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Impact of Education of Library and Information Science in National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper discusses Library and Information Science Education (LISE) in Nigeria. LISE is an educational plan primarily meant for training and development of information Professionals (librarian, teacher-librarians, information managers, lecturers) and users. The 21st century librarians, information managers / specialists are formally trained and developed in library schools through Library and Information Science Education (LISE). Unlike the primitive belief that there is no academic training required to become library and information science professional, Dewey has made it crystal-clear that formal training is not negotiable for modern librarians. Therefore, he introduced the concept of formal education to librarians. This paper highlights the problems confronting the programme as lack of proper recognition in the academic world, lack of single grouping in the classes of knowledge, professionals in other fields belittle LISE as unprofessional among others. The work concludes that the discipline is the hub of all other disciplines as it assists to draw together group into proper class of knowledge and disseminate the information resources at the right time promptly. The paper recommends that scholars in LISE should give it proper recognition by projecting its image; the need for adequate funding of the course by the government, provision of modern ICT facilities, uniform/appropriate curriculum and marketing of information literacy skills; the higher educational commission like National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria should endeavour to put the programme in the same school or faculty for uniformity.

Key Words: Education, Library and Information Science, National Development, Nigeria

Introduction

The 21st century librarians, information managers / specialists are formally trained and developed in library schools through Library and Information Science Education (LISE). Unlike the primitive belief that there is no academic training required to become library and information science professional, Dewey has made it crystal-clear that formal training is not negotiable for modern librarians. Therefore, he introduced the concept of formal education to librarians. Mangla (1980) cited in Edegbo (2011) observed that LISE is designed to equip students with knowledge and techniques to handle immediate job requirements in an efficient manner. Also, it is meant to develop programmes, procedures and services on modern line in future where the use of various modern techniques, computers, etc could provide better quick and efficient service.

With the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), the training has become increasingly complex. Each new evolving ICT is having a significant impact on the way and manner the LISE is being carried out. There is no field that can be said not to be modern with the integration of ICT courses to its curriculum and LISE is not left out. Hence, Edegbo (2011) asserted that LISE in Nigeria cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new generation librarians to effectively use the new ICT in their professional practices. Thus, it is arguable that development in our societal technology or otherwise have brought significant changes to LISE all over the world.

Historical Development of Library and Information Science Education LISE in Nigeria

According to Ojo-Igbinola, (1995) as cited by Abioye (2013), Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria came to the limelight in 1960. West African Library Association (WALA) played a major role in the establishment of the first Library and Information Science School in Nigeria. In 1956, WALA solicited for the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New

York to develop its headquarters. In response, Harold Lancour was commissioned to study the library situation in West Africa and advised on intervention strategy for its development. The report of the study, popularly known as the Lancour Report, established training needs and recommended the establishment of a library school at the then University College, Ibadan.

In October 1959, with a grant from Carnegie Corporation, University of Ibadan LIS School was established but took off in 1960. The school started with its first batch of six students in the university library where it was housed until in 1965 when it moved to the faculty of education. University of Ibadan LIS school started with Diploma in Librarianship (1960-date), Master in Library Studies (1971-date), (now Master in Library and Information Studies)and PhD in Library and Information Studies (Abioye 2013). However, the Bachelor of LISE was pioneered in Nigeria at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1968. (Nkanu, Iyishu and Ogar, n.d.)

At present, there are 20 public and 5 private universities in Nigeria that offer library and information science as a course. They are Abia State University, Uturu, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Bayero University Kano, Benue State University, Markudi, Delta State University, Abraka, Federal University of Technology, Yola, Imo State University, Owerri, Kwara State University, Ilorin, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, University of Calabar, Calabar, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, and University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The 4 private universities are Adeleke University, Ede, Base University, Abuja, Benson Idahosa University, Benin, Ibrahim Gbadamosi Babangida University, Lapai, Madonna University, Okija. (Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria).

Curriculum Development of LISE in Nigerian University

Curriculum development – what is it? It is the organized preparation of whatever is going to be taught in schools at a given time in a given year. They are made into official documents, as guides for teachers. (Teachtechnology, 2015). It can also be described as a process which systematically organize what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. Each component affects and interacts with other components. For example, what will be taught is affected by who is being taught (e.g. their stage of development in age, maturity, and education). Methods of how content is taught are affected by who is being taught, their characteristics, and the setting (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2015). In other words, it is a process of improving the curriculum. Various approaches have been used in developing curricula. Commonly used approaches consist of analysis (i.e.) need analysis, task analysis), design (i.e.) objective design), selecting (i.e. choosing appropriate learning/teaching methods and appropriate assessment method) formation (i.e. formation of the curriculum implementation committee / curriculum evolution committee) and review (i.e. curriculum review committee) (Wikipedia, 2015).

In Nigerian University Library Schools, Oparah (2006) as cited by Edegbo (2011) observed that there was no uniform or harmonized curriculum for Nigerian University library and information science school. Each operated its now curriculum. The newer LIS schools appear to operate modified curricular. A review of the curricular of these schools shows that while some emphasize more library science courses, others strife to strike a balance between library and information science. In support, Urhefe (2014) observed that there is lack of collective curriculum for library education in all universities in Nigeria.

The Librarian as educator play important role in making students use the library resources. They teach students on how to locate, evaluate, retrieve and use information from online or manual sources; they also teach students the ethical aspect of information use and mis-use. (Urhere, 2014). Based on this fact, education for library and information science (LIS) profession has taken a new turn in the face of far-reaching development sparked off by the trend towards globalization. It is largely true that librarians in Africa are adapting to change particularly on innovations brought about by application of ICT. LIS professional are not only having to adapt to change in library services but also require in-depth structures and training programmes for occupational engagements in all library services. The need for the provision of LISE and the acquisition of relevant knowledge, techniques and skills for effective LIS work in the 21st century is for utmost importance. With the integration of ICT into library services, automation, resource sharing and inter library operations and the curricula of LISE has become broadened (Nkanu, Iyishu and Ogar, nd.).

In the university system, Master degree program is specifically designed to qualify a library and information practitioner a professional. Any qualification below that level make a practitioner a para-professional especially in the university library. In the developed world, recent information and communication technologies (ICT) courses have been introduced into the field of library education. According to Chu (2010) in Virkus (2012), they are: digital libraries, website design, web application, computer/information/internet networks, digitization; digital preservation/design, information architecture, cyberspace law and policy, knowledge management, competitive/business/strategic intelligence, human-computer interaction (HCI), user-system integration, metadata, computer/network security, internet relevance/application, information seeking behaviour. To join the global trends, National Universities Commission in

Nigeria should include these courses into library and information science education in Nigerian Universities for graduates of the course to be able to compete with their counterpart anywhere in the world.

LISE in National Development

Development can be described as the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements. It is an extension of the theoretical or practical aspects of a concept, design discovery, or invention. Orji and Job (2013) citing Oke (2004) expressed that sustainable development starts with the ability of a nation to satisfactorily provide the food and fiber that are needed by its people and industry. However, Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) described national development as overall development or a collective socio-economic, political, as well as religious advancement any country or nation.

Orji and Job (2013) declared that nation develops in relation to its achievement in education. This explains why contemporary world attention has focused on library education as an instrument of launching nations into the world of science and technology and consequential hope of human advancement in terms of living conditions and development of the environment. This is because, education, in the life of a nation is the life wire of its industries and also the foundation of moral regeneration and revival of people. It is also the bulwark of any nation's defenses and it has been observed that no nation rises above the level of its education.

Library and information science (LIS) is vitally important for national development. Ahmed (2012) opined that LIS like other branches of knowledge is significant for societal development. The transformation from industrial revolution to information revolution is a testimony that information is an asset for human, economic, political, social and technology

development. Thus, librarians, libraries, and library associations, as well as information systems, all play a role in fostering creativity, innovation, and dealing with peoples needs and expectations. Malekabadizadeh, Shokraneh, Hosseini (2009) cited (Bordbar, nd.) discussed that librarians and information experts play a key role in development. The cooperation (knowledge sharing) and assistance of librarians is a basis for any movement to gain development. By this cooperation and the provision of useful information in economic, cultural, social and political contexts, national development becomes possible. The essential role of librarians in providing access to information for development means that LIS departments must provide dynamic educational systems and is essential in the play of national development. Library organizations can serve as operational arms in development. They can adopt the goals and polices that will facilitate national development and advancement (Malekabadizadeh, Shokraneh, Hosseini, 2009).

Challenges of Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria

Inadequate Fund

The challenges of LISE are particularly acute in Africa where most library and information science schools especially those funded by the government are faced with the problem of funding which makes it difficult for them to meet their need for infrastructural facilities like textbooks for training, labouratory for practical and others.

Inadequate ICT Facilities

Diso (2007) in Abubarkar (2014) observed that technology is a fundamental requirement in the development of any modern library school particularly in this era of e-learning. In order to ensure overall success of e-learning programme in Nigerian LIS school, proper hardware and

software must be provided, in addition to sufficient number of computers, internet access, audio/video, as well as a dynamic Library Management System. However, Nigerian institutions face a number of challenges on the technological facet. Many institutions lack technological infrastructure and computer laboratories as well as inadequacy of internet access. In the same vein, Ochogwu (1992) cited in Ogunniyi (2014) found that of the six library and information schools (University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Bayero University Kano, University of Maiduguri, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Imo State University) surveyed only Ahmadu Bello University and University of Maiduguri have instructional laboratories, however, there might have been some improvement in other schools in the recent years. For instance, Ogunniyi (2014) citing Shiloba (2005) gave a positive report concerning Ahmadu Bello University's Library and Information School in the establishment of ICT laboratory by Emporia State University School of Library and Information Management, Emporia, Kansas. Ahmadu Bello University's Library and Information School staff and students are able to make use of the laboratory for practical from 8.00am to 6.00pm. it is a good development in library and information science in Nigeria.

Lack of Uniform and Adequate Curriculum

In addition, it has been observed that there is no uniform or collective curriculum for Library and Information Science Education (LISE) in the Nigerian Library School.

Brain Drainage

In attempt to look for greener pasture, there is the problem of brain drainage in the field. Some academics and students of LIS who are privileged to undertake postgraduate studies

abroad no longer return to complement teaching and research work in Nigerian library schools. (Ekere, 2008).

Professionalism Issue

A lot of professionals in other disciples ask the question if library and information science is a profession. Even the students of the course are often confused and are always tempted to ask the same question in Nigeria.

Popularity Issue

Many of the professionals in other fields like law, medicine, banking and finance, engineering tend to look down on professionals in the field of library and information science. This is also happening even among students, as students in popular disciplines tend to claim superiority to their fellow students in LIS. Consequently, some of them are discouraged and thereby demoralized.

Prospects of LISE

There is popular slogan that a library and information practitioner knows something about everything. This makes them a potential Wikipedia. Nkanu, Iyishu and Ogar (2013) stated the opportunities in library and information profession. LIS professionals are needed in Senate and House of Representative (National Assembly), government ministries, agencies, parastatals, law court, law school, universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, secondary school, marine and oceanography, war colleges, research institutes, banks, oil companies, professional bodes such as institute of Chartered Accountants (ICAN), Nigerian Bar

Association (NBA), council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN), pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria (PAN) etc. Apart from the aforementioned opportunities, Okere and Ekere (2008) cited in Nkanu, Iyishu and Ogar (2013) indicated that LIS specialists can be involved in creation of consulting services to library training programmes, establishment of internet services, creation of librarian web, intranet site, and organization of professional staff to handle specialized task because they are information professionals who know something about everything.

Conclusion

Library schools in Nigerian Universities is no longer at a "baby stage". However, there is need for drastic change in terms of carrying out a periodic review of is curricular at all levels (Bachelor, Master and PhD) for national development. This review will make it to be on a global platform to compete with other universities in the western world in terms of standard in research, human capacity building and sustaining a national development.

Recommendations

1. Information is power! For a field specifically meant for information handling, the Nigerian government should give LISE a specially consideration by funding it appropriately. More library schools should be formed in state and federal universities particularly in south-west Nigeria where there is only two library schools at university's level.

2. Modern ICT facilities should be provided for the library schools. And ICT training, seminars and workshops should also be organized for both lecturers and students for them to be able to stand effectively in the field in this 21st century.

3. LISE curriculum committee should be raised by national universities commission to create a uniform and appropriate curriculum for all library schools in Nigeria. LISE should be placed in the faculty of education in the universities. Also, there should be interactions among library schools in other to find solution to common problem. Such interaction will serve as a form of human capacity building for lecturers who must be given opportunity to update their knowledge. (Ekere, 2008).

4. Tetiary Educational Trust Fund, a parastatal in Ministry of Education who is responsible for the training of lecturers in tertiary institution in Nigeria should sanction the candidates who are sent abroad for training but who refuse to come back home for national development.

5. LISE is a profession. The skills needed to classify, organize, download and dissemination information (information literacy skills) cannot be found in other fields. Thus, the professionals of LIS must market their skills for image projection. Of course, the information marketing strategies and ICT proficiency in this age is a pride to the field and its professionals. Lastly, no academic institution can survive without a library. This is a pride to LISE.

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