

LIBRARY AS A VEHICLE TO INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA: FEATURES OF LIBRARY

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Abstract

This paper on library as a vehicle to individual and societal transformation highlights the importance of library to an individual and the society in general. It shows that library establishment and individual utilization cannot be ignored. If ignored the society will be heading to developing ignorant human existence. It highlights what quality the modern library should be, and the extent to which library has transformed the place of man. It exudes intelligence to build and manage the society. It brings in various skills that grow and develop the society. Library is unavoidably founded to be instrumental to the height a society attains. Development of science and technology begins with is the utilization of library for the society and individuals. The research concluded on how far the library has transformed the society through the institution of high learning. The use of library has ever influenced the making of high profile of man-power through university research findings and many more. The types of libraries and their locations are also highlighted to draw home the exact picture of the article.

Key Words: *Individual, Library, society, transformation*

Introduction

Library is a place where structured ideas of published works are stored and individual are expected to make use of them to develop to high profile of human intelligence. Individuals are persons in human nature who possessed human ingenuity, ability to invent new things or solve problems. Added to library the ingenuity will sprout and show like a million stars. Transformation provides people with the idea of change. One can be an illiterate today and tomorrow, changes to the status of literacy as a result of being transformed. That is exactly the extent of effective use of library in an open society. The society is the collection of all persons, all the regions states, communities the nations and the entire globe, dwelling-relating community begins from nuclear family of parents and children transforming into society, a wholesome word for all these settlements of man.

Furthermore, library is one of the pillars of both ancient civilization and modern development .History of society is replete with the place and contributions of libraries in the rise and growth of individuals, nations and countries. Libraries have always functioned as catalysts for

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education, intellectual growth and capacity building of citizens and logically by extension of the society. Books and libraries from time immemorial have been status symbols as they have always been associated with not only scholars but more with kings, princes, royalties and the wealthy. Libraries are noble institutions and therefore not associated with retrogression poverty or illiteracy but with progress, development and transformation. Adebayo (2000) library is a place where record of people's thoughts and preferable activities are stored for future use.

According to Quadri and Egesimba (2015), library is defined as a collection of print and non print materials, systematically organized and made available for users. While describing the library as a concept and not a place, Ptacek (2014) asserts that "libraries have never been about the form of materials, rather have always been about the shoulders of giants we stand upon, about being the castle where we keep our history and protect our past, about being a safe place for experimentation and exploration, about being an institution to help us learn and produce throughout our lives". The transformation power of the society is neither in the building nor in the collection, but in the intrinsic values and knowledge inherent in all the library materials either in physical or electronic form. Nwokocha (2018) opined that, power that transforms is in the content of information materials available in the library and not necessarily in the building.

Constitution of library

Library is a place where books of print and non-print materials are selected, organized and stored for the community it is meant for, it include the provision of relevant books, print and electronic format. It encourages reading and research activities.

Library in the modern society

Ancient library did not aim at spreading information. In a bid to safe guide information, they indirectly hoard information hence, in keeping it in lock and key. Modern library can be described as both an agent of education and societal agent, because, the role of the library in the education of citizens cannot be over emphasized. It is often be rated as the heart beat of any academic institution, invariably, in Nigeria, laws establishing institutions of higher learning including, Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and allied institutions are not permitted to function without a library. Libraries act like opium in education, challenges and render it pain free. However the impact of this statutory placement on the library and Librarians depends on individual carriage and personality of each Librarian.

This is a case of a Librarian having been given a trumpet and left with the choice of blowing it or leaving it to rust. The Librarian is as important as he presents both himself and his library. Reporting directly to the Provost (for a College of Education), the Rector (for a Polytechnic) or the Vice chancellor (for a University) automatically mean that the Librarian has equal rights and access with any other officers who also reports directly to the provost and higher than other officers who access the provost through superior officers overall Head of Institutions. It therefore beholds the Librarian to take the advantage of this direct access to the head of the institution for the benefit of the Library system.

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Libraries and individual and societal transformation

Aguolo and Aguolo (2002) states that libraries and the society are compatible; library has to co-exist gracefully with the society. The society benefits immensely in values of information managed and stored by Librarians. For as long as human memory can show, libraries have always been associated with development and transformation. It is, therefore, defensible to argue that societies are developed to the extent of its libraries. There was a time in the nation history that military juntas depended on the university dons to manage the political affairs of the country. That shows the extent of impact of libraries or better, state the extent of transformation libraries placed on the society. Aina (2004) state that for it is difficult to have a developed society with ill-equipped and un-developed libraries. Societies are developed and transformed through the invention while invention is by product of research and where will it be done? Definitely, it is done in the library. It is unarguably that the most acceptable place, in terms of serenity to conduct research.

According to Nwosu (2022), many experts and authors described library as an activity agent for institutional changes; arguing that libraries and other related institutions and techniques are essential preconditions for development and transformation of societies. Thus, the transformational powers of libraries are across all spheres of human endeavour. However, the impact of libraries in the following spheres can surface to buttress the fact that when libraries are transformed it follows that the societies are also transformed. Categorically, any segment of the society that pretends to do without the libraries is only deluding itself or at best operating at half capacity. Furthermore, Nwokocha (2017) reiterated that ‘Libraries does great things for individuals transformation. Lawyers, technologist, medical doctors teachers are typical examples of individual transformations by the existence of libraries in the society. Again, Gbadamosi et al., (2010), averred that library is an essential service unit in every academic institution and enlightened society that is interested in the information and knowledge communication among citizenry.

Importance of modern library in Nigeria

Modern library is important for Nigeria’s development, because it lays an intellectual foundation by providing the primary knowledge required for human and national progress. It also lays the foundation for all other levels of education and provides an avenue that enables young people to build their morals, intellectual skills, library skills, vocational skills and relationship with others through the numerous books, periodicals, magazines and facilities present in the library. In our fast moving world, it is important for the future leaders to have the necessary skills that will enable them to be self reliant, fit in and compete with peers in other parts of the world. Hence, the government is challenged, to keep abreast of the continuous support to library development with modern facilities all over the Nation.

Deepak (2013) states that Jahnnes Gutemberg’s movable type innovation in 15th Century revolutionized bookmaking from the 15th century in central and northern Italy, assiduously assembled libraries of humanists and their enlightened patrons provided a nucleus and around which “academy of scholars” congregated in each Italian city of consequence. Okoro (1999) submitted that many years before the importance of library was apparent scholars noted that true universities were identified by the collection of books; the importance of books or reading (and by

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implication, writing) has come to be paramount in the lives of people which made sir, Authur helps to state that “reading maketh a man” and that reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. For Aina (2002) , research is an important aspect of any discipline. It is critical to any profession, especially library and information science. He held that library is the oldest information provider for research. As a result, library is expected to provide all kinds of information sources needed in carrying out research, such as:

- The catalogue
- Indexing and abstracting tools
- Current awareness tools
- Bibliographies
- Books monographs etc.
- Thesis and dissertations
- Reports, (annual, technical, feasibility and working papers).
- Manuscripts, newspaper and magazines
- References sources (dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories and handbook etc.

Library in Education

Education without library is usually a half cast. Nwosu (2000) States that there is certainly an established and incontrovertible affinity between education and the libraries. Following this view, Nwokocha (2018) stated that the root of successful education is the library and that education is derived from teaching and learning while library is bedrock of the teaching and learning. No teacher teaches well without reading relevant books and materials and the best place to find these materials is the library. This also applies to learning which requires further reading beyond what has been taught. We therefore need to transform our libraries, if we actually want to transform the educational sector. Simply put, your standard of education is always as good as the standard of your libraries, logically, only those who truly appreciate the relevance of libraries actually provide for their growth, funding and transformation (Nwokocha, 2012). Also, in the opinion of Chigbu (2004), modern libraries are founded as instruments of educational to all members of the society and therefore significant in human capital development. Nwokocha (2014) further stated that world leaders have largely agreed in their affirmation that “books, information and libraries are inter woven and are known to work together to promote education and societal development”.

Types of Librarians and their locations

Library can be divided into categories by several methods.

- **Academic Libraries:**

Academic libraries are established along with decree and edit establishing academic institutions in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of Education College of agriculture to encourage or promote intellectual development and science and technology.

- **Public Libraries:**

State governments establish public libraries at state capitals and kept in the hand of state library boards on behalf of the state governments; hence, Rivers State, Imo State, etc. library boards

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providing service of readership to communities, students, politicians, artisans, children and others.

- **School Libraries:**

The school library is usually established in secondary and primary schools to encourage, learning by the students and pupils. It also helps teachers to update their methods of lesson delivery. Reading habits are enhanced by constant usage of the facility which subsequently takes them to higher education.

- **National Library:**

The Federal Government establishes National Library to collate all relevant information on behalf of the country. They also establish policies to control other libraries; having branches, called 'state branches of the national library' for effective control at the state level at the capital city/cities.

- **Special Libraries:**

Special libraries are normally established by manufacturing entities for research purposes aimed at improving their products. The example of this type of library is International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Library Ibadan; Federal Institute of Industrial Research (FIRO) library, Ibadan. Their researches are mainly based on intensive investigation. Their collections are from the journals, pamphlet, reports and letters made possible by subject's specialists. International libraries such as 'France bibliotheque' located in Paris; the oldest national library in the world founded in 1795. British museum located in London since 1973; the American library of congress located in Washington DC among others.

- **Automated Libraries**

All operational services are based on electronic-computer application to locate information and enhance library services to its patrons. Among other libraries Ignatius Ajuru University of Education established automated library use for E-uploading of information and library services.

Governance and Communication

This is other key areas where the link between libraries and society is very visible in its manifestations. According to Ogbonyomi (2007), Archival and Information Science, "Democracy and libraries have a symbiotic relationship to the point that it would be almost impossible for one to exist without the other". Accordingly, to the respected association, democracy derives its power from the people while on the other hand, libraries have the task to make democracy function properly through the provision of access to information which enable citizens take informed decisions and become easier to governs. Udensi and Akor (2013) summarized the above, insisting that it requires the establishment of libraries in government and legislative circles in order to ensure effective governance in Nigeria. When this is done, according to them, such services such as the provision of resources to have information in their respective callings are provided by libraries to all irrespective of age, race, creed, religion or political party.

It is certainly easier to govern an informed citizen than illiterates and unformed. there is no better agency known to man for the dissemination of valid and reliable information than the library. Therefore, when library flourishes, the society benefits through access to valid and author's

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information and ultimately transformation will be for the good of all. Kumar (2018) stated that one should not have any restraint agreeing with Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 23rd president of the United States of America who stated that libraries are essential to the functioning of a democratic society and represent the greatest symbol of the freedom of the mind.

Libraries in affinity with development of Science and Technology

Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) opined that science and technology are the bedrock of inventions and civilization. Science and technology cannot function and flourish in a vacuum, but require libraries to perform optimally. Scientists are known to begin their research pursuit from the library where they generate information, figures and data with which they conduct their researches and experiment in laboratories. Technology, in the words of Nwokocha (2018) is simply, “the application of scientific findings which originates from the libraries. Every scientist reads what others have done before being able to know how it was done and how it can be improved upon. This is exactly what Sir Isaac Newton (a one of greatest scientists of all times) meant when he said “if” I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants”.

Earlier, Nwokocha (2011) stated that it is difficult to separate libraries from science and technology and by extension development. This is because modern research is hardly conducted in isolation, but based on funding of earlier studies to which libraries most times serve as inevitable sources. He went on to assert that “libraries are far more than just books and technological tools; rather they are institutions that citizens, educate individual and at the same time foster thoughtful communities and society. Have you thought of why attempts by nations like Nigeria to embrace science and technology and transform their economics have not yielded much positive fruits? The reason is that science and technology rely on libraries to flourish and because most of our developing nations including Nigeria have continued to neglect libraries of all types without knowing that it is only when you transform libraries that you can transform science and technology and ultimate societies.

Youths, young adults and marginalized Population

The library, especially public library has been described and indeed functions as peoples' University. Aina (2012) stressed that library has the potential to provide not only information but succors to youth, young adults and other marginalized persons. If our libraries are transformed to the point where they are conducive, comfortable and stocked with information in physical and electronic formats, you can imagine the transformational impact it will have on the youths, students, prisons and other vulnerable persons in our society. Transforming the libraries will include establishing modern facilities and by extension to places where there were no libraries. If libraries are positioned to provide these vulnerable groups with useful information, they would not only be properly informed, but transformed leading to a better society. Ifidon, Aguolo & Aina (2004) held that if touts at the motor parks are provided with relevant information (not only about their activities, but about government and their immediate communities) it will certainly lead to a transformed society.

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What library offers to the people

The place of library knows no bounds as it provides knowledge, trains people in intellectual and technological development. The society cannot grow without knowledge and knowledge is derived from library. It is detrimental to underestimate the value of library development because it is “mind power to manpower”.

Recommendations

1. The governments should as a matter of urgency declare emergency to the library development in Nigeria.
2. Legislation should be effected for the establishment of Federal Ministry of Library Development in the country.
3. Elaborate incentives should be extended to publishers of information to encourage commitment in this area:
4. Librarians should be given open opportunity to be trained and be retrained to sustain the tempo of expected standard of dissemination of information in the libraries.
5. The use of Library should be made a condition to graduate from disciplines in academia
6. To encourage the librarians to do more, special incentive as special salary scale and robust condition of service should be given to the information managers.
7. Library and information, communication Technology (ICT) should be emerged as one discipline in order to equip librarians after training for the purpose of standard in the library services to its clientele.
8. Governments should resorts to establishing libraries in rural area so that everybody should be affected in innovations.
9. Touts at motor parkers should be provided with information to change their mindsets.

Conclusion

In concluding this article, it is therefore pertinent to reintegrate the fact that libraries are critical to any societal transformation. The information available to rich nations and the economic viable or wealthy countries are similar as countries with modern-up-to-date libraries. They have their societies transformed as a result. Following this position, it is therefore incontrovertible that when you transform the libraries, you ultimately transformed the societies. The society needs this library as nations who aim at developing economically and technologically. It is only when the libraries are supported by strict policies and implementation that the society can see light at the end of the tunnel. Development strides should begin with multiple library establishments following the explosion of population and the need for education. Funding is expedient to ensure steady library development in all areas including rural settlement with the aim of liberalization of library to ensure knowledge for everybody. Ignorance should be chased away because it causes wrong perceptions, wickedness and hatred.

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