

LITERACIES, LIBRARIES AND
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research work focuses on literacies, libraries and information dissemination with particular reference to Nigeria. The research objectives are determine the various types of literacy programmes in Nigeria which include but not limited to functional/ basic, adult, computer and information literacy. Also highlighted were the roles of public, school, national and university libraries in the development of literacy as well as information dissemination among communities in Nigeria. Documentary analysis involving the use of relevant empirical literatures, photographs to gather information. Results showed creation of children section in public libraries and making available fiction/ reading materials/ story books for children to consult for their educational needs. Primary and secondary schools establish libraries, allocate library periods on the timetable; stock the libraries with collection, form literary and debating clubs; reading competition, casting of news during morning assembly. National library of Nigeria organizes readership promotion campaign; organize workshops, seminars and public lectures. Universities/ university libraries teach use of English and libraries respectively at undergraduate level. Information is disseminated through oral, written, symbols, gestures, etc. Rural communities disseminate information through town crier, opinion leaders, meetings at town halls and also through village heads. Libraries disseminate information through bulletins, notice board, current awareness services, book loan to users, Internet services, reference services as well as bibliographic services. Mass media inform, educate and entertain generality of mankind. Hindrances to efficient literacy and library development as well as information dissemination include indifference of government and stakeholders; lack of public awareness/ orientation on the need of literacy programme, cultivating habit of visiting libraries and the roles of information in any given society. The paper recommended that government should revisit education for all agenda.

KeyWords: Literacy, Libraries, Information dissemination, Nigeria

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The concept of literacy simply means the ability to read and write. This therefore goes to state that a person that can read and write is said to be a literate while inability to read and write can be termed as illiterate. This further goes to say that ideally a child who perform highly in schools is usually a function of caring parent on one hand and an literate parent on the other hand (Ogunsanwo 2005). Reading is a daily activity among mankind with numerous purposes such as pleasure examination, assignment, interview for employment, job vacancies (Ahmed, 2018) such that its emphasis where laid on the Holy Books (Quran and Bible). The first verses of Holy Quran revealed to emphasize on "reading" saying that!

Read in the Name of your Lord, Who has created all that exist; He has created man from a clot, Read and your Lord is the most Generous: who has taught man that which he knew not. (Qur'an 96:1-5)

However, Qur'anic and Islamic schools in Nigeria like other Muslims countries children are taught how to read Arabic alphabets, Reading of verses from the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic literatures and literary books. Information are contained in both printed materials, wooden and iron slates. Children are also taught how to write Arabic alphabets, words, sentence construction etc. Below are children in Qur'anic and Islamic school in one of the Muslim communities in Nigeria. Some of the children are using slates while other are using printed Qur'anic material as well as some Islamic literary books.

To the Holy Bible, some verses were revealed which centered on reading and thus;

Till I come, give attention to the reading of the Holy writings, to comforting the saints and to teaching. (Timothy 4:13) Blessed is he that readth and that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written there for the time is at hand (Revelation 1:3)

The issue of writing is any area of great concern as its origin can be traced to the pre-industrial era when information was documented on clay tablets, sticks, stones, animal skin, leaves before invention of paper in china in 105AD and he writing material were bamboo sticks, grid sticks made from guinea corn stalks. Today even with the abundance writing materials, Islamic schools and to be specific writing of some verses from Qur'an and Islamic literature are carried out using grid stick sharp with pointed mouth made from guinea corn stalk. Information containing letters and words are written on slates locally called "allo" in Hausa.

One of the indicators to National Development apart from Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and life expectancy is literacy which according to Okebukola, (2012) is the ability read and write, mainly for knowledge and think about the written concepts with people of 15 years of age. Based on United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (2011), the adult literacy rate for both sexes in Nigeria was ranked to 60.8%. Literacy takes place in formal schools, libraries informal schools such as adult education, Qur'anic schools and so on. At primary and post-primary school level apart from the fact that some own libraries on average status with inadequate collection yet some organizes quiz, debate ass well casting of news in morning assembly on timely basis Saka and Alhassan 2018. At nursery and the lower arm of primary schools, pupils are taught counting of numbers, reading 26 alphabets as well as "Handwriting" as a course.

In tertiary institutions of learning (colleges of education, polytechnics and universities) are offering library studies in the General studies (GST). A study was conducted by Bosash (2009) to investigate the awareness and use of library services through GST in institutions or higher learning in Edo and Delta states. It was discovered that government owned universities have participated in the programme while state owned polytechnics and COE are far left being. As at time of this study (2009) monotechnics are yet to commence the GST programme. The Nigeria Education, Research and Development Council is not left out in a bid to promote literacy in Nigeria as the agency publish/produce primary and post-primary school reading materials.

The promotion of adult literacy programmes take its origin when the national development plans were initiated most especially the first national development plan which took place between 1962 and 1968 which witnessed the establishment of four universities: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Universities of Ibadan and Lagos; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Nigeria, Nsukka respectively (Ibiyemi, 2014).

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are to:

1. Determine the types of literacy programmes in Nigeria;
2. Identify the roles of libraries in literacy development in Nigeria;
3. Find out the methods of disseminating information among libraries, and communities in Nigeria;
4. Determine the implication of literacy, library services and information dissemination on national development.

RESEARCH METHODS

Documentary analysis which involves relevant and empirical works/literatures, photographs and related examples and case studies were used to gather data. Examples from various libraries, educational institutions and parastatals as well as communities were equally used to facilitate information gathering.

RESULTS

Based on the documentary analysis of various case studies, relevant empirical studies, photographs from various organizations in Nigeria revealed the following findings:

Types of Literacies Programmes in Nigeria

Various literacies exist around the world and Nigeria in particular, amongst are the followings:

Basic Literacy: This is the kind of literacy programme offered at pre-primary and primary school level particularly Nursery class, classes 1-3 whereby pupils are taught counting of numbers, reading of alphabets as well as Handwriting as a subject. This can be facilitated by the proposal made by Elaturoti (2010). that creation of library period can enhance lifelong learning with the teaching of skills.

Adult Literacy: Adults who for one reason or the other could not have opportunity to receive the formal education can enroll for this type of education. Adults including farmers, market women, business men, fishermen etc in words, villages are taught how to read and write (country of numbers; writing, reading alphabets, which etc). The adult literacy programme is usually organized at the Local Government level being coordinated by the State/Federal Agency for Mass Literacy.

Information literacy: This is a kind of literacy that enable one learn or seek information on where, how, when and what type of information to be obtained. Information literacy has to do with competency in seeking about sources, access, location synthesis, use and evaluate of information whether printed or online (Ojedokun 2007) Igwe *et al* 2015.

Computer/Digital Literacy: This is a kind of literacy that involves teaching the learners the skills involved in using computer or ICT and its facilities. To effectively manipulate computer & ICT that literacy is very important, in this era of information, the capacity building of individuals in the area of ICT to change Nigeria society to ICT compliant and at the same time computer/ICT literate is very crucial more so that e-mailing e-conference, computer operations, multimedia projecting, mobile phone usage etc. were among skills posed by libraries. (Adebayo & Adekunle, 2005; Jibril *et al* 2018).

Role of Libraries in Literacy Development in Nigeria

The important and sampler role of libraries is to provide information sources to meet users needs (academic, educational, research, informational cultural etc). the role of public, academic, school and private libraries in literacy development of mankind are briefly spelt out below:

Public Libraries: Public libraries by their native are established out of government and public funds of which their use are not restricted to any class of citizens but by all. Public library in Nigeria by their nature are established mainly to provide reading materials so as to meet users information, educational research socio economic/cultural needs though the fulfillment of this objectives largely depends on a number of issues such as: adequacy or otherwise of financial position, competent and dedicated staff among others (Ejedafiru & Isebe 2013). From this narration, children are not an exceptional in benefiting from this service. Public libraries in Nigeria established/create a section called children section which children's collection (fictions, storybooks, pictures/picture books) are organized for their consultation. The seating/reading tables are constructed based on their age and as such they have easy movement and access to the need collection/reading materials. Children read, do their classroom assignments and are allow to loan books for home consultations.

School Libraries: Despite the present situation of primary libraries in Nigeria, 2017 there are some schools that have libraries on average status. This is with particular reference to recent research conducted by Ntogo-Sagh amen and Monokpo. Some public see school own libraries with inadequate collection and no lab facilities. Those school libraries possesses organized collection of reading materials for children to consult for their test, and assignment. Furthermore, some school libraries have created library periods in the school time table. During this period, children visit school libraries to read books, do assignment, prepare for test and examination (Saka and Alhassan, 2018), although the academic performance of students vis-à-vis reading habits at secondary schools depends on the ownership of schools, teachers commitment to job and conducive environment (Ibrahim & Saleh 2009).

Academic Libraries: Libraries established in institutions of higher learning charge with the responsibility of providing information resources to meet users academic, research, information and host community needs. They are libraries established at colleges of education polytechnics, monotchnics and universities. At college of education polytechnics and universities, the department of General studies and institution's libraries respectively teach use of English and libraries. The aim is to teach students how to read and communicate fluently as well as using library to meet their academic needs (Aina, 2004). In the course of consulting books, reading and writing do take place.

Private Libraries: Individuals owned personal libraries in their homes and family used. The collection of such libraries usually contain their personal collection such as dairy, photograph, textbooks etc. Children take advantage of these private libraries to consult reading materials. Example of such libraries include IBB presidential library Gani Fawhemi Library etc. Existence absence or non-existence of private libraries in homes have significance influence on children students' academic performance and thus this is a formation of literate and illustrate parents. The former in ideal situation have concern over the educational development of their wards while to the later, the reserve is the case. This argument is

supported by research findings of Ogunsanwo (2005) who reported "significant difference in the study habits of students' from literate and illiterate homes".

National Library of Nigeria: The particular type of library contain all published materials in Nigeria and by Nigerians regardless of where they live. The library contain not only collections on various subjects and disciplines but also organize "readership promotion campaign" for general public particularly school children and this is on annual basis. Part of the campaign is the reading competition among primary and post-primary school children/students. The national library of Nigeria, Niger State Branch on 10th May 2018, 1 day organized national leadership promotion campaign with the theme: "Sustaining lifelong reading for positive change" which feature among other programmes: Lecture (Ahmed, 2018; NLA Newsletter, 2018) reading competition among school children, etc. Below is the pamphlet on readership promotion campaign organized by National Library of Nigeria, Niger State Minna Branch which took on 10th May, 2018.

Information Dissemination

Generally speaking information is disseminated through oral, written, gesture and/or sign. Information can be disseminated through writing in newspapers, journals, magazine, and textbooks. The ideas documented in any of these collection can be permanent unlike oral gesture and use of sign to disseminate information.

This is because idea communicated through these media can get lost through deterioration or death (Ahmed 2018) Book writing form major part of the History of libraries globally. Information can be disseminated orally through words from mouth and can be a little but permanent when recorded in sound recording. In the older days, in some rural communities information is disseminated using a sign e.g smoke of fire from distance or nearby village signifies death or something strange has happen. In some area gunshot signifies death and in the process of burial.

Libraries regardless of any type are charge with responsibilities of making collection available and information about such can be disseminated through book loan or circulation, bulletins, notice board, Current Awareness Services (CAS); provision of various internet services, reference services; as well as compilation of abstracts, indexes and references to books list of publications on scale etc. Nigerian Library Association (NLA) is no left out in the dissemination of information to LIS professionals and the general public on the activities of the association and LIS profession in general. Find below the cover page of Newsletter 2018 - a publication of the Nigerian Library Association (January-December 2018).

Mass media particularly newspaper, radio and television inform the public through the news casted educate public through educational performance such as quiz competition guest lecturer etc. Entertainment in the form of display of drama, music and video film about the culture and cultural artifacts of people, among others.

Hindrances to Literacies, Library Development and Information Dissemination

Despite effort to transform Nigerian Society to literate nation and information for all irrespective of socio-economic, cultural and geographical location, there exist certain challenges:

Indifference of government and stakeholders: Despite education for all agenda and promulgation of national information policies the full implementation monitoring and evaluation is yet to see the light of the day. There are a lot of rural communities in Nigeria who are yet to benefits from literacy programmes/adult education. Above all public and school libraries are not well equipped with relevant reading materials most especially those that are relevant to the children.

Public Awareness: Related to the above mentioned challenge is the lack of public awareness/orientation or the need for literacy. This is with special to rural communities who doesn't see the need for reading hence they are predominant farmers who are virtually old.

The situation analysis of the current state of public secondary school libraries in Niger State is the inadequate collection, building and virtually absence of libraries in some schools within the state capital (Saka & Mohammed, 2009). In Akwa-Ibom State, school libraries, there existed reading rooms; few libraries without standard, and with moderate level of utilization while library staff lack qualification. There existed indifference on the part of government in committing adequate funds for school library development (Philip, 2018) and this misnomer existing in Edo State with regards to deplorable condition of public and school libraries (Obasuyi, 2018)

Formation of Reading Habit: The advent of computer and ICTs most Nigerian youth do not imitate the culture of reading. Pupils at primary schools and students at secondary schools and universities attract much importance to the use of phone to tap information as oppose to reading books. Researchers have shown that reading culture is gradually facing out in our society partly due to modern technology as Akanbi-Ademolake (2017) reported among findings that reading culture has been affected by the use of phones and computers even through that the library collections were inadequate in secondary schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper was able to identify the need for literacy society; types of literacies and roles of education agencies in literacy development as well as information dissemination in Nigeria. The implication is that absence of mass literacy couple of library services and information dissemination will lead to information poverty nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above discussion, the paper prefer possible suggestions and it implement would help transform Nigerian society to information rich nation. These recommendations are:

1. Government and stakeholders in education sector should revisit the various policies/bills e.g education, information and freedom of information
2. There is the need for grassroots monitoring by the National Agency for Mass Literacy
3. National library of Nigeria should re-double its effort on "readership promotion campaign" so that majority of knocks and crannies of Nigeria should be touched and feel the impact of the campaign.

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