Revitalizing the Public Library System for National Development

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A B S T R A C T

The paper focuses on revitalizing the public library system for national development. The society or nation becomes developed continuously as a result of the information acquired. Libraries emerged as a result of the need to preserve and utilize records of civilization. This preservation is being documented. The revival of library is pertinent to National development as modern discoveries and innovations particularly those showing the advancement of science and technology depends on the rational use of recorded information. The reviewed literature established the existence of a direct relationship between utilization of library systems and national development which directly influence individual, agencies, government, international bodies etc. to ensure that public library is sustained to meet its overall objectives which will enhance the national development of the country.

INTRODUCTION

The effective use of the library enhances growth and development of individual, society and nation. The user acquires information and knowledge, the library renews itself by acquiring new information resources for the ever-expanding information needs of the users. The society or nation becomes developed continuously as a result of the information acquired. It is on this premise that the researchers observed the need for public libraries to be revitalized for national development. Another reason could be that an obvious gap exists between the existence of public library and National development. This means that what ought to be achieved is lacking. Thus, there is need to revitalize it to function efficiently and effectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Definition of Concepts

Library Science has been defined by different authors. Gates in Obi (2013), defined library science as the body of organized knowledge in whatever form which is concerned with the purpose, objectives and functions of the libraries and the principles, theories, methods, organization and techniques employed in performing library services.

Library services can be viewed is a collection of manuscripts, publications and other materials for reading, viewing, listening, studying, referencing materials etc. Library is the store-house of knowledge for posterior use. Edoka (2000) sees library as a collection of books and possibly other materials and media that is accessible for use by its members and allied institution.

The main objective of the library services is to maximize the social utility of recorded information for the benefit of the society. Thus, modern discoveries and innovations particularly those showing the advancement of science and technology depends on the rational use of recorded information. Library has been described as layman's university. It can equally mean the heart of the society. The commonality of the various definitions confirms that library is an organized knowledge; it has purpose, objectives and function. Library has its principles, theories, methods, organization and techniques. In the real sense of application of library science, the librarianship is implicated. It is on this note that library science can be defined as the collection, organisation, presentation, dissemination and the use of books and non-books materials for varying needs (information, knowledge, aesthetic, recreation etc.)

Types of Library

Libraries exist to provide information services to users. The different and overlapping services offered by libraries made it possible to group them into types, based on the various functions they perform. Thus, the following are the major types of library.

a) National Library: Known as the nation's apex library. Every nation has its own national library e.g. National library of Nigeria. Edoka (2000) conceived it as library of libraries, legal depository for books.

b) Academic Library: Are libraries attached to institutions of higher learning. They enhance and provide information, research and directory.

c) School Library: Are for primary and secondary schools. They are not academic library because they are not into research. They are resource centres, provide information, improve reading skills and learning habits.

d) Special Library: Belongs to particular organization that set them up, e.g. government ministries, parastatals, banks, professional bodies and research institutions. They are maintained by the founder or parent body. Other examples are law library, medical library, sports library, church library etc.

e) Private Library: Is a personal library or family library. Mostly owned by bibliophiles. Collection is according to individual owners e.g. Herbert Macaulay library etc.

f) Electronic Library: is the collection of library resources in electronic formats, which can be accessed electronically with ease from different locations. Electronic library can access negotiation, resource capture storage and access resources discovery, delivery, utilization etc.

g) Public Library: Exist to meet informational, educational and other needs of the general community which may be recreational, aesthetic etc. The existence of public library is to make available all kinds of knowledge and information resources for its users (internally and externally). There is no limitation regarding age and physically challenged person's.

Public library maintains the following functions according to UNESCO public library manifesto raised in 1994;

1. Supports both individual and formal education at all levels.
2. Provides access to cultural expression of all arts and opportunities for personal creative development.
3. It strengthens reading habits to all users.
4. Support oral traditions and provides information services to all interest groups in all areas of human activities.
5. Public library facilitates development of literacy skills.
6. Public library ought to house adequate current books and non-book materials for public use.
7. The state government owns the public library and maintains it for public use

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Library and Educational Technology Point of Inter-Relativity

Libraries emerged as a result of the need to preserve and utilize records of civilization. This preservation is being documented. The documentation appeared in pictorials carvings, paintings on stone, walls, velum, clay tabloid, parchment, Papyrus and scroll. With time writing emerged and formed part of the documentation process. The ancient documentation process gave meaning to existence of-modern library thus the above discussion is in line with Obi (2009) who defined library as the selected collection of books and non-book materials organized and preserved for the dissemination of information by a well qualified personnel of librarianship. From the above definition one can

appreciate the fact that not all books and non-book materials are selected but basically those of them that enhances teaching and learning process and served as documentary process which can be tagged as educational media in the field of educational technology. The book materials are conceived as textbooks, manuals, newspapers, fictions, Journals, encyclopedia, etc while the non-books are projector, television, transparencies, slides, films, charts, graphics audio cassettes, computer etc.

The books and non-book materials can be accessed as hardware and software approaches in educational technology. While these books and non-book materials are organized, preserved for dissemination of information by a qualified personnel of librarianship, in educational technology they are utilized by professional educational technologists to improve teaching and learning process. The library resources are also made available to users to explore and to exploit. The non-book materials are information bearing materials and they were introduced into the library through the advances of information technology which is critical aspect of educational technology. In educational technology the book and non-book materials that complement teaching and learning are divided into three segments as follows. The audio-materials, visual materials and audio-visual materials. The audio materials apply to the auditory perception. The visual materials appeal to the sense of sight, while the audio-visual appeals to the sense of both sight and hearing at the same time. The Non-print resources are used not only by technologists, they are also used in the Libraries by teachers and learners (users). The use of these non-prints primes the interest of library users or learners. They are good for slow learners. The use of the non-print materials in the library easily enhances teacher/learner skills for educational programmes. The library itself is an educational agency and the modern technology which comes in form of gadgets seriously aids the provision of information service delivery in the library.

This can be represented in a diagram below.

User's Services

Books

Fiction, non-fiction, reference books, textbooks, cassettes

Soft wares

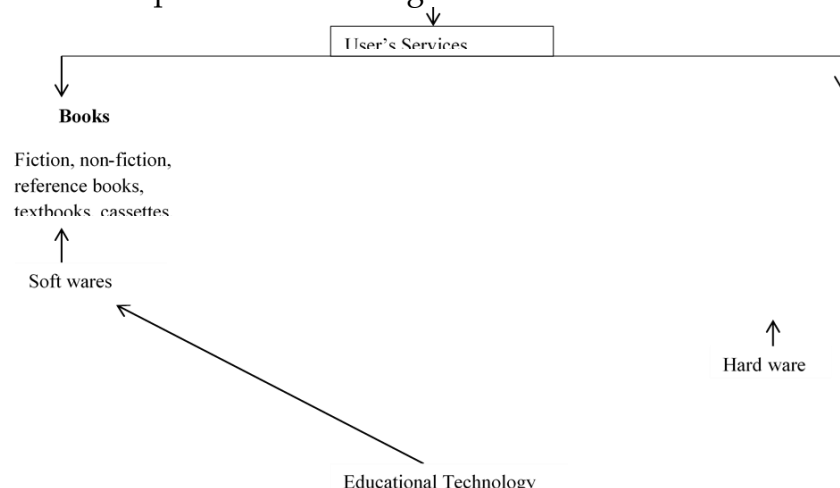Hard ware

Educational Technology

Figure 1. Inter-relativity representation of Educational Technology and Library Education

The fig. 1: reveals the inter-relativity representation. The books and non-book materials in library education are conceived as hard and soft wares it educational technology. At this point there is a possible relationship. The other

functions of library education such as circulation, classification, cataloging, reference services etc. are also enhanced by the third, domain of educational technology which is systems approach.

Public Library System

A system is the sum total of interrelated parts working independently and in conjunction with each other to achieve a set objective predetermined goal or a specified objective. A system must possess parts, subset, or units functioning independently and collectively to enable the objective of the system to be achieved; Thus, in a public library there exist functional sections such as;

1. Users services section
2. Technical section
3. Research/Bibliographic section
4. Information communication Technology (ICT) section
5. Administrative section.
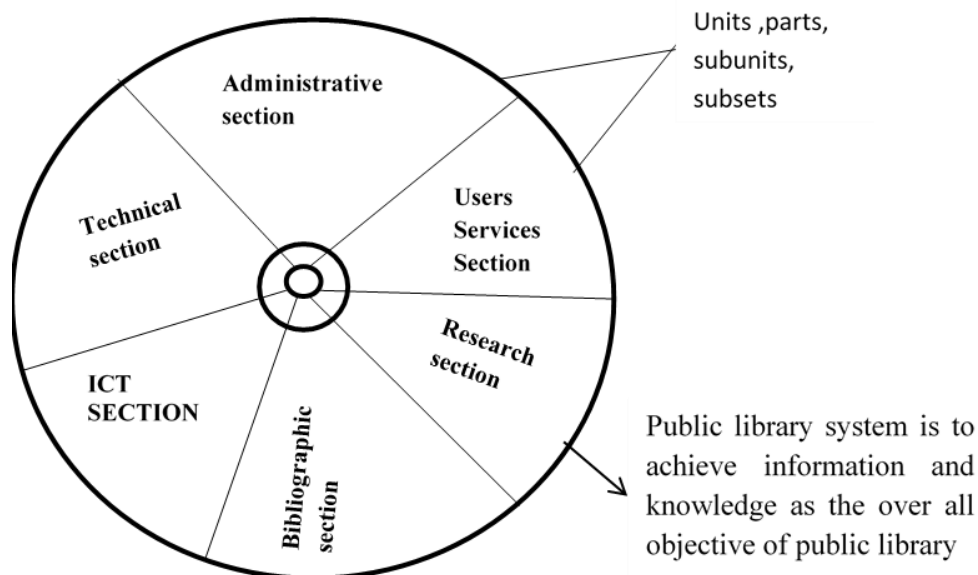
This can be graphically illustrated below.

Figure 2. Graphical Presentation of Public Library System

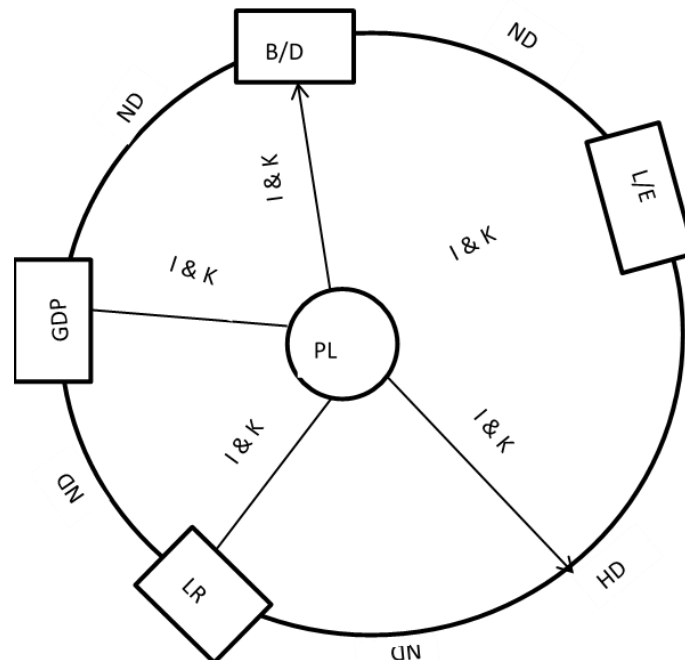**Public Library and National Development**

Public library dated 19th century. Public library is said to be used first and foremost in England (Aslam & Sonkar, 2018), funded with public funds. Managed by professional librarians and para professionals. A concise consideration of public library as one of the types of library reveals that public library is a function of National development.

National development can be defined as improvement in a country's social and economic conditions through the management of national and human resources in order to create wealth and improve lives. National development can also be described as the capacity of any country to raise the standard of living of its residents and can be achieved by providing individuals

with basic livelihood requirement and supplying them with employment among others to alleviate poverty.

Smarter (2023) posits that national development can be maintained by the following indicators;

a) Gross domestic product (GDP) is an economic measure of money a country make through its product or services.
b) Birth/Death rates, as number of births and deaths in a country.
c) Life expectancy as general age people can live in a nation.
d) Literacy rate involving the number of people in percentage over the age of fifteen (15) years who can read and write.
e) Human development index; this aims at the quality or level of human development in a country, which includes health of a population (life expectancy) educational level, standard of living through gross National Income (GNI). From the foregoing public library and national development can be represented graphically;

Key: PL = Public Library
     LR =   Literacy Rate
     GDP= Gross Domestic Product
     HD =   Human Development
     B/D = Birth/Death Rate
     LE   = Life Expectancy
     I &K= Information & Knowledge
     ND = Ntional Development

Figure 3. Public Library and National Development

Information and Knowledge

The term information has been subjected to various definitions due to its enormous growth and use. The Webster's dictionary defines information as the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence communicated by others or obtained from investigation or instruction. Information also consists of facts and data organised to describe a particular situation. Knowledge is used to

define what a specific situation means and it is applied to interpret information about the situation and to decide how to handle it.

According to Lester and Koehler (2007), information tells about physical things in the library such as registration card, Holder's name, password, etc. while knowledge describes the know-how and how to get about a procedure. Knowledge is the application of information. While there is fluidity in knowledge (diverse, for ever changing) information is helpless without knowledge. Information is not knowledge until it is applied effectively. It is of good note that information and knowledge are inseparable.

Revitalizing Public Library to Enhance National Development

The following indicators should be considered in order to revitalize public library.

Rescue Public Library from Threats

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

This is the intelligence of machines or software as opposed to human or animal intelligence. It is a study of computer science that develops and studies intelligent machines. There exist various types of AI soft wares, such as;
IBM Waston- question and answering, Tensor Flow - Machine learning, H20 AI - Cortana - virtual Assistant, Google Assistants, Sales force Einstein etc.

AI soft wares is a computer programme which mimics human behaviour by learning various data patterns and insights.

AI is also a field of study which combines computer science and robust-data sets, to enable problem- solving.

AI is the theory and development of computer systems capable of performing task that historically required human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, making decisions and identifying patterns.

Benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
a) It derives down the time taken to perform a task.
b) It enables the execution of complex tasks without cost
c) AI operates without interruption or breaks.
d) AI augments capabilities of individuals.

Google: Is a popular internet search engine. It scans the Web to find web pages that are relevant to the words you have typed in search box. Google search is the popular web search engine which is designed to search information on the World Wide Web.

Information Needs: Is the desire to locate and obtain knowledge and information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need coined by Robert S. Taylor

Information Seeking Behavior: It means the ways and means different profiles get information to meet their needs and fulfill their social or intrinsic obligation. The approaches of information seeking behavior includes, question and answer, trips to a library for book and non-book materials, internet search

engines, dialogue, conversation etc. Lerter Koehler (2007) opined that information searching behavior may be unsophisticated and in which case, it could be serendipitous, as one can be searching for one item of information but ends up in another one that did not know of its existence. Etim (2007), also identified the following as information seeking strategies.

- Locate and Access: This is a situation where information seeker will be able to locate and access designed information from the numerous resources from either the library or internet sources.

Fisher (2005) advocated for an information motor ground, which emphasis is on space for exchange of information. There is need for social atmosphere that foster the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information. Information seeking behavior also includes seekers to utilize what they have found by reading, viewing or listening in order to determine its relevance and to extract and put to use.

Inadequate Fund: Finance is one of the major factors that is required to revitalize public library. This will go a long way to build more public libraries in each local government area. Equip a public library with facilities, procure books and non-book materials, organise seminars, workshops etc.

Drive towards Information Society: Information society as defined by Gurnsay in Obi (2013) involves majority of people engaged in one way or the other in creating, gathering, storing, processing or distributing information. Thus, as at 2006 five nations were described as information societies by International Telecommunication Union, they are; Korea, Japan, Denmark, Iceland and Hong Kong. Most of Western nations like Canada, the United States of America, United Kingdom, France and Germany have developed themselves into information societies.

Attributes of Information Societies

- Storing information technology base that has influenced the way people work as most of their business activities and transactions are technically done and these have boosted their economy.
- The standard of living, patterns of work and leisure, the education system, market places are all influenced by advances in information and knowledge.
- Information communication Technology as the order of the day. The implication is that everyone will aspire to be technology literate and the nation or country will build their own information industry which will enhance the National development.

Research of Information Resource: It involves individuals, organisation, libraries, information centres, educational institutions, government agencies, electronic information system.

Maintenance of Libraries, build infrastructure- libraries, post-office, cyber café etc. Sarrocco (2005) enumerated the following steps to enhance revival of public libraries and encourage information society.

a) Internet Connectivity
b) Establish international cooperation

c) Create an enabling environment by making policies and regulations to govern information activities.
d) Liberalize use of information gadgets
e) Invite international body for technology transfer to provide technical and financial assistance.
f) Encourage citizens through training to have the basic skill needed to fully participate in the information society.
g) Political influence in the system affect public library.
h) National library as a co-coordinating agency.
i) Library board should be headed by a professional, if more ribbon should be revived, funded and sustained.
j) Readership campaign should be efficient and effective as conducted by the national library.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The revival of public library is pertinent to National development. There exist a direct relationship between the two variables which mandates individual, agencies, government, international bodies etc. to ensure that public library is sustained to meet its overall objectives which will enhance the national development of the country.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research could explore strategies for sustaining public libraries as vital instruments for national development. Investigating innovative funding models, public-private partnerships, and the role of technology in enhancing library services could provide valuable insights. Additionally, comparative studies on the impact of public libraries in different socio-economic and cultural contexts could help identify best practices and tailor interventions. Research could also examine how public libraries can better align their objectives with national development goals, such as improving literacy, fostering lifelong learning, and promoting digital inclusion. By addressing these areas, future studies can contribute to creating sustainable public library systems that effectively support the nation's progress.

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