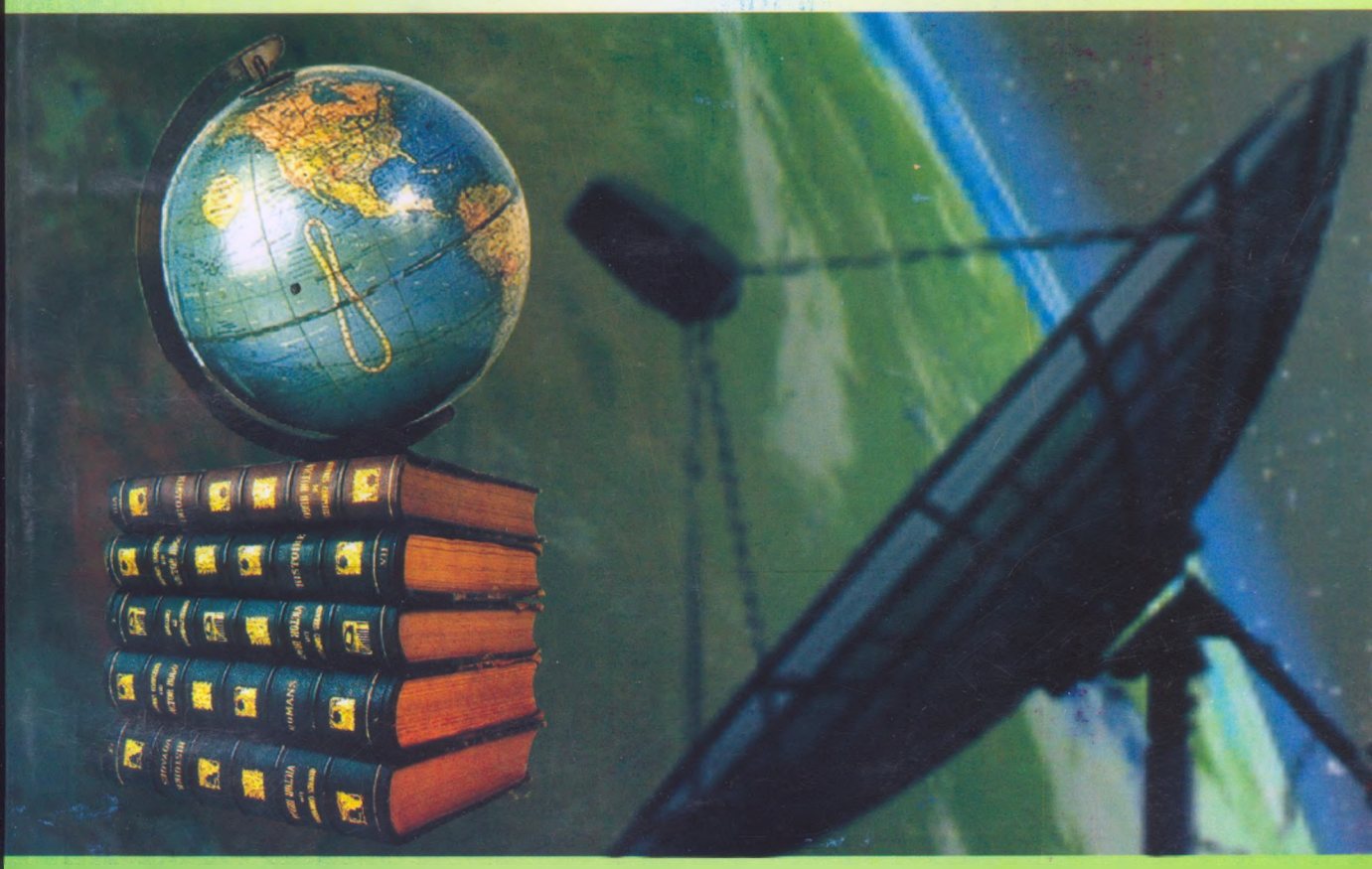
ISSN: 3428-0009

Global Review of Library & Information Science



Vol.11, 2015

Global Review of

Library



Information Science

Vol. 11, 2015

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

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Librarianship Beyond Reproach: Perspective for Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Kasa, M. Gabriel,
Quadir, A.O.,
Bana, I. Dorcas

Abstract

The paper focuses on the benefits of including and engaging librarians to facilitate achieving the different themes of sustainable development goals not minding numerous reproaches on librarians and libraries such as the neglect and partial-utilization of library resources and services for sensitization of patrons and communities to be aware of their contributory roles to sustain development and achieve the goals. The inclusion of the library is aimed at utilizing the library space and resources because of popularity and trust over the years to bridging information gaps- a requisite for sustainable development goals. The paper in conclusion, points to the fact that librarianship permeates communities. Libraries are indispensable partners in the quest to liberate man, the environment and the economy as stipulated in the sustainable development goals.

Introduction

The classical description of a librarian illuminates him/her as a facilitator, organizer, reliable information source and collector. Librarianship is a path to qualification of librarians; qualified librarians are acclaimed to be advocate for sustainable development because they conserve and preserve information for present and future use. They are also not deterred by poor or irregular funding, need to embed technologies in their activities, though they are ravaged by dilapidated infrastructure, inconsistent release and sponsorship to trainings to improve their trade (librarianship). This implies that librarianship is all about information bridging and building through deliberate actions that are concerted irrespective of clients, information formats, medium and subjects. These challenges faced by librarians are not restricted to a particular economical and geopolitical sphere; it is a problem in the developed and developing countries. Substantiating the processes, commitment and goals of sustainable development goes beyond mere news headlines and speculations. It require access to obscure research that point to

impact made and reaching out to all stakeholders to see the needfulness to partake and accomplish the universal goal. Challenges such as the proliferation of research reports, the non -availability of statistics to validate projections and assumptions that boardroom decisions and financing abound cannot be allowed to continue unabated.

As a partner, librarian engages patrons and put to use the library (the working environment) using deliberate structures aimed at improving man's well-being, providing access, retrieval and use of most needed information systematically following specialized and standardized procedures. Librarianship supports sustainability by satisfying information needs to sustain existence and ensuring that empirical learning and replications of results are successful. These roles are very imperative but not easy because of neglect of libraries. This neglect caused ineffective and inefficient functionality of libraries in their duties of providing high demand of evidence-based information for retrospection and make visibility the contents and context of information resources on topical issues.

Economic, social and environmental improvement depends on access, retrieval and utilization of information acquired, processed and stored by libraries. Therefore, librarians should be focused and continue exploring better ways to bridge gaps created by lack of current information, and causing waste of time and money as a result of duplication of research efforts. Arguably, Anunobi, Ukwoma and Ukachi (2012) said that the era of arm chair librarianship is over.. The consciousness that librarians must not be deterred by reproaches of numerous kinds requires that they work against incapacitation by collaborating, pledging allegiance to the state chapter associations and national body of the Nigerian Library Association so that together they can be supported because these have caused the decimal progress recorded for sustainable development.

The facts available also show that, it is extremely important to reconsider the library and its roles for sustainable development because of its spread, closeness to the people and the trust the people have that it is dependable to satisfy the basic information needs. It is also interesting to note that library activities take cognizance of the present and future generation's information need because it preserves and conserves information resources to demonstrate that decision making affects all facets of life and that there are times when the human knowledge transmitted previously through correspondence is needed to resolve a problem. Librarianship teaches, guides, and retools professionals to satisfy such deficit in

addition to training professionals of what information to acquire, process, arrange, make accessible, store and make retrievable. These routines influence all the elements of sustainable development – caring for the present and future generations, which corroborate with the goals of sustainable development which seek to improve man, environment and the economy.

The significance of the study is hinged on the premise that librarianship is anchored on all types of communities and in diversified subject areas. Therefore, the reiteration of the position of libraries to actualize the sustainable development desire is that as a vital organ of the society it has the capacity and professionals that can readily influence the knowledge base of all.

Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations from meeting their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). According to Reed (1997), sustainable development has three recognized aspects that need integration: economic, environmental and social aspects. Economically, a sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on continuous basis but avoid extreme sectoral imbalance that damages agriculture or industrial production. Environmentally, sustainable system maintains a stable resource base devoid of over-exploitation of renewable resources systems or environmental sink function and other ecosystem functions that are not ordinarily classed as economic resources. Socially, the system addresses distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education, gender equity and political accountability and participation.

Concept of Librarianship Reproach

The reproach librarianship suffer emanates from malicious behaviours of stakeholders and financiers of the library. Worthy of note is that very few could be blamed on the traditional operations within the technical sections of the library where delays in processing resources for use may be. The resources which are subjected to the technical units must be acquired, they undergo processes guided by ethical procedures are themselves relying on the availability of material resources.

Librarians are insisting that the process of supporting lifelong learning, availing

people the opportunities to improve quality of life, knowledge and mutual respect is currently under siege that is why some stakeholders vent their annoyance on the library. As information providing platform, libraries are doing their best to resolve conflict, injustice, and threat to the existence of resources. It is also faced with its own kind of annihilation through acts of mutilation, defacing, theft, computer virus infection and hiding of resources. Funding of the libraries is also at the discretion of man, cutting down budgets has not helped the library to salvage its resources and acquire new ones, the act of preservation, conservation and use of appropriate technologies is also at risk because of obsoleteness.

Environmentally, the libraries are also reproached by humidity, organic reactions, lightening, winds, rains and heat. The contrast of climatic conditions makes a typical library in Nigeria incapable of deliberately salvaging already acquired collections from ruins. The attacks by insects and rodents deface and destroy resources when they excrete and tear, it is very alarming that librarianship is the most battered profession because its reproach are multi-faceted (from human, animals, insect and climatic). Remarkably, library roles in sustainable development are the distinctive ways they have been able to reveal and support what must be sustained.

Areas Where Librarians Interventions Influences Sustainable Development Objectives

What should be stained according to the library must be capable of opening opportunities, have requisite capacities and capability to bridge a missing link and ushers more participation (Pearce, 1998 and World Bank, 1997). Clearly, the three elements of sustainable development introduce many potential complications to the simple conceptualization, it requires intervening platforms. These are the areas where library interventions are employable to influence the three recognized aspects of sustainable development which comprise of economic, environmental and social aspects. Therefore, the scope of this paper is discourse on the ways the library is supporting the research process, Ensuring Research Visibility, Reducing Research Anxiety of Patrons and Advocating and Encouraging Novelty in Research Activities.

Supporting the Research Process:

Drawing the attention of librarians to go beyond facilitation has been emphasized by Thorpe (2015) who reiterated the natural position of the librarian in the responsibility pyramid which bestowed the librarian with the capacity and capabilities to research other researchers, acquire and subscribe to sources and

resources because of their relevance to knowledge, trending in research, dialogue with information seekers and primarily service the information needs of different types of clients. It is therefore very logical to note that the library is a veritable tool that can be leveraged on to sustainably develop the society. For instance, a total of 54% of people undertaking research in the United States of America leading in the world research activities visit the library to browse through research topics that interest them, 50% go to get help from librarians, 46% visit the library to use a research database. Overall, 81% claimed the support from librarians as very helpful, what is significant of notice is that there are no notable demographic differences in the respondents' answers which points to the fact that librarians and libraries have ever failed them (Zickuhr, Rainie and Purcell, 2014).

The premise on which Dewey (2004) formalized a role and called it embedded librarianship was simply to let the world know that librarians are immersed in the activities of specialized groups who proactively display relevance and commitment to contribution of tertiary institution research output by making research simpler, interesting, challenging and encouraging through ameliorating the deficiencies of skills and training lacking during reviews of literatures, compiling consulted resources and working within the confine of the literary laws.

Ensuring Research Visibility:

Librarians are trained information scouts, who are also cautious researchers to direct use of unsure publications. They describe following a standard and chronologically describe resources covering their titles, subjects, authors, publishers and numerous descriptors to make the resource visible. According to Jake and Kneale (2011), the librarian has been able to close coordinate and collaborate with every one undertaking research.

Reducing Research Anxiety of Patrons:

The choice of consulting a librarian has been reported by several authors as the last resort during the early start of research (Zickuhr, Rainie and Purcell, 2014). The encounter with a librarian significantly refocuses the perception of a research work and makes it inclusive. Patrons primarily are encourage to participate in all the activities that subsequently make them confident, competent and self-actualized. It is not surprising that the librarian is capable of reducing anxieties and stress; because librarians are empowered to research other researchers and that is what they pass on (Thorpe, 2015). They teach their clients how to be critical and understand the impact of researchers and the messages their works convey for

their benefits.

The ability of the library to control, consolidate and moderate the growth of the exponential growth and desire for information has significantly reduced anxiety during research activities. According to Omekwu (2010) librarians have been able to provide the convergence for man to exploit for his activities.

Advocating and Encouraging Novelty in Research Activities:

The mediating role of librarians has been reported by (embedded) shows that apart from encouraging scholars, librarian can distinctively point to novel researches, reveal the created possibilities for a would be research report. This is evident at the postgraduate levels during topic articulation and construction phase. Libraries have never failed at providing available knowledge base to help researchers fully realize what is trending, guide restructuring and construction of ideas that are innovative, contributory and researchable based on earlier works. As a patron receives guidance from the librarian, skills are developed, the urge to share opinions is intensified and works are done within acceptable research norms. Accordingly, Kibirge and DePalo (2000)reveal the efforts of librarians have made the society generally to be indebted to the profession. The determination of librarians goes beyond advocacy, they functionally integrate the disperse research activities and make it look seamlessly (Ohmae, 1995).

How the Library Can Help to Achieve Sustainable Development in Nigeria

The expectations of patrons from the library is always high, however they tend to forget about the influence of external forces whose destructive tendencies are enormous. Budget cut and environment challenges are sometimes outside the control of librarians, the librarians have not given up on their roles. The report by Zickuhr, Rainie and Purcell (2014) revealed that patrons experiences of library services is positive with a total of 76% saying the libraries have impact on them and their family members. An overwhelming 91% said the libraries are very important to their communities; the reasons given varied but centred on access, use and affordability of information resources.

The role of the library is expressed as basis for using the library, though reasons for patronage may be diversified, what is consistent is that the library is a ready platform which has always been used for sensitization and campaigns. Sustainable development can benefit from this ready platform. Earlier, the submission by Harris (2000) could be used to argue for librarianship by stating that librarians have always

insisted that ideas affecting millions of people and can guide the policies of nations are accessible to all and not just to elite. This permeate library to influence institutional actions by their stock and accessible to all making libraries to transit from local to the global level, thereby becoming and remaining part of the human landscape, and part of the fabric within which we define our lives.

The library no doubt resolve the dearth of information in a dramatic manner that guide the present generation of what was obtainable in the past, what is currently going on and what must be done to ensure that the future generations do not suffer. Harris (2003) synthesis / perspective on the basic principles of sustainable development is a great revelation that basing sustainable development mainly on the economics elements could spell doom. Arguably, therefore, the familiarity with the library which may be blamed for its exclusion must be addressed in order that the immense contributions of the library to the development process and progress are acknowledged. Certainly, when this is done, other elements (fields) shall become proactive because they are also partners and utilizes the services of the library.

Conclusion

The library influences all facets of the society and aimed at improving livelihood, the environment and the economy through providing the requite evidence that shapes and guides decisions making. Conclusively, it shows that irrespective of location, time and content the library plays very vital roles and must not be neglected because libraries are epitome of what is applicable rather than what should be applicable. Therefore, the inclusion of the library ensures even distribution of information resources to all stakeholders, averts ignorance and ensures that the desired changes are implemented in both goals and methods to address the demand on resources and environmental absorption of the proliferated information on sustainable development.

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