

# LIBRARY EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEYOND 2020

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## **Abstract**

Education is a tool a society can use to achieve social, economic and political development. When this is done, it is national development. No proper education can succeed without libraries. Libraries are faculties that acquire, organize, preserve and disseminate recorded knowledge to users. But, beyond 2020 the library should go beyond acquiring, organizing, preservation and the dissemination of this recorded knowledge to library Education for all. This paper therefore sought to identify the place of the library beyond 2020.

Education is the most important tool that shapes the destiny and future of individuals. Achigaonye (2014) describes education as the process of training and development of the mental potentials, physical knowledge, skills and character of individuals by formal and informal schooling. Education has also been described by Obaro (2014) as the development of the positive values in the society where one lives, by the development of one's abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour. Education therefore is an indispensable tool that a society can use to achieve social, economic and political development. Nigeria as a nation can use Education to achieve national development. Education literarily means teaching, using formal system of schools, college or university. It also means to give knowledge or understanding (Obaro, 2014). Similarly, Onyebueke (2014) has described it as the totality of life experiences which starts at birth and ends at death.

Development according to Akinpelu (1992) embraces all the aspirations, dreams, goals of a people, nations and government. It can also be described as the improvement of people's lifestyle through improved qualitative and functional education, income, skill, development and fulfilled employment. Igwe (2011) has the view that education should encompass the ability of people to read and write. The process of increasing the knowledge, skill and capacity of all the people in a nation can be termed national development. National Development is expected to be transformative. It is when the citizens of a nation get to the level where they experience a measure of fulfillment and happiness, where they can realistically hope and work for better tomorrow. (Akinpelu, 1992). This we expect beyond 2020.

## **The Library**

The library has been defined by Clarke (1997) as an institution that acquires, organizes, preserves and makes available these recorded knowledge of man to the users". Nwafor, (1977) also described the library as a "collection of books and related materials housed, organized and interpreted to meet the broad and varying needs of people for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment". Human knowledge are also stored in other forms of materials other than books, hence, libraries contain varying materials including non book materials. Libraries would be useless if they were mere storage systems, but they become kinetic once they are in contact with the inquiry mind in the form of potential knowledge, hence the librarian is entrusted with the distinctive cultural and social responsibility of having to select from the universe of rapidly proliferating records growing at an exponential rate, the materials that may be needed by the users, organize, interpret and disseminate them for users. Beyond 2020, the library should move out of acquiring, organizing and disseminating information for users to library education for all.

### **Library Education**

The library can be described as a building or room which has collections of book and non book materials for use. Education literarily means to teach someone using the formal system of a school. Library education can then be seen as teaching someone about libraries using the formal system of a school Obaro (2014). In this context, library education has to do with teaching the pupils and students about libraries and its uses. This will help inculcate in the children at the early stage of life reading habits. Curriculum has to do with what a child has to learn in school. In the primary and secondary school curriculum, library education is not embedded. This paper addresses the need for library education to be embedded into our primary and secondary school curriculum.

### **Library Education Beyond 2020**

Libraries in Nigeria can be traced to the Second World War. During the war, the British Colonial Masters established reading rooms that helped them to spread the war propaganda. At the end of the Second World War in 1945, these reading rooms became redundant until the regional governments of the East, West and North, decided to start proper public library services with them. Librarianship evolved over these years. In some places it succeeded, and in some it failed.

Early Nigerian libraries were manned almost completely by expatriates. Training of indigenous personnel to manage libraries became necessary. Early notable organizers of this training included John Harris and Joan Allen. In 1953, UNESCO organized the first seminar on the development of public libraries in Africa at the University College Ibadan. One of the recommendations of the seminar was that some library schools of high caliber be established in Africa. This led to the first library school in Ibadan in 1959 which was known as the Institute of Librarianship, now, Department of library archival and Information Studies of the University of Ibadan. This was the first library school in Nigeria and from here, other library schools came up. Presently there are over twenty five states and federal Nigeria Universities offering librarianship as a course (Edoka, 2000, Okiy, 2014).

### **Library Education: A Panacea for National Development**

The advancement of knowledge is made possible through specialized investigations that are undertaken in the Universities, research institutions, business and industrial establishments. If Nigeria must develop, then, it must ensure equal opportunities of access to knowledge for all citizens. A democratic society which Nigeria runs is that society where the political and economic power belong to the people and must open up knowledge equally to its members which can be seen in the development of libraries. A tyrannical government would like to keep the masses ignorant and illiterate for exploitative purposes. Beyond 2020 therefore, libraries should from the higher education, extend and be embedded into the primary and secondary schools curriculum like other subjects.

### **The Rationale for Library Education in Primary and Secondary Schools**

Over thirty four years ago, the federal government stated in the national policy on education (1981) that “libraries are one of the most important education services. Every state Ministry of Education needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in our educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for the schools. Libraries have been established in schools, library schools have also produced good number of librarians, but the use of the library is yet to be inculcated into the children; and should be inculcated at an early age so that it becomes lifelong. Fayose (2003) stressed that “children whose school training have been limited to learning from teacher’s dictated notes or on contents of presented textbooks cannot acquire the ability to learn on their own”. For the development of a lifelong interest in books reading and information seeking children should be introduced to the use of libraries early.

Any nation that doesn't take the education of its children seriously is jeopardizing its own future because the children are the future of the nations and have to be introduced into the world of learning and reading early in life through the libraries. With the introduction of library education early in life, the child will be cultivated early into the habit of reading and nurtured through infancy to adolescence with the provision of interesting and challenging reading and information resources as well as setting up of educational out of class library programmes. Library education involves learning and teaching. Learning is child centered and comes from within and is participatory.

The library resources will help the child to learn and the classroom will be used for both learning and teaching. Combining these two, lead to child development. Schools without libraries lead to negative teaching/learning environment and this promotes truancy, apathy to learning and demoralizes children and teachers. This, no doubt, is not good for national development. If library education is inculcated early into the children, it can help the children develop vicarious interest that will keep them profitably engaged after school.

Library education will also provide opportunity too for teachers, librarians, pupils and students to cooperate. It will also inculcate the spirit of creativity, permanent literacy, numeracy, laying down of sound bases for scientific and reflective thinking, as well as develop creativity.

### **Conclusion**

Libraries and library education are a *sine qua non* for education and development in Nigeria beyond 2020. An uninformed citizen cannot cope with the social, economic, emotional and educational challenges of a developing Nigeria. Information-selecting behaviour should be cultivated and nurtured from infancy through adolescence to adulthood. Libraries and library education can do these.

### **Recommendations**

For education beyond 2020 and national development, children, librarians and the government must begin to explore the world of knowledge together. To achieve this, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) Curriculum planners, government policy makers and educators should see to it that library education is recommended and inculcated into the school curriculum like other subjects from the kindergarten that is pre-primary education level to the secondary school level.
- (b) Federal and State governments should promulgate laws directing all schools to establish viable libraries.
- (c) Information bearing resources should be used to equip the libraries.
- (d) Qualified competent personnels should be employed to manage the libraries.
- (c) Librarianship as a career should be made attractive to attract the right caliber of librarians and teachers.
- (f) Punitive measures should be taken against defaulting schools and proprietors.
- (g) No new school should be approved unless it has a standard library.

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