



THE ROLE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES TO NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the role of library services in national growth and development in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the concept of library services in the context of Nigeria. The paper further discussed how library services affect the attainment of national growth and development in Nigeria. Finally the paper offered recommendation on how to move the Nigeria society to next level of development.

Keywords: *Library services, National growth, Development, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge and information are crucial factors in attaining national growth and development in any society or country. The ability to use knowledge and information tools at all levels are considered as sources power, which improve national growth and development in Nigeria. Fattahi (2013) explained that, knowledge and information are regarded as ingredients for any national growth and development, which are supported through the help of library and information centres. Therefore, librarians and information experts play significant roles in achieving national growth, development and upgrading of any country's status. The cooperation and support they offer to their users are the basic ingredients that make the

society and the country develop their economic growth which result in the overall development.

In any aspect of education, library and information centres play a very significant role in supporting and providing a variety of services to the users. Therefore, education of all kind is the fundamental right for every citizen without discrimination. In the word of Sangal (1995) Education is an inalienable right which every individual male/female must enjoy in order to be free from ignorance, poverty and disease to mention but a few..."

In this regard, the purpose of a library or an information system is to fulfill some needs for documents and information for users or potential users. Such needs may, for example, be related to educational, research, professional, recreational, and cultural activities or to personal development.

Therefore, today one of the criteria for categorizing a country as developed nation is the extent to which it develops the system of education and information system. This is because information services all over the globe can be seen as an integral part of factors of production apart from land labour and capital.

THE CONEPT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Libraries and information services are support and services rendered to any patron community through selection, subscription, maintaining and dissemination books and other information resources which are housed in a given structure for the benefit of intended users within community. The library acquires and organizes the needed materials which are maintained by public body, or institution in order to support and carter for the need of their patron community. Therefore, for the libraries and information centres to achieve their targets as information, resources and services providers, they must go along with current information and communication technology trends. As the world is being integrated into global village, the modern libraries and information centres must be more

sophisticated in terms of handling qualitative and reliable information, resources and services in an electronic form.

However, the need for libraries and information services in achieving economic growth and development has become greater with the recent technological advancement in the information and communication technology. This advancement greatly affects every facet of knowledge and information world, ranging from government, procurement, packaging, disseminating and use,. Consequently, many libraries and information centres turned themselves towards automating their resources and services in order to satisfy the need of their users. Adegbite (2011) explained that, in order to respond to the challenges of the information and knowledge explosion, our present day libraries must be computerized to strive and adapt their operation as well as their services to meet the imperative of interdisciplinary research, learning and teaching in support and servicing of their users to acquire necessary resources and materials nationwide with ease.

Thus, modern electronic or automated libraries and information centres are seen as places of getting, accessing and using the unrestricted knowledge, resources, information and services in different formats from variety of sources via the global net and other electronic gadgets. As such, these modern or automated libraries and information centres are now extending their support and services beyond the physical wall of building by including materials, services and resources accessible by electronic means to acquire knowledge, information, resources and services to support the government's dream on national growth and development.

With the support of librarians and information professionals in navigating and analyzing tremendous amount of knowledge, information resources and services effective teaching, learning, research and consultation will be effective and the country's aims and objectives of achieving national growth and development will definitely be arrived at. Libraries and information centres support and carter for users with materials, resources, information and services for decisions making, administration, teaching,

manufacturing as well as processing the country resources, materials and services for national growth and development/

THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth and development have become the twin concepts that can hardly be discussed independently. Nations keep changing by their structures, they change in size, and appearance and physical make up. The way they change differs from nation to another. But the fundamental underlying patterns of growth and development remain more or less the same and take place in an orderly way. Each nation, with its unique heredity and the way it is nurtured, determines the way it traverses the broad highway of it progress.

The concept of growth is sometimes used to designate all the quantitative changes brought about in the structure and functions of the nation's anatomy and physiology. The term 'development' means a progressive series of qualitative changes that occur as a result of maturity and experience. Thus, at each stage certain developmental processes bring changes in the nation in different aspects of life; physical, social, psychological and emotional. The speed of change varies from one nation to another, but it follows a definite and predictable pattern. Every nation has to go through the various stages of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Both growth and development, at every stage, follow certain principles.

In this situation, the country's national growth and development is also a comprehensive framework designed in turn to which offers a blueprint that will give room for sustainable political, social, cultural and national development I the country. These national growth and development is aligned with the country's aim of achieving the goals of National Development Plan (NDP) which can be seen as an important aspect which improve and upgrade the general welfare of the people in a given society. Abdullahi (2010) pointed out that, several interest groups and stakeholders have been holding a meeting, discussion preparation to

create new vision for Nigeria, in anticipation of the new vision for achieving national growth and development.

The country's national growth and development is a clear mental picture of the future generation which is representing realistic path to follow in its attainment, which requires consistent commitment and sustainable effort for achieving it. Agboola (2012) explained the key goals of the national growth and development that "it is hoped that Nigeria will be one of the 20 largest economies in the world able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa". Therefore, to attain this goal of reaching the top 20 economies, Nigeria need to enhance the alternative of achieving economic development by improving the services and functions of different agencies of development including the provision of an affective library and information services.

Today, our leaders and planners are quick to announce the birth of a new economic blue-print without any plan on how to resolve the fundamental ills that have bedeviled our nation for several decades. Thanks to the previous order, our country is today enmeshed in unprecedented crises, arising from disputed mandates of our leaders at all levels resulting in resetting in diminished faith in their ability to deliver the deliverables to achieve the set goals and objectives before the year 2025. In a related literature, Agboola (2012) also explained that, "one of the main objective of achieving national growth and development is to place Nigeria in the top 20 leading economies of the world".

Looking at the above, it is hoped that Nigeria will compete with the developed nations like the United States, Japan, Germany, China and the United Kindom which have traditionally and seriously maintained the position as the top five ranking countries in the world.

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES TOWARDS ACHIEVING NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Library and information services are capable of alleviating illiteracy, poverty, diseases and other social vices through various support, training and services rendered by the libraries. It was based on this that Danayi

(2014) observed that “among the roles of libraries and information services professionals are to advise, support cater and encourage the governments to uphold their commitments in rising awareness of the issues related to education, national growth and development by equipping libraries nationwide”.

This implies that libraries and information services should assert their position and facilitate the conversion of information into useful knowledge through ready rudimentary information services, which will result in positive change toward achieving national growth and development throughout the country. Abdullahi (2010) lamented that, education, national growth; development and human capital are the greatest challenges facing the nation. Therefore, the early childhood curriculum and instruction should be strengthened. He went on saying that, Nigerian leadership need to articulate a coherent shared vision of where the nation is and what the nation will look like educationally and economically in the next coming years.

Commitment must be made and effort must be made to improve practice in our classrooms and other learning centres. The innovation, reforms and other social changes that have been advanced in the past have failed to reach their intended outcomes, because they are not fully implemented which resulted in failure in achieving the objective of national growth and development in the country. Therefore, Nigerian educational system and leadership must now embrace the principle of collective, democratic leadership and accountability, as well as embracing the idea of equipping and automating libraries and information centres with current and relevant resources and services to support the potential users toward achieving national growth and development.

Botubo (1986) stated that, modern libraries and information services are the enablers which enhance human productivity, influence human development, allowing access to information resources and services and enlarging variety of choice which leads to economic growth and development.

Therefore, libraries and information centres transformed and changed the way education is imparted and acquired which up-lift the society from agrarian to industrial. From the above, we can see that library and information centres provide a functional and up-to-date materials, resources and services which are of great importance in meeting the challenges of achieving the country's national growth and development. Libraries and information services therefore, are among the principal agencies that help the nation in attaining and achieving all its educational and national policies. Therefore, libraries and information centres in this era have become automated and the roles of librarians and information scientist have also been changed to information organizers and managers beyond the traditional library operations. This make them delve into new paradigm shift of using ICT in the service provision which carries along all the librarians and information scientist to adapt new system that will allow users to have an access to varieties of knowledge, information resources and services for national growth and development.

Habib (2010) argued that "modern information and communication technology and its gadgets help in improving libraries and information centres to drive the users to the web platform, making aware of new tools which offer faster and reliable services in knowledge and information seeking". In the same vein, Adegbite (2011) pointed out that, modern libraries and information centres set out strategies to automate their resources and services in order to achieve the objective of the country's economic growth and development".

He went further that, modern libraries and information centres shall strive toward an accessible and affordable access to information globally through an assertive and proactive information outreach to the whole society".

Therefore, librarians and information scientists should facilitate access to knowledge, information and services by creating full support to the users (patron community) to access resources and information to contribute their quota towards achieving national growth and development.

Consequently, good libraries and information services do not only support the users, but also enrich the educational policies, programme of the

country. They also prepare students, researchers, lecturers, teachers and patron community to be useful citizens. As academic, public and special libraries and information centres are the integral part of the teaching, learning and research activities. Therefore, the success of the country's educational policies, system and programmes depend largely on the symbolic efforts of the librarians and information centres.

Ochogwu (1994) highlighted the following roles played by librarians in achieving the objective of the country's national growth and development:

- Librarians serve as an operational arm that support users in acquiring the necessary materials, resources and services in order to achieve the objectives and adapt the goal and policy that facilitate the realization of the national growth and development.
- Librarians and information scientists represent the typical reception culture for the assembly of communication of every discipline for easy access and retrieval. Because the society nowadays depends on the information and knowledge for education, national growth and development which are available through the aid of librarians and information centres.
- Like all other professions, the future librarians and information profession lies in its ability to be self-productive in the way and manner it will attract and retain new talent to support the users with up-to-date materials in order to achieve the aims and objectives of national growth and development in the country.
- Modern librarianship in the country now includes some skills related to designing and improving information system. As they are trained and qualified in making decision, executing, organizing and managing modern libraries as well as supporting and rendering effective services to the clientele.
- Librarians and information scientists are now sophisticated and complex due to proliferation of modern information sources for managing this knowledge and supporting the clientele with necessary and up-to-date materials for realizing and achieving the country's dream of achieving national growth and development.

- Librarians and information scientists should help make individuals' drive for spiritual, inspirational and recreational satisfaction through reading and the opportunity to interact with society's wealth of accumulated knowledge to achieve the objective of the nation's growth and development.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious to note that libraries and information services have a greater role to play in nation's growth and development. Many nations have set several reforms aimed at strengthening the library and information centres, Nigeria inclusive, but the purview of the available literature indicated not much achievement has been recorded. In the same vein several plans have lasted without substantial assurance of the country is a target on its growth and development. It can also be noted that despite the efforts by Nigerian government achieving the millennium goals, attention has not been given to library and information services this also resulted in backwardness in educational system and policies. Education is the only way through which every country train and develops its citizens and without libraries and information centres at different stages of school, development and training cannot be possible. Therefore, education requires government commitment and equipping the libraries and information centres with relevant and up-to-date resources, materials and services which will aid and support the citizens to become, learn, and be innovative for the attainment of nation's growth and development.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are offered for library and information services in achieving the objective of national growth and development in Nigeria:

- Government should be more proactive in recognizing the role library and information services as agent for national growth and development.
- Government should make library and information centres an area which give training, support and render services to both the

personnel and the teaming users, by creating awareness which will enable them to contribute their quota toward achieving national growth and development in the country.

- Government should make sure that library and other information services serve as a medium that link the patrons community or clientele with varieties of information, resources, services as well as materials toward achieving national growth and development.
- Government should also ensure that library and information services serve as a element between different disciplines in acquiring the potentials skills and knowledge for proper training and apply the rewards of the training toward achieving national growth and development.

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