

Library as a social and knowledge Institution: An overview

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Abstract

The article describes the library as a social and knowledge institution in the changing society where the interaction between humans as an important social need. In modern societies, all people's activities are organized through institutions. Thus, the social institution is a product of society. The educational institutions promote the processes of knowledge, competence and socialization of society. Therefore, the society needs the institution in the broadest and most practical sense for social betterment. Information allows us to change and improve the society. Library professionals are trained with various skills to acquire in digital environments.

Keywords: Social Institution, Digital Libraries, Knowledge Delivery.

Introduction

'Libraries have a recognized social function in making knowledge publicly available to all. They serve as local centres of information and learning, and are local gateways to national and global knowledge.' In modern societies, all people's activities are organized through institutions. Thus, the social institution is a product of society. It was created to function as a means of expressing its social processes and carries out through its techniques developed for this purpose. It is a form of social networks. Lowell Martin states: "A social institution is an integrated pattern of human relationship established by the common will and serving some vital human need."

This definition indicates that the social institution deals with the integrated model of the human being in the society. The trend is caused by the interaction between people as a vital social need. For example, religious institution deals with conviction and unity, educational institution as Schools, colleges and universities promote the processes of knowledge, competence and socialization of society. The institutions incorporate a set of formal and informal rules and regulations through which the activities of a society are made or regulated.

As knowledge institutions, Libraries are doors to knowledge and culture. However, traditional archiving and dissemination practices of Information are no longer effective today. Technology allows us to share information and the library immediately. Users are aware of this. Their expectations for accurate and timely service are higher than in previous years.

Now it is a challenge for libraries to meet the growing expectations and demands of their customers. Budget and work is limited and may even be smaller than before. And employees and managers of the libraries may not have the skills and level of comfort needed to use existing and emerging technologies. The library as a social institution:

In modern societies, the activities of all people are organized through institutions. Thus, the social institution is a product of the company. It was created to function as a means of expressing its social processes and transports

through its techniques developed for this purpose. It is a form of social order.

Library as a social institution

Lowell Martin states, "A social institution is an integrated pattern of human relationship established by the common will and serving some vital human need." This definition shows that the social institution deals with the integrated pattern of man in society. His pattern is evoked by the interaction between humans as a vital social need. For example, religious institution looks after the belief and unity, educational institution like school, college, and universities promote knowledge, skill and socialization processes of the society. These institutions comprise a group of formal or informal rules and regulations governing or regulating the activities of an institution.

Need of library as social institution

We are living in an information age in which information plays a crucial role in keeping the citizens well informed, so that they can exercise their right as citizens of a democracy properly. Information allows us to change and improve the society. Decision makers to lay person information are needed in their daily routine work and also to upgrade their knowledge. This is helpful to prepare themselves better for the fruitful pursuit of their respective vocation. Therefore, the society needs the institution in the broadest and most practical sense for social betterment. No one can imagine other social institutions except the library that can be entrusted with such type of responsibilities.

The libraries acquire, organize, store and disseminate the information in the required form to users (print, CD-ROM/DVD, Web form) for use. No other institution carries out such long-term, systematic work.

Changing role of library and information science centres

The information society requires a redefinition and re-evaluation of the position and objectives of all institutions that work with information, knowledge and culture. Modern society pays particular attention to literacy, adult education, formal education, continuous training, and information dissemination and so on. In addition to integrating their traditional knowledge and experiences with regard to their vocation or profession.

Nowadays library does not restrict itself in procuring the books only but goes to the extent of CD ROM, DVD, network information, sharing information among the like minded institution in the form of consortia and so on. The change can be viewed from four angles.

1. Change in demand: A change from just in kind to just in time is a major shift.
2. Change in structure of libraries: Emergence of the concept of data centre, data bank, data consolidation and evaluation centre, learning resource center, documentation centre, clearing house, information analysis centre, referral centre, etc.
3. Change in services: Providing CAS, SDI, consultant, literature search, information broker, gate keeper of information, etc services.
4. New Information products: Emergence of the digest, newsletter and such others.

Let Us Sum Up: In modern societies cultural values are changing. A new social awareness has emerged as we become more diverse, more independent and more highly educated. More than ever before the modern societies acknowledge the right of every individual to be free, to participate in democratic processes, and to strive for achieving his or her fullest potential. When we consider such high expectations of the society in respect of man as individual, we realize the full potential of the library as a social institute.

The culmination of centuries of advances in the printing press, cast-iron type, paper, ink, publishing, and distribution, combined with an ever growing middle-class, increased commercial activities and consumption, new radical ideas, massive population growth and higher literacy rates forged the public library into the form that it is today.

Knowledge delivery

A reviewed of literature of civilization and library development will show how knowledge has grown from oral/aural mode of communication and learning to this stage when knowledge, learning and information is communicated via space and satellite through the help of telecommunication equipments, microcomputers and networking delivery in the context of this study is any process used by humanity to seek information to reduce the ambiguity in his environment. Given the context of our definition of knowledge as being instructed or having information acquired by erudition which results in one getting acquainted with ascertained truth facts or principle. Knowledge delivery is implied in the whole process of

seeking information. Coshen (1974) [28] argue that some knowledge users are concern exclusively with their own problem, others make decision on behalf of many others with effects lasting for decades and others pursue academic activities of enriching the literature presumably these two will improve the lives of people who use the literature at unspecified future time.

This implies that knowledge seekers or users can be classified.

The specialist users are people who create information and use information as the basis upon which to build their contribution to world development.

Administrators, planners and policies maker, these need technical information repackage in a different fashion to help make decision.

The non technical user, need information appropriately interpreted and made available in order to understand the society they live in. In line with Brooke's interpretation of poppers' world three, Fine (1984) [22] argued that the mission of Librarianship need to be based on well founded theoretical understanding about the nature of information, the nature and need of human being, the transfer process between people and information resources and the way people use information. Kenam (1996) [31] therefore, library and information science is known as a field of knowledge, theory and technology dealing with the collection of facts and figures and the processes and method involved in their manipulation, storage, dissemination, publication and retrieval. World Book Encyclopedia, (2004) [32] pointed that the job of providing materials for patrons is a challenging. To do it, librarian must constantly stay aware of new publications and other materials. He or she evaluates vast amount of materials either through personal inspections or by reading reviews, deciding which ones should be available in the library. Given the above scenario the immediate questions that should be uppermost in the minds of library and information professionals include, given the above mission imposed on them as professionals, how have they discharged themselves? A more fundamental question that is begging for answer is, given the rate at which information is generated and disseminated, especially using the ICTs, Is the librarian or information professional still relevant in the knowledge circle? Approaches to Knowledge Revolution, What is knowledge? Knowledge as defined by Harbert and Payton (1995) [38] is an acquaintance with or understanding of facts, actions, etc or as that which is known. However, knowledge in the fast changing world needs to be put in its dynamic functional and humanistic dimension to be appreciated. Information becomes knowledge when it is decoded, interpreted and given a context by the individual and embodied in his/her beliefs, values and commitments. Knowledge may be classified into subject's knowledge, general knowledge and professional knowledge. Since knowledge is becoming the most important factor in economic and social development, managers of institutions in Nigeria should accordingly shift emphasis to functional knowledge creation, delivery, dissemination and application (knowledge processes): skill

training and technology acquisition and innovation. Institutions here include universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, research institutes and other post-secondary school-level institutions. Tertiary institutions are yet to make the desired impact on knowledge revolution, apparently because the country has not effectively integrated into the global knowledge economy. According to World Bank (2002) [39] Many developing countries have not articulated a development strategy that links the application of knowledge to economic growth, nor have they developed their national scientific and technological capacity. The current economic, social and educational reforms in Nigeria based on microeconomics, knowledge, innovation and creativity are therefore commendable. The fact is that it is mandatory for Nigeria to embark on the reforms as developing and transition countries are at risk of being further marginalized thereby widening the digital divide and remaining underdeveloped if they continued to sit on the fence. Managers of institutions in Nigeria, particularly the universities should see the global knowledge revolution as a critical challenge and play a leading role (as in other countries) in the production of intellectual and social capital necessary for the construction of modern knowledge societies for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Other roles include

1. Library as an integral part of the system provide supplementary sources of information for students, lecturers, etc. in addition to what transpires in the classroom.
2. The provision of information communication technologies in the libraries such as computer is an added impetus to current trends in librarianship, their utilization serves a stepping-stone to becoming computer literate since present day appointment into positions emphasize the need to be computer literate.
3. Provide materials to support library users in their own personal development.
4. Provide information to meet the specialized needs of the community in which they are situated.
5. Helps to train information professionals with skills, who will be able to develop, appreciate strategies in response to the information needs.
6. To provide the needed resources and services to meet the development needs of individual, groups, corporate, organizations and even governments irrespective of locations, age, religion, political and ethnic affiliations.
7. Library got children acquainted with books so as to broaden their ideas and stimulate their appetite for knowledge.
8. Library aid the students in making reasonable use of their leisure.
9. Participate effectively in the school programme as it strives to meet the need of pupils, teachers, parents, and other community members.
10. Provide an opportunity through library experiences for boys and girls to develop helpful interest to make

satisfactory personal adjustments and to acquire desirable social attitudes.

11. Participate with teachers and administrators in programme for continuing professional and cultural growth school.
12. Collection, acquisition of knowledge in all formats and organization of knowledge for access, storage, retrieval and dissemination.

Conclusion

Do we live in an era of change or in a changing era? How can one characterize the deep transformations that come with the accelerated insertion of artificial intelligence and new Information and Communication Technologies.

Library and librarian has recognized the expanding nature of the challenges that is before them and the range of competencies required of them. The challenges represented by these competencies must be seized and acted upon today so as to ensure that professionals in the libraries are viable.

Based on the above statement, library which is both knowledge society and information society is the key to achieving sustainable development which is said to meet the needs of the present. Summarily, the roles of the library are ever growing because an attempt to educate a man invariably is an effort towards educating the society. Based on this argument put forward the library is the store house of these knowledge/development. It therefore behooves on the library professionals to possess the requisite competencies to be able to collect, process, store and disseminate information effectively so that knowledge and information management will not only affect communities but the society at large. Without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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None.

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