's food, largely without the benefit of conventional agricultural research (International Development Research Center, 2003). This production is mainly due to their application of indigenous skills and resources and their capacity to adapt to changing agro-ecological conditions through their local experiments. It is evident that farmers' knowledge, innovations and practices have provided the basis for thousands of years of agricultural development.

Natural Disaster Management

A study carried out by Rautela (2005:233) on Indigenous technical knowledge inputs for effective disaster management in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem", disaster prevention and management, the study revealed the relevance of the various disaster management practices of the Himalayan region. During the course of their habitation in the disaster-prone Himalayan terrain the indigenous people through experience, experimentation and accumulated knowledge devised ways of reducing their vulnerability to natural hazards. Findings showed that their understanding was fairly evolved in the areas of earthquake, landslide and drought management and had devised efficient ways of mitigating the effects of these.

Furthermore, the repertoire of Indigenous Knowledge in a four study areas of Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and South Africa by the world bank draw on to deal with natural disasters is very large. This knowledge serves communities well within the traditional power structures (www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/what.htm). People revere elders in their role of divining climatic conditions and natural disasters. The culture and belief system of a community also influences its response to disaster. However, in most communities disasters were believed to be of supernatural origin and as such the communities affected resigned themselves to the fact that they had no power to stop them once triggered but could only mitigate their effects. These elaborate power structures ensure that communities are properly guided on the actions to take to prevent or mitigate disasters. Signs of coming disaster are obvious to everyone and this leads to instinctive response and preparation for coming events without necessarily being instructed as such by elders.

However, it must be noted that the successful application of indigenous knowledge in natural disaster management is based on good prognosis, close observation and a thorough understanding of the local environment.

Documentation of indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge are immensely valuable databases that provide humankind with insights on how numerous societies have interacted with their changing environments, including resources of flora and fauna, yet not much of it has been captured and recorded for preservation in Nigeria. Efforts to capture and preserve IK have concentrated on the documentation and communication of good practices that can be transferred across cultures and communities. The IK of Nigeria needs to be codified into print and electronic formats for both audio and video to make it widely accessible through the global information

infrastructure. The documentation and communication of IK in languages understood by other communities is another important consideration when it ceases to be locally specific. At face value the process of documentation and communication of IK is assumed as technically easy, yet it can be laborious, time consuming, costly and sometimes disappointing. The importance of documenting and communicating IK is to ensure that communities are not left impoverished as a result, just as the world needs genetic diversity of species (Labelle, 1997). Most importantly the documentation and communication of IK is important and provides an acceptable way to validate it and grant it protection from bio-piracy and other forms of abuse.

In the world of globalization and knowledge societies, IK should be recognized and paid for. Documentation provides evidence that local communities are the owners of a complex knowledge system. Consequently, documentation processes should establish the origin of the knowledge and the claims of local communities to share profits obtained from the commercialization of products derived from communicating their knowledge.

Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge

Since part of the mandate of public and national libraries is to document and preserve the cultural heritage of the nation, and this includes indigenous knowledge. IFLA however stated succinctly that the public library is one of the few institutions in a local community open to all. Ideally therefore, African libraries should be actively promoting and protecting IK, and should also be a hive of activity for communities wishing to gain access to relevant information and knowledge. However, because libraries in general were fashioned after libraries in the northern hemisphere in their orientation and the kind of clientele they envisaged, this has not happened. This model of librarianship, to some extent, still remains. However Moahi (2012:549) noted that in Botswana, it is acknowledged that public libraries in rural communities, as well as the Village Reading Rooms which were meant to take services to the people, are not fully utilized by the greater population in those localities; instead, they are used by school students as a quiet place to read. The International Federation of Library Association (IFLA, 2012) has clearly mandated libraries to:

- collect, preserve and disseminate indigenous and local knowledge;
- publicize the value, contribution, and importance of indigenous knowledge to both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples;
- raise awareness on the protection of indigenous knowledge against exploitation;
- involve elders and communities in the production of IK and teaching children to understand and appreciate the traditional knowledge; and

- encourage the recognition of principles of intellectual property to ensure the
- proper protection and use of indigenous knowledge and products derived from it.

Moahi (2012:549) posited that librarians must partner with other organizations and individuals in order to be able to document and promote IK. Librarians must work hand-in-hand with the communities that they serve and interact with community leaders in order to be

able to identify the IK and collect it. They must therefore be prepared to leave the comfort of their offices and become as one with the communities they serve. Nevertheless, Academic, Public, and Research libraries should be able to serve as antennae for identifying and locating IK resources in communities Ngulube (2002:92) averred that librarians need to create inventories, registers, and bibliographies of IK. Librarians should see themselves as change agents and community workers whose role is to impact the lives of communities in a positive way. Identifying and documenting IK is one way of doing this. Librarians in Africa have always stated that governments do not take them and their work with the seriousness they deserve. Nonetheless the concern here is that librarians need to play an aggressive role in documenting IK as the elders who possess IK in tacit custody are dying and their knowledge might be taken away with them.

Librarians as professionals need to appreciate the need to promote their products and services to ensure awareness amongst the communities that they serve. They should therefore equally see their role also as being that of promotion of awareness and appreciation of IK for communities. This starts with the identification of sources of IK, capturing IK, storing IK, disseminating IK by increasing awareness and promoting access to IK. Once this is realized, interest in IK will be heightened.

It is pertinent to note that libraries could serve as a documentation centre for IK where adults could be invited to tell stories to children, to teach children dance and to enact plays and dramas that depict some form of IK. Librarians could reserve space to showcase IK products and processes, and they could produce systematic documentation of IK practices and artefacts. Once the IK is documented, access to that information must be facilitated for those who have an interest.

Libraries must have the artifacts of IK as much as is possible, as well as other material that provides the knowledge. Librarians need to inform themselves as much as possible on IK so that they can guide users to the sources of that IK and provide other information that could be useful. The type of access will depend on the technology used in documenting IK.

Challenges confronting documentation and communication of IK in libraries in Nigeria

National indigenous knowledge policies are essential to the documentation of IK and the lack of these policies remains a challenge to Nigeria. In some other countries, centers for IK have been established and networks have been more intensified, e.g. the Center for IK for Agriculture and Rural Development of Iowa State University, USA, and the National Research Council of South Africa. So far Nigeria has yet to provide an enabling environment for IK system documentation and communication to thrive. Other factors that affect IK documentation and communication in libraries in Nigeria include but are not limited to the following:

➤ **Paucity of professional and institutional documentalists**

The presence of a handful of experienced and qualified documentalists in the field of IK in Nigeria has been a serious impediment in the exploitation of the potentials of IK. Besides, abstracting is tedious and not many people may be interested in working in that department. If a qualified scientist is employed to do this job, he needs to be given additional training as a documentalist. For instance, if a librarian-documentalist is employed in this job, he needs to be encouraged to increase the basic knowledge relevant to the subject area so that he will be familiar with the practices, and technical language in that particular field. Libraries and library school can partner with institutions that offer programs on indigenous knowledge and sustainable development such as the centre for sustainable development of the University of Ibadan which offers postgraduate diploma, professional and academic master's programs in indigenous knowledge and development for training on indigenous knowledge documentation.

➤ **The Tacit nature of indigenous knowledge**

As earlier noted, most indigenous knowledge of African people is still tacit and not explicit or codified, and as such it is embedded in the culture/traditions/ideology/language and religion of a particular community and is therefore not universal and difficult to globalise. Codified knowledge is knowledge that can be converted into symbols for easy transmission, replication and storage, and often forms a basis for classification. The library can thus create a knowledge recording system (audio-visual, visual, pictorial) to make IK explicit, however (Ocholla 2007:240) recognized the value of explicit knowledge which him highlight the attributes to include tangibility, shareability, transferability and storability. Ocholla further averred that these attributes can originate from a knowledge recording system.

➤ **Low Patronage**

Many subscribers are needed to ensure the use of abstracts, indexes, bibliographies and other works that have emanated from documentation. The cost of preparing abstracts and indexes is sufficiently high that it demands a high level of use, if efficient organization of information source is to be realized. According to Okorafor (2010:12) citing Onuoha (2005) stated that, because of low patronage in Nigeria, access to abstracts and journals is mainly through libraries. For this reason, low subscription rates will impede full exploitation. Nevertheless, this situation can be ameliorated through the provision of special discounts to non-profit educational organizations, voluntary co-operation of neighboring libraries, and access provision.

➤ **The individualistic nature of indigenous knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge is individually based and this makes it difficult to document and communicate it to other people. This knowledge is supposed to be communicated to children by the parents or grandparents and ancestors through dreams, using incomprehensive language, which only the owners can understand. This makes it difficult for the library to easily document and communicate the knowledge no matter the importance. Indigenous knowledge reinforces the concept of "Knowledge is Power". Knowledge is often guarded

jealously and cannot be shared easily because it is a source of status and income. Local people are always secretive and often suspicious of documenting IK outside their customary oral exchange. They are afraid that it will be misused or stolen or even used against them. They also fear that if it is documented they may not have to claim it, thereby rendering them powerless.

➤ **Networking technology**

Computer networks consist of computers connected together in such a way that these computers communicate with one another by using one computer to access data/ information to others if permitted. Over the years Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have facilitated the growing opportunity for many libraries to scale up the documentation and communication of IK, but this has not happened so far in Nigerian libraries. In the Nigerian situation, there are problems in terms of cost, access, and other issues related to technologies, electricity and telecommunications, which are still not available to communities. Computers are still unknown to most communities. Jabulani (2007:121) citing Jensen (2001) opined that the rapid growth of computers in the African continent have only been in the continents capital and secondary cities. The costs associated with ICTs are a challenge to many libraries and information institutions. Technology is not just a phenomenal change; Nigerian libraries have to deal with old equipment, a dearth of trained personnel to handle the systems, and antiquated equipment donated by individuals or organizations. If there happens to be a breakdown, an expert has to be flown in for repairs.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that indigenous knowledge constitutes an important information base that needs to be made known to the world through collection, documentation and communication. However, there are a number of challenges confronting libraries in Nigeria in documentation and communication of IK. It is worth noting that in Nigeria the problem of documentation and communication services development for IK is a national one. There is a need for Nigerian libraries to fully participate in the global exchange of information for socio-economic development. There is a need for the different institutions to coordinate their efforts and form partnership to address the issues of cost to ensure that IK is available, so that experts in such fields as health, music, and agriculture can have access to such information. Government, non-governmental organizations, and research funding agencies must actively support the documentation and communication of indigenous knowledge. Nigerian Libraries in documentation and communication of indigenous knowledge should play a key role in indigenous knowledge organisation and preservation as well as promoting access and sharing to enhance a sustainable national development.

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