



CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARY IN RENDERING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT AND SERVICES TO LIBRARY USERS AS PANACEA FOR GLOBAL SECURITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper introduces and discussed the concept of electronic library, their support and services to the patron community, the concept of global security and the concept of socioeconomic development all over the globe. The challenges and prospect of good and effective electronic library as an effective tool in rendering effort support and services to library users for global security and socioeconomic development were also elaborated and discussed for better understanding of the electronic libraries. A table was drawn to compare the electronic library and manual system of library in the process of rendering effective support and services to library users to access the desire information, resources and services in libraries for more clarification between the two libraries. Conclusion and recommendations were included for future reference on uses, prospects and the factors that necessitate the establishment of electronic library based on it dual function to their patron community which will support and serve as an effective tool for socioeconomic development.

Key words: Electronic library, Challenges of Electronic Libraries, Library users/patron Community, Global Security and Socioeconomic Development

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are gateway for all the development in the country as it select, subscribe, process and disseminate current and up-to-date information, resources and services to the citizens in order to accomplish their aim and objective which will resulted in the country's socioeconomic development. Danayi (2005) observed that “among the

roles of librarians and information professionals are to advices, supports and encourages the government to uphold its commitment in raising awareness to the issues related to education and socioeconomic development”. There is need to adequately equip the library with information, resources and services in printed and non printed formats which will be use by the end users for their

assignments since the library is serve as enabler which make and support the realization of the country's education at all levels.

As we entered the information or digital age due to emergences of IT and its gadgets, these age brought so many invention and social changes in which also the library function of the olden days are now transformed to most sophisticated one which enhanced brighter access to many information, resources and services by the teaming users.

The authority concerned with educational policies and development in the country should initiate ideas that can fully help in digitizing libraries. The world is significantly becoming a global village following development in the field of Information and Communication Technology and its facilities especially computer which gives room for interaction, collaboration and sharing among individual and organizations. Botubo (1996) explained that "modern libraries are the enabler which enhance human productivity, collaboration, allowing prompt access to information resources / services and enlarging variety of choice which leads to realization of socioeconomic development in the country".

Therefore the advent of the ICT facilities, many changes occurred from the traditional libraries to virtual one and brought phenomenal invention in the progress of collection, storage, preservation as well as retrieval and dissemination of the information which resulted in changing the role of manual library. He went further that "computers and other related technologies not only crates and develop some libraries in the country but also transform many of the existing users globally". As such the world as a whole become a globe village as mentioned above, due to the development of ICT facilities which plays a vital role for generating and disseminating of information, resources and services in libraries,

THE CONCEPT OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

The term electronic library can be defined as the library with all the information, resources and services available in the digital form in which the possibility of horizontal and vertical integration of knowledge and information has increased significantly and provides access to electronic information, resources and services. Ansari (2003) "electronic library is an assemblage of digital computers, storage and communication machinery

together with the context and software needed to produce emulate and extend those services provided by conventional libraries". In the word of Daniel (2002) "digital, electronic are often use synonymously which refer to a large databases for the people who are working on hypertext environment, i.e. an environment which supports the full life cycle of creation, storage, preservation , dissemination and use of data, information and knowledge".

Therefore, an ideal electronic library must have and accomplish all essential support and services of manual libraries and exploit the well advantages of digital storage, searching and communication of all the resources and services to enhance virtual function. It can also be treated as repositories of massive amount of information, resources and services in digital form in different servers on diverse format permitting access over different electronic networks of local area network, metropolitan area network, or wider area network for organized collection of digital materials or its holding in digital form, which can be accessible by computer on network by using some protocol.

In another related literature, Adelekan (2001) emphasized that virtual library can

also be defined "as a collection of library resources in electronic / digital format at various location, which can be accessed and used with great ease using computer information technologies for the purpose of teaching, study, learning, research, leisure and decision-making".

Therefore from the above, electronic library is based on set of data-bases of information from library resources which are regarded as a child of necessity arising from the need to use technologies and other related gadgets in accessing the world information overload. Thus there is a need to develop electronic library and to adopt electronic media for it collection development so that it can fulfill the requirement of the teaming users which will resulted in socioeconomic development. Librarian and other information professionals should make efforts for setting electronic libraries and conversion of resources into a digitalized format it introduce the concept of hypertext, facilitate networking in order to communicate and exchange digital information, resources and services from source location to the destination.

THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL SECURITY

National integration covers all activities and arrangements put in place to ensure

free movement, mixing and interaction of a people of a nation with other people of the same nation without any form of gender, racial, tribal or religious discrimination. Happenings in recent times in the nation have once again called for sober reflection by all particularly, in view of the dynamics of our federation. Global security is in jeopardy. Insecurity comes in different coloration and magnitude among which include the spate of bombings in some parts of the country, election related crises, kidnapping, human trafficking, militancy, assassination, hunger, armed robbery, environmental degradation and other untoward acts now being experienced in the country which are among the setback for global security.

All these have thrown up the need for all and sundry to be more retrospective, introspective and proactive on issues of global security so as to arrest this negative drift currently impacting our national psyche. Some of these security issues have been with us for some time now without fizzling out despite concerted efforts to the contrary. There is therefore the need to try the education option as a panacea for assuaging the drift thereby guaranteeing global security. Global security is a top public issue today. It is a matter of national importance that should

be of concern to all stakeholders in the global States and one that requires comprehensive and committed contribution of all groups and interests that make up Nigeria.

Global security cannot be narrowed down to defense and military might alone.

It is wider than that. It is this narrow conception of global security that forms the basis for the disproportionate budgetary allocation of funds as the case is, to "ensure global security of lives and property", however, to the utter neglect of other equally important sectors of the economy that bear directly or indirectly on global security. Such sectors as education, health, agriculture etc become poorly mobilized in some part of the world. Iredia (2011) defined global security as the ability of a State to overcome any form of its challenges no matter what the challenge is. He averred that global security is wider than military might, defense or law enforcement and pointed out other rather basic dimensions like job, water and food security. It is appropriate therefore, to state at this juncture that a global security policy would be of no use to the unemployed and hungry citizens that constitute the majority of the population in a poor country like ours.

To lay credence to the all inclusive nature of the meaning of global security, the American President Barack Obama in 2010 canvassed an all-encompassing world view in his own definition of America's global security interests which include, "a strong, innovative and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity of the country and other nations". Similarly, Abubakar (2005) averred that recent international debates have raised the need to see security in the broader sense as "the struggle to secure the most basic necessities of life that will enhance socioeconomic status of every citizen in a given nation".

This broader view of security from the perspective of human physiological needs is important for the attainment of physical, global security and overall peace and development, as social unrest arising from the absence of such basic-human security can indeed lead to security problems and conflicts. Apart from the socio-economic security challenges, Abubakar (2005) identified some of the major security challenges confronting the nation to include political and electioneering conflicts, ethno-religious crises, ethnic militias, boundary disputes,

cultism, criminality and organized crimes. In the same vein, Oshio (2009) opined that Nigeria is today plagued with social disorder, insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, balance of payment deficit, poor health statistics, ethnic and religious conflicts, corruption, crime and criminality and political crises. All these mean that we are very insecure in terms of human wellbeing. The problems, individually and collectively constitute threats to the peace, security and development of the country and other nation at large.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIOECONOMICS DEVELOPMENT

The country's socioeconomic development is a clear mental picture of the future generation to sustenance method and developmental way of political, social and religious life which is representing realistic path to follow in its attainment all stages of national and socioeconomic developments all over the country and worldwide in general.

According IT Global (2011), "socioeconomic development is defined as building of our communities so that we can all live comfortably without consuming all of our resources and we make an impact on our environment through how we lives in harmony with

each other". It further stated that "socioeconomic development is not just about conserving our resources: it is about changing our culture to make conservation a way of life". Therefore, the concept of socioeconomic development means a development that continues to meet today's needs of a given nation in a way that will not jeopardize the future and future generations.

Socioeconomic development is the only way to guarantee humanity and societal wellbeing of the country now and in the future years. In situation where library are developed virtually in a given country, the country's educational systems and policies will be sound and socioeconomic development do occurred because education is the backbone of any meaningful developments in the world.

The above statement was also emphasized by Sangal (2005) that "education is the right which every individual male or female must acquire and enjoy in order being free from ignorance, poverty and disease to mention but a few". Therefore, the first step towards socioeconomic development is to encourage the government and the policy makers to have well and good educational system in the country and to have good and equipped library which will support in

disseminating a sound knowledge to the citizens for socioeconomic development.

Socioeconomic development also is a pattern of development in the country not only for the present time but is a continuous agenda which will be useful even to the future generation. As Bello and Mamman (2009) explained that "the socioeconomic development of any country depends largely on the quality of education and training provided. Therefore, quality education through resources and services provided by libraries and training are the major contributors in the overall progress of any country towards socioeconomic development". Since education is among the key contributing factor for any socioeconomic development, the prospects of the electronic library cannot be over emphasized in that regard. Because education and library cannot be separated as they are twice of the same coin.

THE CHALLENGES OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

Electronic library is a library that combined the information, resources and services into an electronic form using computer and other information and communication technology facilities.

Before changing to the reality of electronic library, there are many problems to be redress, as we need to create electronic information, resources and services system that will match with individual pattern of thinking and learning in order to produce the kind of support and services expected. Electronic library is associated with the following challenges:

- ***Violation of the copyright law:*** Electronic libraries that are virtually good in their support and services to their patron community violated the copyright law because the content of one author can be freely transferred without his acknowledgment. Therefore, since the electronic library allow free and virtual access to different information, resources and services. it is very difficult for them to protect the copyright of the author because all the information, resources and services and accessed by the library users without boarder.
- ***The initial operation cost is higher:*** The initial cost of infrastructure for electronic library is very expensive i.e. the cost of

hardware, software, leasing communication circuit and transforming the manual library information resources and services in electronic means is generally very high compare to manual or traditional libraries and information centers.

- ***Bandwidth degeneration:*** Electronic libraries need high band for transfer of multimedia resources to function effectively. But the bandwidth is decreasing day by day due to over and too much utilization, with decreasing of the said bandwidth, access to varieties of resources and information cannot be possible.
- ***Environment of operating the electronic library:*** This is another great problem in this our third world nation which are generally affected with the problems of poor power supply, poor internet connection, insufficient infrastructural facilities etc. as such digital, automated, electronic or virtual libraries cannot operate in rural and some urban areas where they lack some social amenities.

- **Poor speed in accessing information:** As many computers are connected to the internet, its speed of accessing materials and other resources will reasonably decrease. There is need to invent new technologies to solve the problems poor speed or in the near future internet will be full of error in sending and receiving of messages by the patron community.
- The electronic library has no limited physical boundary: The user of the electronic library need not to go to the library physically as against the traditional or manual libraries. People from all over the world could gain access to the same information, resources and services as long as an internet connection is available. Therefore, the question of inadequacy of materials, sitting capacity and time is redressed and users can access to varieties of information resources and services for their educational and training attainment without limitation.

PROSPECT OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

The role of librarians in providing the patron community with desired information, resources and services to this regards cannot be overlooked, because they are needed for packaging and repackaging of information for electronic publishing, reference purpose, to advise the users about the strategy to identify relevant electronic sources and materials via the net. A digital or electronic library scheme will also facilitates access to vast collections of books, materials, journals titles and other information materials from as far as back in limited time possible. Therefore, the electronic library has the following prospects:

- The operating hours are round the clock: The prospects of electronic library in connection with time are virtually sound. The digital or electronic libraries can be accessed by the library users at any time in the day and night, as such it can be accessed twenty four (24) hours a day and three sixty five (365) days of the year any time without breakage. This gives room for continues education for research, teaching and learning which are the

potentials elements for socioeconomic development.

- Electronic libraries has variety of space: The traditional or manual system of library are facing the problem of storing of their materials but the digital libraries has the potential to store much more information and resources this is simply because digital information requires very little physical space to contain many and unlimited information and resources as such when the library has no space, the only option is to go for digitalization which require small space t housed many resources, and materials in digital format.
- It has wider networking system: As the world is integrated in a small village using internet a particular electronic library can provide the link to any other resources and materials of other electronic library very easily where as the benefit of resource sharing among individual and group can be achieved.
- Small cost of maintenance is requiring for electronic library:

The cost of maintaining electronic library is very much lower than that of manual library practice. In a manual library very reasonable amount must be use to pay the staff salary and allowances, book maintenance, additional books, purchasing and maintaining of library furniture, training and retraining of staff etc. but the digital, electronic or virtual library do away with these expenses and requires small amount for maintenance.

From the above we can see that in electronic library all the materials and resources is machine held, manipulated and does not have physical boundary that the conventional library has. The important point to be considered in the electronic library is that, the information, resources and services are stored in computer system and allow it to be manipulated and delivered in the way that the users can get access to it at ease. The numbers of personnel to manage the electronic library are small in number compare with manual library. The support and services is round the clock in the digital, and services without bothering who owned or where the information, resources and services comes from and

the resources can easily be share and network among individual and group of clientele. (Ref Table – 1)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, the entire library conventional system of operation is to be discarded to embrace the electronic one which are fully digitalized and allow variety access of many informational, resources and services around the globe without any differences whatsoever. It is general belief today that all the developed country has, that is living in a good and socioeconomic development condition, embarked much on good and stable educational policies and systems, good standard of living, healthy condition and other opportunities. As such no country can be called developed without the above facilities and all these can be enhance or achieve through education and functional equipped library. As the world become a globe village as a result of emergence of Information and Communication Technology facilities, therefore traditional or manual library system must be change to electronic library with virtual information, resources and services for the citizens to acquire their educational activities as different stages of learning for socioeconomic development in the country.

RECOMMENDATION

The following points were recommended in an effort to enhance proper challenges and to have better and effective electronic library which will serve as a panacea for global security and socioeconomic development.

- Due to information explosion, the current trend cannot handle the system of information, resources and services as well as their uses. Therefore; there is need for the government and other organization to change from manual library system, support and services to more electronic one with virtual accessibility.
- Considering the nature of the electronic libraries, there is the need to have a central back up or achieve at the national level which will store, regulate before accessing by the clients or patron community and to serve as a back up for references.
- The government should provide enough incentives for the realization of electronic, library in the country for socioeconomic development of individual and organization.

- In the electronic library, there is need to have user's community and a means for users to reach the library since the essence of electronic library is to have a global coverage.
- There is a need to have policy/guideline for establishment, maintenance and use of electronic libraries all over the globe.

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LIST OF TABLE:-**Table 1 Comparison between Electronic and Traditional Libraries**

| S/N | LIBRARY SUPPORT AND SERVICES | MANUAL LIBRARY | ELECTRONIC LIBRARY |
|------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Staff requirements and involvement in rendering support and services | Very high | Very low |
| 2. | Sitting capacity and space of the library | Much is required | Not required always |
| 3. | Opening hours of the library | Opening hours are limited | The opening hours are round the clock |
| 4. | Access to information, resources and services by the users | Limited to physical location on shelf | No limited access to resources and materials |
| 5. | Library cooperation resource sharing and networking activities among libraries | Inconvenient and delay | Convenient and faster |
| 6. | Cost of maintenances of the library | Very expensive | Very small is required |
| 7. | Migration in the library to matched with library users needs | Limited | Uses of other libraries via internet services |
| 8. | Support and service offered to non-traditional users | not possible | Online delivery |
| 9. | Multiple access of information, resource and services by the users | Not flexible | Easy and clear |
| 10. | Search engines for information resources and services in the libraries | Manually not reliable | Electronically and easy to search |