

# The Library as an Agent of Change: Pushing the Client Institution Forward

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**Abstract:-** The libraries today must transform into change agent. "While" a place to go to for information, the emphasis must be on dispatching information beyond its walls. Libraries should disseminate information to its patrons, rather than waiting patrons to come. The ability of the library profession is found in its value of information. The ability to select useful information and arranged it into categories for easy access represent that libraries possess a detailed understanding of what the institutions desire. The traditional place of library stopped at collecting, arranging, and assisting. It did not involved, any significant way: Informing the institution about the material collected on their behalf; Discussing the issues for which the material was to provided background and enlightenment; Soliciting users through extensive demonstration programed of how to use the information collected and for what purposes; Targeting individuals in the institution for special services so that they can sent the value of the information to others; Teaming with management of the organization on addressing challenges, projects, research initiatives, and instruction as a player (policy and decision-maker) who brings the significant perspective of knowledge and information provider to the table; or Stretching the job specification of librarian, or the institutional role of the library to fit better needs of the organization it serves. These six under-used action need to be put to use intelligently if the library will remain useful, and the organization they serve wish to progress. To achieve this transition, libraries can't be passive organizations. They must act like other information providers who, are often less well-equipped to increase the position of the organization that the library serves. Libraries are \* Facilitators \* Consultants \* Trainers \* Journalists/reporters. In making the assertions above, it is important to provide some brief background on why library are faced with the problems of either remaining same or putting itself as an agent of change.

**Keywords:-** Library, Agent, Change, Pushing Client institution, Information, knowledge.

## I. INTRODUCTION

It's not new that the world has moved from the industrial age to information era. Men's desire for information has led to the creation of this great amount of information. The world now desired a knowledge-based society. The desire for

knowledge has no limits and is never satisfied. According to Issa (2003), it has come to be in the earth today a full realization that information remains the prime product of the present age. This has continued since the civilization to the modern age. Indeed, the present and free movement of information brings knowledge which has potentials in providing an impetus for the cultural, spiritual, social, economic, political, technological and scientific improvement of the country. Affirming to this, Reding (2005), note that library play a role in our society. They are the collectors and stewards of our heritage; they are organizers of information in books they collect, adding value by cataloging, classifying and describing them; and, as public institutions, they ensure equality of citizens' access to information. They take the information of the past and present, present it for the future.

## II. THE LIBRARY

The collections of put down informations in some repositories are as old as civilization itself. The name for the place became the library. The library is derived from the word "liber" means book and it can be defined as an organize collection of unpublished and published books and audiovisual materials that help the services of staff that provide and interpret the materials as required, to meet the informative research, educational and recreational needs of its users. Libraries are refer to as agencies which source of information are accumulated, Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) defined the library as an information center located in an organization, institutions, agencies, industries, governmental agencies etc to meet the information needs of the individual client and the realization of the broad goals and objectives of the parent organization. These can be achieved through acquisition and distributions of information to specific kinds of users. Libraries are built for the purpose of special collection, organization, preservation, and distribution of knowledge and information. Rajkoomar (2012) affirmed this by stating that library is a treasure of knowledge. Libraries give people the access to information they required to play, work, govern and learn, The purposes of libraries have been changing over times becoming more faceted and multifarious. This modern concept of the library makes it defy the definition given to it in the earlier times. Libraries are not institution /building/warehouses/stores etc. of materials but are an agent of educational, social, economic and political changes or revolutions in the community and their doors are now open to all who need them. Leheman (2011) was of the opinion that

the future of library will be as a knowledge-centered that was dynamic, where not only librarian, the "books" (whether real or virtual), and the users engage in an interchange of idea but the library architecture acts as not only a surrounding framework but also as a healthy "space" where ideas can flourish, live, grow and even be protected. It is obvious from the foregoing that the changing concept of library calls for the desire to learn the basic common library routines and practices saving time and avoid frustration.

### III. LIBRARY AS AN AGENT OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The term information is used in a wide range of ways by different people in the different discipline in order to allow them to make a particular case as they seek to advance understanding of their discipline, and as they attempt to relate different aspects of discipline in a broader area of knowledge. This has led to some differences especially as an aspect of definition from one discipline may be inappropriately more widely or be adopted in part by those in another discipline. Until recently there has not been any widely accepted definition of information. If you put the question, what is information, to a group of people of mixed professionals, you might get as many definitions as there are people in the group. So different are the definitions of information today that for most part, it is impossible to reconcile them, nevertheless definitions of information should incorporate one of or a combination of the following characteristics:

- It should be represented by a set of symbols which has some structure and can be read.
- To some extent understood by users of information (Meadow; 1992).

Most definitions of information agreed with the following three forms: a Firstly the real types of representation of a particular thought used for communication. Based on the mental state of the recipient i.e. the ultimate effect the communicated information has on the mental state of the client. Some properties have been attached to some effects. These may include "increment of knowledge", "resolving uncertainty", "and value in decision making" etc. some holistic "system" concept involving people, their attitudes, and needs. The second type is the most prevalent among the definitions. Let us consider the following definitions:

1. Information are data that has been processed to form that is meaningful to the receiver and of real perceived value in current or prospective decisions (Davis: 1974).
2. Information is data that changes the states of a system that perceives it, whether a computer or a brain, hence a stream of data that does not change the state of its receiver is not information (Meadow: 1992) thirdly, the above definitions relate more to the physical form of representation of information.

1. Information is a factual idea and other knowledge emanating from any segment of society that is identified as being of value, sometimes gathered on a regular basis, organized in some fashion, transmitted to others, and used in some meaningful fashion (Norman, 1986)
2. Information is the name of the content of which we exchanged in the outer world which we adjust to and make adjustment left upon it (Norbert 1960)

Information both in the real sense is used by the biologist and the librarians as facts. It is the stimulus receive through our senses, it may be an isolated factor a whole cluster of facts, but it is still a unit of thought (Shera: 1971) these definitions recognize the fact that information affects some changes in the cognitive status of the recipient making the recipient adjust to it. Other related definitions of information to be considered are those which believe that information adds some new structure to the existing knowledge base of the recipient. This added new structure being capable of changing the existing knowledge structure of the recipient.

- Information is "that which is capable of transforming structure" (Belkin: 1978)
- Information is a "written or spoken surrogate of knowledge" (Carradine: 1980)
- Information's are a measure of one's freedom of choice when one selects a message.

However, the information applies not to the individual message but to the situation as a whole (Mackey: 1967). Any of these definitions imply that information satisfies a basic physical need. We are informed when our cognitive structure is reshaped or altered as a result of an external stimulus which changes our existing knowledge about any phenomenon. Debons ascites in Fine (1984) argued that people need information in order to reduce ambiguity in their environment and that they use the information to impose some structure in the unstructured event while Knowledge can be defined as what one knows or understands. It can also be seen as the awareness one has about something. Renfree (1981) define knowledge as "the body of information and understanding which individuals acquire throughout life experiences". In line with this also Davenport & Prusak (1998) were of the option that knowledge was a fluid mixed framed experience, contextual information, values and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and including new experience and information. Knowledge has also been defined as the ability to bring out facts. In modern times, the inclusion of knowledge has changed in value and in use, Mohammed (2006), explains the concepts of knowledge in this era as follows:

- A. Knowledge is a worldwide commodity of business which can be used by government, corporations, and individuals to gain an advantage.
- B. Knowledge is a restricted commodity for National Corporation and personal security.

C. Knowledge is a patent item with rights and privileges of ownership access.

D. Knowledge is a commodity which is advertised and marketed, which recognizes the role of the supplier and consumer in the production chain. Knowledge from this point of view is seen as a commodity that can be produced and bought by anyone who is in need of it and has the means to purchase it. In line with the above definitions, Lyotard (1984) believe that: Knowledge is produced in order to be sold and be consumed in order to expand production. Okebukola (2004) without missing words says that “knowledge is a highest mover of prosperity”. A knowledge society is one of the basic foundations for the development of any nation and it is hard to know of the current knowledge evolution without information technology. Mabogunje (2004) advised that Nigeria must pay attention to knowledge acquisition. According to him "a nation which does not recognize and always thinks about money is lost". He further advised that the nation should return to the knowledge society, respect information communication technology and not money bags. Knowledge is power and information is the power of knowledge. Akindele (1997) argued that the urge to know cannot be dismissed or eradicated, no matter what the individual, and despite any attempt by others to dissuade him. To resolve these issues he has found solution in many ways of understanding things affecting him.

#### IV. THE LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS CHANGING ROLES

Libraries are a repository of all forms of graphics and oral communication organized to meet the human information needs. It is a social institution, which came into existence when the accumulated body of man's knowledge became so voluminous that it superseded the extent of human memory and all records of that experience could no longer be left to the survival of the oral tradition. The objective of any library is to bring man and the documents that would solve his information needs. To do this work the librarian bought literature, store it, organize and control it. He equally performs a secondary function by compiling catalogs and readings, providing up-to-date comprehensive bibliographic services that allow users identify important information.

The World Book Encyclopedia (2004) argued that the services of the librarians go far beyond getting and arranging library materials. As a result of the rapid increased in information generation, the librarian and information professionals are constantly working ways of coping with professional expectations. Share (1971), Ogunshye (1976) and Aiyepkun (1993) have all described the changing roles of the librarian, due to change in the mode of transmission of information and graphic records.

Crawford (2000) submits that ‘ongoing complexity and unpredictable currents of change will mark the future of

libraries'. Before now, a user looked at one book or journal at a time. Electronic information can be stored and accessed by millions of users simultaneously from personal computers (PCs) with modems or through direct Internet connections from home, work, or practically anywhere. Patrons no longer have to physically visit the library to retrieve information. This ability to access full-text resources electronically from within the institution or from any PC provides the user with convenient and immediate access to information. Expanded use of interlibrary loan and document delivery offers the potential to provide access to materials, rather than only materials owned locally. Library institution, which traditionally and historically the custodian of knowledge and information, has witnessed a paradigm move from the traditional information handling methodologies to technological platforms. This tends to transfer the information and knowledge custodian roles of libraries to other institutions and professions like the computer, communication, information, and knowledge. Yet, different types of libraries remain the dynamic engines for the knowledge and information society.

#### V. ROLE OF LIBRARY AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE IN SOCIETY AND SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA.

Libraries are centers of information, mainly established to generate knowledge, equip people with knowledge to serve the society and advance the well-being of mankind. Thus, libraries are like a storehouse of knowledge, a whole world encompassed in one room. In this digital age, libraries face challenges from both within (institutions) and within (the business sectors) for instance, academic departments, faculty members, and even students may buy or build their own portals to meet their academic and research needs. Is it possible then that services of the libraries may be marginalized? A pivotal role played by the libraries is one of the factors which help in the development of a society or even civilization. It caters to the knowledge thirsty minds of thousands of people. With the onset and advancement of technologies, virtual libraries are created. These types of libraries are present in many colleges. Libraries are an integral part of the educational system and development and one is incomplete without the other. In order to continue to remain relevant and valuable libraries must strive to provide the right amount of information to the right clientele at the right time with a right expense of financial and human resources. With the ever dwindling library budget, libraries have increased their operational efficiency in order to meet this challenge. One management tool that can help in this regard is Knowledge Management (KM). Lee (2006) expressed that it was the business world that recognized the importance of knowledge in the "global economy" "knowledge age" in the new knowledge economy, the possession of relevant and strategic knowledge and the increasing renewal enabled the business to gain competitive advantage. The palliatives knowledge management has now spread to other sectors

including a government agency, research, and developments, departments, universities, and others. The basic reason for establishing libraries and other information organizations in modern societies is to be able to respond to the information needs of communities. And for the information organizations to function well there is need to train the professionals who will provide needed resources and services to meet the development needs of individuals/governments. It is only through this process that Nigeria society can guarantee library and information services to all Nigerians irrespective of locations, age, religion, political and ethnic affiliations. It is thus safe to say that library (education) in Nigeria is about fifty years old. A discipline in its golden age must have passed through several revisions in a curriculum to keep pace with the trend of events that have been necessitated by force of change especially those of education, economy, and technology. One may hasten to ask some pertinent questions which should direct the directions of this discourse. The first has to do with what has been put in place over those fifty years in the library (schools) to train and retain the professionals to achieve the above objectives? While the second question is what kind of structures have been established by the practitioners to render appropriate information resources and services to Nigerians information user communities? And even a third could be what types of user communities do we have in Nigeria in terms of their information literacy levels? Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) observe that generally, the role of libraries depend on the needs of the sponsoring organization or institution. Madu and Adeniran (2005) assert that the feature of libraries is the fact that the primary purpose of collection, organization, and dissemination of information is devoted to a special subject body offering specialized services to a specialized clientele. Nuut (2004) opined that library's main role is to mediate existing and accessible information resources to users, providing materials according to areas of responsibility in the form of databases, electronic serials, full texts and traditional publications. Libraries no matter how they grouped or classified are always seemed to show individuality than uniformity, each reflects the purpose of the group that establishes and supports it. Edoke (2000) notes that in view of the specialized character of the demands of libraries, considerable specialized training is required of the staff. He listed the following as the basic role of libraries.

- To provide comprehensive and balanced information resources relevant to the activities of its parent organization;
- To provide required information quickly and precisely;
- To conduct a retrospective literature search for as appropriate;
- To acquire, organize, maintain and disseminate information materials relevant to the organization activities. Librarians are information experts dedicated to putting knowledge to attain the goals of their organizations. They are employed most frequently by a corporation, private business, government, agencies, and museums, colleges, hospitals associations and information

management consulting firms. Today libraries are far better to locate and collect data, with internet and other current technology, they evaluate, analyze, organize, package, and present information in a way that maximizes its usefulness (Special Libraries Association, 2003) Libraries provides the below services: Current Awareness Services (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Document Delivery Service (DDS), CD-ROM Service, Access to Internet and E-mail, Discussion Group/Bulletin Board Services etc.

## VI. PUSHING THE INSTITUTIONS FORWARD

- Library as an integral part of the system provides supplementary sources of information for students, lecturers, etc. in addition to what transpires in the classroom.
- The provision of information communication technologies in the libraries such as a computer is an added impetus to current trends in librarianship, their utilization serves a stepping-stone to becoming computer literate since present-day appointment into positions emphasize the need to be computer literate.
- Provide materials to support library users in their own personal development.
- Provide information to meet the specialized needs of the community in which they are situated.
- Helps to train information professionals with skills, who will be able to develop, appreciate strategies in response to the information needs of the Nigerian society. (ABU Undergraduate Student Hand Book 2007/2008).
- To provide the needed resources and service to meet developmental needs of individuals, groups, corporate, organizations and even governments. It is only through this process that the Nigerian society can guarantee library and information services to all Nigerians irrespective of locations, age, and religion, political and ethnic affiliations.
- Library got children acquainted with books as to broaden their idea and stimulate their appetite for knowledge.
- Library prepared pupil to work independently so that when they leave the school they can carry on with their education without depending solely on teachers.
- Libraries aid the students in making reasonable use of their leisure.
- Libraries enable students to participate effectively in school program it strives to meet the need of pupils, teachers, parents, and other community members.
- Provide an opportunity through library experiences for boys and girls to develop a helpful interest to make satisfactory personal adjustments and to acquire desirable social attitudes.
- Students participate with teachers and administrators in the programme for continuing the professional and cultural growth of the school.

- The collection, acquisition of knowledge in all formats and organization of knowledge for easy storage, preservation, retrieval, and dissemination.
- To ensure an even development of the library collection by making sure that the library purchases balanced collections so that no discipline is developed at the expense of the others.
- Investigating problems which under the development of reading habits among the people and encouragement of reading habits in the people other than utilitarian purposes.
- Encouragement of the provision of books and other reading materials in the right quality and these materials should be relevant to our culture.
- Provide information about library collections and locations.
- Reduce duplications and enable the participating libraries to know what is available in the other libraries and help them to decide on what and what not to buy.
- To bring out a printed national catalog or a union list which can be used for Inter-Library? Lending (ILL)?

## VII. SUMMARY

Since information is increasingly seen as a commodity that can be acquired, processed, bought and sold. As a result, all people do not enjoy equal access to information and globalization has brought a deepening divide between the information haves and have not, a divide between privileged and unprivileged, rich and poor (Dike, 2007) This brought challenge to the libraries and the inability of librarians to master and apply the art and science of the profession in their work environment, coupled with the reluctance to learn the operations or manipulations of the new information technologies which has restructured the work of the library to creating access to information and knowledge irrespective of its location in the world through the virtual nature to make librarians relevant in the world of information and knowledge acquisition. The challenge is now for us to stand up to our professional responsibilities to claim our professionalism to other contending professionals in the field of information and communication theory and knowledge management. Library services are our core need in the knowledge acquisition and development which has been acknowledged. The librarian must not be relaxed in his/her duty to be relevant to the profession in general.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Do we live in an era of changes or in a changing era? How can one characterize the deep transformation that comes with the accelerated insertion of artificial intelligence and new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in our present society? Is it a question of a new stage in the industrial society or are we entering into a new era? "Global village", "Technotronic era", "post-industrial society", "information society" or "information age", are just a few of the terms that

have been coined in an attempt to identify and understand the extent of these changes. Library and librarian have recognized the expanding nature of challenges that is before them and the range of competencies required of them. The challenges represented by these competencies must seize and act upon today as to ensure that professionals in the libraries are viable. Dike (2007) opined that the level development which was formerly measured by a country's Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) i.e. level of economic development, was found faulty due to its irregularities nature i.e. between the rich and the poor moving its industrial based to an information-based society which lent more emphasis to human resources development as human beings with the requisite education and skills were seen as key societal resources. Based on the above statement, a library which is both knowledge society and information society is the key to achieving sustainable development which is said to meet the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Summarily, the roles of the library are ever growing because an attempt to educate a man invariably is an effort towards educating the society. Based on this argument put forward the library is the storehouse of these knowledge/development. It, therefore, behooves on the library professionals to possess the requisites competencies to be able to collect, process, store and disseminate information effectively so that knowledge and information management will not only affect communities but the society at large.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The followings are recommended*
- The library should be made to acquire and store modern information technology resources while the librarian should master the art and science of the profession in their work environment.
- The libraries should grow alongside information technology which has restructured the role of the library in creating access to information and knowledge irrespective of its location in the world through virtual nature of technology.
- As our counterpart in Europe, America etc prove the relevance of the role of the library; we must not out of laxity make ourselves irrelevant in our provision of information to the communities we serve.
- The library should provide comprehensive and balanced information resources relevant to the activities of its parent organization.
- 5. Recognizing the increasing rate and nature of information, libraries should be adequately funded to enable them to provide the necessary infrastructure for knowledge acquisition and provision of services.
- 6. Public enlightenment programme, lectures, symposia, conferences should be organized in a non-formal scheme through the rural communities of the state through Federal Ministries of Education.

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