

FUNCTIONAL LIBRARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA; CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY AND INSECURITY

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Abstract

The provision of functional library education in Nigeria is crucial and indispensable to National development. Both academic and public library must be functional to enable the user's to develop attitudes and skills that will enable them adapt to change in order to function practically, and creatively academically. Functional library education has been identified as one of the key elements that can give access to information, which is crucial to democratic information society development. This article is aimed at examining how challenges of democracy and insecurity affect functional library education in Nigeria. The authors used secondary data which was obtained from print materials and online publications. The concept of library, education, democracy and insecurity were discussed. The paper identified challenges of democracy and insecurity as they affect functional library education in Nigeria. On the way forward the paper recommended the following among others, Government proper funding of library education. When the funding of library is increased, infrastructural facilities improved with up to date library information resources, then libraries will provide the function it was established to serve.

Keyword: Library, Education, Democracy and Insecurity.

Introduction

Education is a process of acquiring knowledge or habit through instruction or study by bringing desirable change in the behaviour of human beings. Library education is the most neglected aspect of service in most Nigerian libraries (Akande, 2017). An important part of library education is to help users find information independently and efficiently. Library education has become an important component in education of today. The present day Nigeria society has changed. Both academic and public library must endeavour to help user's develop attitudes and skills that will enable them adapt to change in order to function practically and creatively academically. Library education is necessary because to know how to use the library is part of education and can prepare the users for the continue process of self-education. In Nigeria, it seems that while there is a growing awareness about the importance of library education instruction programme, many public and academic libraries still does not evaluate their programmes towards making them functional which appears that library education is the most neglected aspect of service in most Nigeria libraries, especially academic and school libraries (Todd, 2012). It is surprising that a large proportion of library user's, even among university staff and students do not know how to make proper use of the library.

Education has been proven to be a weapon for the development of attitudes and values which are capable of building a nation (Arua & Chinaka, 2011). Library and education are two vital institutions that cannot be separated in an all-round national development. Education as a result of knowledge imparted develops abilities, attitudes, behaviour and

technical know-how, and are of the agency responsible for acquiring, disseminating and imparting this knowledge is the library. The provision of functional library services is therefore crucial and indispensable to national development. Hence libraries are established to advance the course of education, impacting knowledge for national development. Library objectives are interwoven with the knowledge for national development, aim at producing intellectually developed and complete individuals in the society. Thus, libraries exist to promote knowledge and complement education. Library has been described as the heart of the educational system. It is the school learning resources centre, public library serves as the people's university, the laboratory of laboratories which play vital role in shaping both the citizen and student knowledge. The role of library have always been inextricably tied to educational reform which moved libraries from the periphery to the heart of the school and made them central to teaching and learning (Moruf , 2015).

Educational system in Nigeria has passed through several stages and changes, though change is inevitable, as all natural phenomena in life, library as an institution has experienced many challenges and problems in terms of functionality and consistency due to insecurity from time to time. Some libraries have very limited resources and clearly are unable to satisfy their users, whereas others are large in size, have substantial and quality holdings, and can provide a variety of services (Esther, 2016). Obviously, those libraries that are able to provide users with whatever they want achieve higher levels of user satisfaction. Thus, the availability of security and library resources can have a significant influence on both citizens and students education outcome. It is this overall perception of a library's security of resources and users that contributes to education development of (Jerome, 2013).

Education in Nigerian is crucial to the development of Nigeria as a nation; as such functional library service is very essential for the Nigeria's security and education itself. The library will bring out the best out of the citizens when they cultivate the habit of using library resources. Solomon & Gboyega (2020) opined that Nigeria can actually achieved the status of giant of Africa and thus become a major force in Africa and indeed the world , if proper policies and structures are in place to inculcate the habit of reading into Nigerians right from the scratch at their tender ages; as education now drives the growth of a nation. As noted by Keith (2004) that the purpose of educating Nigerians can only be achieved through a well-equipped and functional library. Nigerians need a functional library and the services of a well trained librarian to succeed in national development. Information is power and access to information is indispensable to individual advancement in life as well as national development. Nigerians need a functional library for effective learning for lifelong education, in consonance with the National Policy on education which stipulated that, "education is to equip individual with such knowledge, skill, and attitude that will enable them to live meaningful and fulfilling lives, contribute to the development of the society, derive maximum social economic and cultural benefits from the society and discharge their civil obligation." The essence of promoting functional academic library is a significant improvement to assist our both the citizen and students, when there are functional libraries and security couple with well trained librarians to man the libraries Nigerians will succeed in national development.

Conceptual Considerations

Library

The word library is derived from the Latin word "libraria" meaning "a book place". It originates from the term "liber" which means "a book". Library refers to a collection of books gathered for study, research, reference and recreation. According to Ranganathan in the father of library science cited in (Bhatt, 2011) define library as a public institution or establishment charged with the care of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them. Similarly, the American Library Association defines library as a

collection of resources in a variety of formats being organized by the experts or information professionals provide access, convenient to the digital as well as to the physical information to targeted services and achieve the mission of education needs by promoting society as a whole. Chukwuemeka (2018) sees library as an instrument of self-education, a means of knowledge and factual information delivery, a center of intellectual recreations and a beacon of enlightenment that provides accumulated preserved knowledge of civilization which consequently enriches ones mental vision. Chukwuemeka (2018) sees library as learned institution equipped with treasures of knowledge, organized and managed by a trained personnel with the responsibility of educating children, students, men and women and further assisting them to develop the ability of solving their information problems which is possible through the development of the ability to use information tools to get the right information at the right time from the right source and at the right place. For Bamidele (2015) view library as a learning laboratories whose equipment includes books, magazines, newspapers, filmstrips, tapes, slides, recordings, transparencies, art painting and other types of teaching and learning materials, these equipments are required for student educational purposes and development.

Education

The term education is derived from the Latin word 'educare and educatum' which intends. The former means to bring up and the latter denotes the teaching and training. These words reveal that education aims at providing a learner or a child a nourishing environment to bring out and develop the latent potentiality hidden inside him. In simple terms (Ary, et. al., 2018) define education as a practice that aims at teaching an individual new skill and principles which sharpens the minds and builds moral principles in an individual. According to (Kedrayate, 2012) education aims to nourishing the good qualities in man and draws out the best in every individual and develops the innate inner capacities of man. (Ary, et. al., 2018) opined that by educating an individual we attempt to give him some desirable knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, attitudes and critical 'thinking. Through education one acquires knowledge of history, geography, arithmetic, languages and sciences. Shah-Mohammad (2021) observed that through education one can develops some understanding about the deeper things in life, the complex human relations, and the cause and effect relationship, gets some skills in writing, speaking, calculating, drawing, operating some equipment, develops interests in and attitudes towards social work, democratic living, co-operative management among others. As an individual in the society education makes one think critically about various issues in life and take decisions about them being free from bias and prejudices, superstitions and blind beliefs (Kedrayate, 2012). It is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude (Chandra & Sharma, 2002). Education makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life. According to Dionne et. al., (2001) In the largest sense is education is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. To sum up, we need to recognize that the knowledge, skills and productivity of our growing young and dynamic work force forms the backbone of our economy. To reap the benefits of such a young work force Dionne et al., (2001) observed that, we need to implement the reforms in the education system and bring forth new factors of production, namely knowledge, skills and technology which have the

ability to unleash the productive frontiers of the economy in the most efficient and dynamic way.

Democracy

The word ‘democracy’ has its origins in the Greek language. It combines two shorter words: ‘demos’ meaning whole citizen living within a particular city-state and ‘kratos’ meaning power or rule. It is generally agreed that liberal democracies are based on four main principles:

- ❖ A belief in the individual: since the individual is believed to be both moral and rational;
- ❖ A belief in reason and progress: based on the belief that growth and development is the natural condition of mankind and politics the art of compromise;
- ❖ A belief in a society that is consensual: based on a desire for order and co-operation not disorder and conflict;
- ❖ A belief in shared power: based on a suspicion of concentrated power (whether by individuals, groups or governments).

Insecurity

Insecurity is simply the very opposite of what we have as security. Insecurity just as security is seen also in diverse ways. Some people would take it to mean absence of safety or presence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection and unsafe (Achumba, 2013). Insecurity can make one to lose confidence, be afraid, unsettled, oppressed, lose focus, and be devastated and lose one’s humanness.

Functional Library and Quality Education

The American Library Association defines library as a collection of resources in a variety of formats being organized by the experts or information professionals provide access, convenient to the digital as well as to the physical information to targeted services and achieve the mission of education needs by promoting society as a whole. A functional library is one which is in good working condition, useful and serving the functions it was set to fulfill be it public or academic library. Academic library is the second class for students due to the extremely important position and function in quality education and public library is said to be the people’s university. A functional library is expected to stock all kinds of items that add to knowledge from books to audio and visual materials, internet through computers and artifacts that advance the cultural and recreational needs of the users. In addition to providing materials (Xiehe, 2003) noted that, a functional library is one which provide the services of librarians who are trained and experts at finding, selecting, circulating and organizing information and at interpreting information needs, navigating and analyzing very large amounts of information with a variety of resources. Nigeria should not be without functional libraries because Nigerians need information consultation that must be in time and libraries can provide the most updated and fastest timely information and intelligence for them. The information consultation of libraries can help Nigerians update their knowledge and understand the need for national security, peace and unity.

The main function of a library is to serve the society through the record of human thoughts, ideas and expressions by making them available to all at all time. We do need libraries as a resource center and reference purposes. A well equip and functional libraries can give information Google can never give you on a platter of Gold. (Lan, 2011) noted that a functional library should create user’s-oriented library management culture, take users as the core objective in library management, respect users as human being. Stimulate user’s

initiatives and innovation and arouse their common sense and make users accept library education voluntarily. Combine all tasks of libraries organically and form an initiative inner driving power, a functional library should join in the process of educating. Lan (2011) stated that functional libraries are kind of self-study education process, where users can improve their learning efficacy, realizing the psychological experience of cognitive acquirement and cognitive process, and achieving the organic unification of learning knowledge and learning study. With sufficient independence, Nigerians can actualize the self-training to a great degree, and also the formation of subjective consciousness, the play of creative and design ability, the activity of divergent thinking, and the complete understanding of experiences and fruits, not only improving the knowledge efficiency, but also realizing the psychological needs for self values.

Libraries are places of information, once Nigerians thought of library they assume only books. Though it may be true, but functional library is taking a different shapes not only print text as people may think, but also e-books and audio books. Over simple books, functional libraries are places of information by providing users free access to a wealth of data that cannot be seen elsewhere, whether on-line or in print. Xiehe (2003) observed that a functional library is one which creates users service facilities and environment which include but not limited to the building design, environmental layout, reading station design, and the arrangement of journals in rooms should follow the principle of caring people, considering people, and facilitating people, which can generate a human reading environment for users. This is to say that a library with bright, warm, and quiet environment can not only improve Nigerian reading interests and efficiency, but also inspire Nigerians minds, influence citizen's morals, improve citizen's personalities, wills, and qualities, creating a favorable harmonious society free of insecurity and promote peace and national development.

Challenges of Democracy as it Affect Library Education in Nigeria

Democracy allows ordinary people to have a say in what the government does. It allows people to decide how their country and society should be run. It's a chance to hear other people's opinions. The society information demands of all the democratic institutions which work with information, knowledge, and culture, of these; library and education have been a marginal theme. Library education has been identified as one of the key elements that can open or give access to information, which is crucial to democratic information society development. Libraries are especially important now when the whole idea of government is gazette, stressing more and more independent learning. Here functional libraries enter the stage. Kirti & Devanand (2012) stated that, unique function of a library is to acquire such as government gazette, organize information materials of public interest, and others users service facilities, offer for use and preserve publicly available material irrespective of the form in which it is packaged in such a way that, when it is needed, it can be found and put to use. No other institution carries out this long-term, systematic work other than a library. All citizens must be able to find and use information. It is the key raw material - but it is a zero resource, if there are no access points to it and if documents are in chaotic order.

In this democratic dispensation, Kirti & Devanand (2012) believe that effective citizen action is possible only when citizens know how to gain access to information of all kinds and have the skills to become responsible, informed participants in democracies. This is especially so as e-government evolves. Libraries offer real and virtual civic spaces where citizens can speak freely, share similar interests and concerns, and pursue what they believe are in their public's interest. Ultimately, free discourse among informed citizens assures civil society; and civil society provides the social capital necessary to achieve common goals. Through this role libraries prevent the lack of information and idea exchanges which in a

closed society stifles creativity, suppresses the imagination and creates a barrier to social, economic and technical progress.

Factors Militating against Functional Library Education in Nigeria

Initially, before the advent of the internet and its usage by our contemporary society, the library was the real Google. Libraries served as resource for almost everything and they still do till date, but people rarely used library in Nigeria. Today the whole world is a global village, with the advent of the internet where information can be grabbed by just inputting some words on the internet, one would then wonder if we still need a functional library, but truly, the place of libraries cannot be underestimated when it comes to education system. But some factors still hindered the functionality of library in Nigeria today such as inconsistency in government policies. Each government comes in with its own different type of policy when its tenure expires another comes in and ignores the previous policy and introduces another. This has been the trend from time to time in the political settings of Nigeria today. This has had an adverse effect on the different policies put in place to further the rapid development and utilization of library in Nigerians especially public libraries.

Poor library administration is another factor that can hinder functionality of library in Nigeria especially public library. Librarian ensures that libraries are open, functional, and serving the school and/or community in which they operate but the reverse is the case especially public library in Nigeria. Librarian should ensure they have received both academic and practical training in librarianship from a reputable higher institution before venturing into the art of managing a library for public utilization in Nigeria. To some extent half-baked library professionals are entrusted with the management of library especially public library. Inexperienced library administrators may lead to the underutilization of the library as users may stop to patronize when they seek for information and no competent librarian to help find what they need.

Another scenario is the irrelevant or outdated information resources in the library. A functional library should be well equipped with up-to-date information resources of all sorts and make it available to users at all times. A functional library is expected to be a place of up-to-date information resources, from daily newspapers to weekly journals, bulletins, contemporary textbooks, government gazette and everything in-between. That seems to be a mirage of sorts in most of the Nigerian public libraries. Some library resources are in a pitiable state not to talk of the latest current book or journal in the library.

The most challenging situation of functional library services is the issue of funding. Without proper funding, a library as an institution charged with the responsibility of providing and dissemination of information will fail in its quest. As said earlier, most of the libraries in Nigeria are in a pitiable state. Lack of funding hinders the provision of functional library services in Nigeria, without funds a library cannot grow. Government has turned a blind eye on the educational sector which involves the library and education of its citizens; this further deteriorates the function of libraries established to serve. We may not see it as a problem today but the nearest future generations where the citizens will see no need of using the library as a way of finding solutions to national problems they might be facing.

Similarly, poor infrastructural facilities in most of the libraries in the country is pitiable especially our public library. (Ossai Ugbah (2013) reported that the existing infrastructural facilities in most public libraries in Nigeria are obviously inadequate. - No conducive room for serious reading or research, most of them has no or limited reading tables and chairs which shows that most of the libraries in the country are not given due attention they deserve to discharge their functions. As bad as this situation maybe, we can only hope that governments do something and find a lasting solution to the deplorable state of library in the country.

Functional Library Services as a Way Forward for National Security

Information is necessary for people to be liberated from the shackles of ignorance, misconceptions, economic stagnation, social unrest, and political instability (Anasi, 2010). If library can provide unrestricted access to information resources free of charge to all the residents of a given community people will be well informed, they will be less aggressive; as such a well informed society will be a less aggressive society. A functional library acquire all relevant, adequate and useful information resources of all format, for easy access and preserve them from damages and disseminate timely information to the public without discrimination for the purposes of achieving an informed society. As observed by Jennifer & Onyema (2018) when a society is well informed will take into consideration the dangers in insurgency and the need for national security. This is to say that a functional library services will continue to keep Nigerians educated on the need for national security and unity thereby steer clear from any act or conduct that have the potential of fueling insecurity and will only seek for what will promote peace and unity of the nation. It is therefore clear that having a functional library is a way of achieving an informed society.

Knowledge is power and this can be achieved through timely and accurate information. National unity cannot be achieved without citizens having timely, accurate, and relevant information relating to working of the society in which they live in. Library provide access to knowledge, information and works of peoples imagination through a range of resources and services available to all members of the community regardless of age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic status and educational attainment of the citizen. This is because information is fresh ideas or fact taken out of a person's environment for use with the objective of transforming people's behavior. Ignorance is man's enemy and citizens who are ignorance can become a fighting member of the society fostering insecurity (Azubuike et. al., 2021). Library such as public library is a common man's school where any citizen can walk in freely and have access to a variety of information. As stated by (Bradley, 2016) if a society is well informed, will contributes significantly to the development of the nation as the availability of information resources would promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Similarly, Aiyebilehin, Onyam & Akpan (2018) stated that public library is one of the institutions that can promote education and eliminate illiteracy among the citizens by providing educational, social and political information to people in a particular community. Hence, library is the local information centre; making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users (Kelechi, 2020). Librarian should begin to see national security as an important issue. No development can take place when there is an insecurity and destruction of lives and properties. When Libraries enlighten the citizens by providing accurate, factual and timely information, these will guide their actions and help make good decision that will promote peaceful society for all Nigerians. Librarian is responsible to disseminate information that can contribute to peace and national security by helping the citizens to understand their role in national security.

Conclusion

Library is the people information center. For any nation to make a meaningful impact in preventing insecurity and promote peace early warning information is needed and this could be made available by the library. It is the responsibility of the library to provide timely, accurate, and reliable information to their users through materials that communicate experience and ideas from one person to another making them easily and freely available to all people. Absence of a free flow of information in the society may bring about conflict and insecurity.

Recommendations

- Government should redress the issue of funding of libraries in the state. It is only when the funding of library is increased, infrastructural facilities improved with up to date library and information resources then libraries will provide the function it was established to serve.
- Librarians should think more broadly and highly of their task, ethically responsible and take actions that are socially just by avoiding sentiment and personal interest in the discharge of their duties. This will help in shaping peoples negative perception about the library
- Regular evaluation of library and information resource and services should be carried out in the library on regular basis this would result in an improved service delivery
- Library should have a good maintenance culture to maintain and preserved library resources and facilities to facilitate continuous usage and services to the nation

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