

Role of Libraries in Educational Development of Nigerian Army Personnel.

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Abstract

This review paper explores the role of libraries in the educational development of Nigerian army personnel with reference to the concept of libraries (pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial era), education and national development. The paper emphasized on the roles of education in national development to include knowledge production and acquisition, provision of workforce and as well as the general role of libraries such as acquisition and dissemination of information resources, information, computer and digital literacy, preservation of information resources, outreach services, information sharing/networking. The specific roles of libraries by their types include: national library of Nigeria legal deposit, reading promotion and research and publication; while academic libraries role include: complementary role, quality assurance and training. The role of school libraries include acquisition, accessibility and use of collection as well as reading promotion, while that of public library include: service to children and outreach services. One of the roles of special library with respect to the educational development of Nigerian army personnel is the conservation of knowledge and cultural artifacts. Challenges to libraries in the course of discharging their roles include: inflationary trends in the publishing industries, reading culture, funding, incessant power failure and technological issue. Paper concludes that education and library are inseparable as library play vital role towards meeting information and educational needs of Nigerian army personnel. Recommendations were proffered to include: adherence of government to the UNESCO standard in funding education and the need to imbibe reading culture by children, among others.

Keywords: Army, Education, Libraries, Nigeria, Personnel, Role,

INTRODUCTION

Libraries and librarianship have passed through age, pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrials era otherwise known as information age. Their existence is not only to acquire, process, store and preservation of information resources but also to make them available to meet user's information needs. The pre-industrial era witnessed the use of crude implement not only to document information but also to preserve them, thus information was documented on leaves, tortoise shell, skins and stones, wooden slates, while grid sticks made

from bamboo sticks as well as guinea corn stalks (sharpen with pointed mouth) was used as writing materials.

The so called information resources were available for users' consultation. However, libraries at that time were secured, managed and handled by the so-called librarians/library staff who stood by the entrance and exit (gate) of the so-called library monitoring the entrance and exit (passage of users). The library staff or so called librarian was more or less a gatekeeper, serving as security to the library and its collection. As time passed by, librarianship gradually metamorphosed to the industrial era witnessing not only invention of printing machines but also reading materials were printed/produced on a large scale thereby meeting the information needs of users. Work and services that was discharged or offered by human being and of course library staff were now being discharged by machine. This is a typical characteristics of industrials revolution. The third era is the information age known as the 21st century which people refer to as computer age or information age whereby information is not only produced by printing machines but also through computer or ICT facilities. Information resources are now selected, ordered, acquired, processed and disseminated beyond the four-walls of libraries due to advent of ICT thereby making information service delivery faster, accurate, adequate and reliable.

Library is the collection of books and other literacy materials kept for consultation. It is also a place where books and non-book materials are kept for use. In this information age, the definition of library has gone beyond mere collection kept in a place for people to go and consult. This is because of the reality of the 21st century whereby reading materials are not only in physical/print format but in electronic and available online, hence Aliyu, Saka and Udoudoh (2020) posits that smartphones are now use to access, download and consult information resources without physically being in library. There are many different kinds of libraries, including academic, school, public, national, special, and virtual libraries.

The concept of education varies from individual to individual depending on perception. However, the word "education" originated from two Latin words "educare" and 'educere" – meaning to train, to form or to mold. By extension "educare" means that the society trains or mold people's life to achieve the societal needs. "Educere" means to build, to lead or to develop a child to meet the societal needs. (Kingdom and Maekal, 2013)

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in it's National Policy on Education (2013), every Nigerian child has the inherent right to education hence government is making

concerted effort towards ensuring Nigerian children have access to high-quality education that would meet the country's economic needs: The Federal Republic in its National Education Policy (2013) designed and structured the Nigeria education system into four (4) main areas:

- Early Child care and development aged 0-4 years
- Basic Education aged 5-15years (pre-primary, primary and Junior Secondary education)
- Post-Basic Secondary education (senior secondary education)
- Tertiary education (colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics and universities)

Federal Republic of Nigeria in its 1999 constitution as amended in 2011 sections 18(1) and 34(1) states that government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that the citizens of Nigeria have equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels... thereby eradicating illiteracy.

Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones (North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-South, South-West and South-East with teaming population spread across the rural and urban centers which signifies that the citizens of the country (army inclusive) need to acquire some forms of education thereby eradicating illiteracy so as to enhance national development (cultural, economy, health, political, education, science and technology) among others.

A uniform military staff serving as soldier, land army, naval and air force as well as officers and men in military that are charges with responsibility of protecting the nation, lives and properties of citizens as well as its territory and boundary against external intrusion. The military men and women are spread within various formations and barracks with ultimate responsibility of protecting the nation and its citizens. They are found in barracks, defence academy, various military formations and army universities. They undergo various educational programmes leading to the award of certificates and degrees; they also undertake researches as well as collaborative training, exchange programmes and researches. There is the need for not only the establishment of libraries in various military formations, but also to provide educational and information services to military men and women and their family as well the provision of information services by national, academic, public, school and special libraries respectively.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Knowledge Production, Acquisition, Dissemination and Use

One may generate, acquire, gain, and use information about the whole universe via education. Teachers and librarians are the ones that disseminate knowledge, although teachers deliver/ disseminate knowledge to students based on their field of specialization and in line with the curriculum, the librarian select, order, acquire, process, organize, preserve and disseminate information resources to users on request. Students as well as library users acquired knowledge through teachers and supported by librarians through the dissemination of information resources based on the collection development policy of a particular library. (Saka, Aliero and Ibrahim, 2022)

2. Production of Labour/Workforce

According to Ako and James (2018) education at any level is to prepare and train people to meet societal needs for national development. In other words education prepares individuals for labour market viz-a-viz economic development. Majority of Nigerian workforce are product of education as they must have acquired some level of education and be certificated. Education is seen as instrument for the production of skilled manpower in various sectors whether government or private. This justify the reason for engaging private sectors to contribute tax to parastatal under Federal Ministry of Education known as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) as a means and major source of funding public polytechnics, colleges of education and universities. The funds are distributed to beneficiary institutions in the form of intervention and that of library is called library intervention which are used to procure books and journals as well as procurement and installation of library equipment. By preparing the workforce required for national growth, education helps a nation's economy to grow. For this reason, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in its National Policy on Education (2013) has since set out to accomplish this goal.

3. Mutual Relationship among People

Through education, formal or informal, the relationship among people is strong hence people/learners, students or trainees relate with one another. In other words, social relationship is being promoted especially through school system which last longer because of the formation of clubs, societies and associations in addition to classmates and colleagues association. Mutual relationship among students, lecturers and between institutions and host

communities become stronger through various collaborative ventures-research, teaching, publication, staff exchange, etc. (Saka, Aliero and Ibrahim, 2022).

4. National and International Integration

Education promotes national integration which arises from students exchange program and the mandatory National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) as students are made to study or serve in various states/organizations other than their state of origin or particular organization or school respectively. At the international level, students and participants at conferences from different parts of the world meet not only to exchange contacts but also cross-fertilize ideas and form networking.

5. Political Development

Education enable one to be patriotic and have respect for people's right, culture and religion, thus children and youth are taught various political systems at home, keep abreast of their fundamental rights and those of others. One can learn about the political systems, civic responsibilities and rights, etc through subjects or courses like social studies, government, civic education, political science, peace and conflict resolution, etc. (Ako and James, 2018).

EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There is relationship between education and libraries and one cannot exist in the absence of other.

Education is the training, molding, building, developing and leading individuals to be useful in the society. Libraries are places, agencies, instruments containing organized information resources for users' consultation thereby meeting their educational needs. For quality education to be ensured, there must be functional libraries in terms of collection, services and manpower as well as building thus the 3Bs (brain, building and books) must be adequate. Types of libraries include: public, national, academic, school, special and virtual libraries.

National development may be referred to as aggregate of advancement or improvement of a nation in terms of education, social, economic, cultural, health, political, agriculture, science and technology. The contribution of each of these sub-sector is generally reflected in monetary value termed Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and according to (Okebukola 2012) there are three (3) indices to national development viz-a-viz: gross domestic product (GDP), expectancy and literacy. This means that the ability of citizens of a country to read and write

is one of the indicators to national development thus (Holy Qur'an 96:1-2) and (Holy Bible Revelation 1:3) emphasized the importance of reading to humanity.

GENERAL ROLES OF LIBRARIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN ARMY PERSONNEL

Talking about the roles of libraries in the educational development of Nigerian Army personnel is like talking on the roles of libraries educational development. However, libraries regardless of types have unique roles to play in the educational development of Nigerian army personnel:

1. Acquisition and Dissemination of Information Resources

Libraries generally are charged with the responsibilities of acquiring and making information resources available for users on request. Current and relevant information and information resources (books, journals, newspaper, non-book material etc) according to Adepegba and Adedokun (2022), these collections are acquired through purchase, subscription, donation, gift and exchange and legal deposit as the case of National Library of Nigeria. It should be noted at this juncture that while acquiring informational materials for army personnel, librarians should take into consideration the army personnel's areas of information needs, expertise and specialization. Those areas might include but not limited to: Military, Public Administration, Peace and Conflict resolution, ICT, politics, security, peace education and government. Army personnel should have access to collection from the above mentioned fields and at the same time the collections be disseminated to army personnel through public libraries or libraries establish and stocked with collection. To support this argument, scholars in the field of librarianship such as Umeji and Chukwuyi (2018), Jabo and Ubandawaki (2019), Njoku and Ken-Agbriju (2020) maintain that disseminating relevant information that will avoid crisis and promote peace in the country is a function of peace education.

2. Information, Computer and Digital Literacy:

This is a recent role as it replaces user education. Information literacy simply means teaching library users how to source, identify, access, synthesize, use and evaluate information (Ojedokun, 2007). To ensure educational development of Nigerian army personnel, peace education be taught. Information literacy is the ability to source, access, use and evaluate information as this service would go a long way in promoting the study

skill of army personnel. There is the need for army personnel to acquire the knowledge of computer i.e ability to manipulate computer and word processing, PDF and excel format as well as ability to access information and use technology to learn and work.

3. Preservation of Information Resources

This is one of the roles of libraries though with the advent of ICT, most libraries have adopted this role. Academic libraries preserve research works by way of digitization and store in institutional repository so that users can access information through the repository as some Nigerian universities have their theses in the institutional repositories, although Saka (2013) maintain that cultural and historical artefacts and local contents need to be video-film and preserved for future use.

4. Outreach Services

Libraries are expected to play the role of outreach or extension services. Due to one problem or the other, army personnel might not be able to visit library for their information needs. Public, national and academic libraries need to organize sensitization programs, seminars, conferences and workshops on the need for army personnel to imbibe peace in the country.

Special libraries attach to some organizations like Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolutions and National Orientation Agency are expected to embark on collaborative services to sensitize army personnel on the need to maintain peace through a number of strategies including adoption of mobile library strategy and enlightenment program which are crucial to national security. This involve library staff moving from one apartment office to another for sensitization. Another method adopted by libraries in the discharge of their role is the outreach services which some scholars perceived as the provision of information services to active but disadvantaged users such as hospital patients, women in purdah houses, special needs(deaf and dumb, visual impaired, cripple), sick people, old retiree and legion, etc. (Issa, 2018)

5. Public Enlightenment/Conflict Resolutions.

Libraries regardless of the types are charged with responsibility of resolving conflict and crisis in the society direct or indirectly. Umeji and Chukwuyi (2018) as well as Jabo and Ubandawaki (2019) emphasise the need for public library to resolve conflict through

enlightenment campaign on the need for peaceful co-existence among people. Towards the achievement of this aspiration, universities can conduct researches in order to find solution to social vices and societal problem through undergraduate and postgraduate researches and kept in library for user consultations. Umeji and Chukwuyi (2018) as well as Njoku and Ken-Agbirioju (2020) stress the need for library to maintain the security of lives and properties as well as conflict resolution among citizens in Nigeria.

6. Information Sharing/Networking

No library on earth is self-sufficient in terms of information resources at their disposal. Therefore, there is the need for libraries to come together through collaboration to share resources not only to boost the services but also to meet the educational needs of army personnel. This can be achieved through information networking whereby libraries through mutual understanding share resources online.

UNIQUE ROLES OF LIBRARIES BY TYPES

1. National Library of Nigeria:

a. Legal Deposit

National Library is the type of library that is established by the Federal Government and is saddle with the responsibility of acquiring all the published materials by citizens of Nigeria regardless of wherever they live. The national library perform the legal deposit function thus established by Decree number. 29 of 1970. The decree stipulates that private publishers are to deposit three (3) copies, while state ministries, parastatals and its agencies are to deposit 10 copies of the published materials and 25 copies be deposited by the Federal Ministries and parastatals, agencies to the headquarters of National Library of Nigeria or any of the state branches respectively. The National Library of Nigerian acquire the published materials throughout the year and are made available in both hard and softcopies (Rotimi, 2020).

b. Readership Promotion Campaign (RPC)

In order to imbibe the culture of reading in the minds of Nigerian children and youth, the National Library of Nigeria on annual basis organizes reading promotion campaign which mark series of events across the 36 states in Nigeria. This assertion according to Saka, Bitagi and Garba (2012) is to ensure lifelong learning thereby forming good reading habit so that by the time children enter institution of higher learning, reading has already form part of their life and not to read for examination purpose. The year

2024 readership promotion campaign was launched by the then Honorable Minister of Education in conjunction with the National Library of Nigerian and National Librarian through Flag-off ceremony while other state branches of the National Library of Nigeria in conjunction with the 36 state chapters of the Nigerian Library Association launched the Readership Promotion Campaign (RPC). In Minna, the Niger State capital (Nigeria), the RPC took place at Unguwar Zakkah Primary school Gbeganu with series of events and activities including paper presentations, talks, impromptu speeches and reading competition among secondary school students as well as “Drop Everything and Read to Somebody (DEAR)” and drama/cultural presentations in relation to reading culture (Niger State Branch of National Library, 2024)

c. Research and Publication

Although the apex library(National Library of Nigeria) has various departments and one of such department is “Research and Publication” charge with the responsibility of conducting researches, collect manuscripts and publish them in the official journal of National Library called “Niger Biblios”. The journals publish articles on annual basis.

Academic Libraries

These are Libraries established in institutions of higher learning such as collages of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and universities respectively. Their establishment is to support the overall objective of the parent institutions thus relating to teaching, learning, research and community services. According to Saka, Aliero and Ibrahim (2022), the total number of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria stood at 869 as at year 2022. The needs to provide library services to users in these institutions become crucial. The services perform by the academic libraries are link to the objectives of establishing the institutions.

(i) Complimentary role

In order to support classroom teaching, lecture and learning and to meet educational needs of students and army personnel on training, academic libraries strive to acquire current but relevant collections in relation to programmes of study and the collection development policy of academic libraries. Academic libraries by their nature and services acquire information resources relevant to users’ information needs since one of the objectives of academic libraries is the provision of information resources to support teaching, learning and research activities of both undergraduate and postgraduate programs and community services

respectively. The academic libraries select and acquire information resources relevant to the curriculum of the institutions.

(ii) Quality Assurance

One of the unique role of academic libraries is to ensure and support smooth running and to maintain standards of academic programs in the institutions and one way to support this aspect is their role in resource verification and program accreditation by the regulatory bodies such as National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) as well as professional bodies respectively. Academic departments are consulted to submit list of recommended books, journals and equipment required for resource verification and program accreditation in order to mount programs or accredit the existing programs respectively. (Abidemi, 2016).

(iii) Training

Academic libraries offer practical skills, knowledge and training to students as part of academic requirement particularly in the area of information technology, public administration, marketing, etc. Librarianship is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field which cut across all other disciplines. Apart from the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) program, some academic libraries organizes conferences and workshops as well as certificate courses in apprenticeship, information technology, etc.

School Libraries

These are libraries established in nursery, primary and post-primary institutions to support teaching and learning of both pupils, students and teachers. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (2013) maintain that library is one of the educational services which every proprietor of school is expected to establish library so as to promote readership as well as training staff for efficient service delivery. The role of school libraries in the educational development of Nigerian army personnel in this case is indirect as it carter for the information needs of army children. School libraries attached to command children school, Army Day Secondary School, etc are expected to perform the following roles:-

(i)Acquisition of information resources: School libraries need to acquire both fiction's (story books) and non-fictions (textbook) relevant to school curriculum.

(ii) Accessibility and use of collection: Collection in school libraries should be accessible and used by both pupils/children and teachers. School libraries should be opened during school hours and for boarding schools, library period should be extended to 6pm from Monday to Friday.

(iii) Readership Promotion: In order to imbibe the culture of reading in the minds of children and youth, Saka, Bitagi and Garba (2012) were of the opinion that school libraries should organize readership promotion campaign on annual basis to feature – reading, quiz and debate competition, symposium etc. Books should be allowed on loan to children/students for use at home. Subject teachers should give take-home assignment to pupils and students and above all, library periods should be included in the school time-table and strictly follow and adhere to the time-table.

Public Libraries

These are libraries that are established partly funded from public and government funds and its use is not restricted to any class/group of people but to all and that is why it is refer to as people's university. The role of public library, according to Issa (2018) is to make promotion for access to knowledge and information through range of resources and services which are available to all members of community regardless of age, gender, tribe, nationality, etc.

(i) Service to Children

One of the unique roles of public library is the service render to children. The children section in public library accommodates the collection of fictions and children visit the unit to access and use the materials and loan as the case may be. The culture of reading can be imbibed if children are allowed to use collection and loan for home use.

(ii) Outreach Services

Because of one reason to the other, some people are not privileged to visit or use library and as such public library offers outreach or extension services even to army personnel and their families. Such group of disadvantaged people includes but not limited to: sick people, house wives, army on 24-hour active service, legion, etc. This group of people might not have the opportunity to visit public library, as such information resources need to be taken to them in their places (residence, hospital, duty post, etc.)

Special Libraries

By their nature, they are libraries established and provide unique and specialized services to specific group of users. They are libraries located in hospitals, government departments, research institutes, military cantonment, center for peace and conflict resolutions etc. Special libraries need to acquire and disseminate specialized collection to army personnel in the area of peace, security, administration and politics.

(i) Conservation of Knowledge

Libraries established at Barracks need to conserve the historical documents, video film war artefacts: preserve museum materials and can be used to meet information and research needs of army personnel.

Collaboration between Nigerian Libraries and Nigerian Army

There should be collaboration among various libraries and Nigerian army training institutions and their libraries and in terms of collaborative resource sharing, training/teaching, research and community service which are geared towards the educational needs of Nigerian Army. Information resources on politics, peace and conflict resolution, military democracy of various libraries are contributed to common pool and shared among various libraries for the benefit of Army.

Librarians need to engage in collaborative research and publication, project supervisor and teaching with emphasis on the librarianship or information literacy. Some scholar were of the view that there is the need for collaborative research and publication, teaching and mentoring, supervision of research works as well as professional networking among librarians and faculty members in the Nigerian universities (Saka and Ibrahim, 2023) including army academy, army universities, Air-force Institute of Technology, Nigeria Defence Academy among others .

Challenges to libraries towards discharging their role in educational development

1. Inflationary Trends

Because of the high cost of published materials, libraries are finding it difficult to procure adequate information resources especially books. This also applies to ICT facilities. Both local and foreign collection are on high cost coupled with the cost of shipment.

2. Problem of Reading Culture:

The culture of reading is becoming low and what accounted for this low patronage is the ICT phenomenon. Some Nigerians now laid emphasis on generation of information through computers, Internet and smart phones as opposed to visiting libraries to read the available books. Children and students these days do not read for pleasure instead they read for examinations purpose (Saka, Bitagi and Garba 2012; Saka, 2013). This become problem to students as they enter institutions of higher learning as most of them cannot read and write but simple correct English not to talk of writing essay.

3. Funding Issue:

Funding to Nigerian educational system does not meet the UNESCO standard of 26% of the Nigeria budget; Literature reveals that funding to education is between 10-13% of Nigerian budget (Ako and James, 2018) and public, national, academic, special and school library are under education sector, they find it difficult to offer adequate information service delivery. Libraries need adequate funding to meet users' expectations – adequate collections and service, etc

4. Power Failure

Power failure has been a problem to library services in Nigeria which has negatively affect the information needs, accessibility and resource utilization. Sometimes users are frustrated due to power failure and some libraries don't have alternative sources of power generation. Using Internet becomes problem due to power failure. Digitization of print collection sometimes becomes a problem due to power failure. (Saka, 2013)

5. Technological Issue

Despite the clamouring for ICT^s, most libraries experience inadequate ICT facilities in terms quantity and quality. Sometimes even with the presence of power, there use to be network failure and Internet problem. Library users and staff working in E-Library unit get frustrated because of technological issues arising from inadequate ICT facilities, Internet and network problem respectively.

6. Functional Public and School Libraries

Public libraries in some states are in bad condition as regards buildings, infrastructure and collections, while the situation of most school libraries are worrisome to the extent that some school libraries are converted to class rooms and staff rooms whenever there is shortage of

classes and accommodation for staff. These two libraries serve as people university and foundation of education respectively. (Saka, Bitagi and Garba, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both education and libraries perform complimentary roles and are inseparable as the absence of one would lead to failure of other. As such their roles cannot be underrated as they are pre-requisite to national development. No nation can rise above the quality of its education and libraries contribute directly or indirectly to national development in terms of research, economic, politic, education, cultural, science and technology as well as enhancement of decision – making and productivity in organization as well as reducing un-certainty. Information is now used to determine how to judiciously use capital, land, employ labor and adopt/execute entrepreneurship.

To have adequate and functional libraries and for quality educational development of Nigerian army personnel, there is the need to look into the following areas: -

- a. Patronage-Nigerian authors and publishers should patronize local publishing firms instead of patronizing the foreign published firms.
- b. Readership Promotion-There should be orientation on the part of Nigerian children on the need to imbibe the culture of reading; National Library of Nigeria is hereby requested not to relent in its continuous effort in the sensitization of Nigerians on the need to imbibe the culture of reading for life long learning.
- c. UNESCO Standard-Nigerian government is hereby requested to meet up with UNESCO standard of 26% budgetary allocation to education sector to which most Nigerian libraries are affiliated.
- d. Alternative Power Supply-Both public and private organizations should as a matter of urgency source alternative power such as inverter, solar and automatic stand-by generating plant to support the provision of efficient library services.
- e. Collaborative Effort-National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and National Communication Commission (NCC) are requested to assist organizations in the provision of ICT facilities and also advise heads of various organizations on way forward for efficient network and Internet services. ICT units of various organizations are requested not to relent on their commitment towards ensuring 24-hour network and Internet service.

- f. There should be provision of adequate information resources to meet variety of information needs of military personnel.
- g. Provision of incentives and fringe benefits to military librarians to boost their morale thus motivating them to be committed to jobs.
- h. Establishment of standard libraries in military for nations standard in this case include collection, staffing, building, facilities and a purposeful built-library.
- i. Library Legislation-There should be strong public and school library legislation to commit the concern authority in ensuring functional public and school library system in Nigeria.

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