



Library as a Tool toward Attainment of Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria: A Structured Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of libraries on sustainable economic development in Nigeria. It looks at various sectors of the economy, and it was discovered that the libraries have contributed significantly and boosted the development of the economy by providing adequate information that supports learning, research, innovation, businesses, socio-cultural development, in the Nigeria. Attention was given to education, culture and tourism, agriculture, and health sectors in this study. Several challenges to the effective provision of information services in several economic sectors in Nigeria were identified which include poor funding, inadequate power supply, and incompetent library personnel. It was recommended that, there is need for adequate funding, training, and re-training of librarians, steady power supply, and integration of libraries in the national policy framework.

Keywords: Sustainable Economic Development, Library Roles, Economic Sector, Nigerian Economy.

Introduction

The sustainable development goal is a match towards revamping the economy of nations. Nigeria embarks on the journey of economic redemption. It is expected that, with the sustainable development goals, national governments would develop their own action plans that emphasize or deemphasize various goals depending on the local situation (IFLA, 2015). The government at different levels in Nigeria has been making efforts to revive the economy. To redeem the Nigerian economy, every sector of the economy has a great role to play; given that information is power and the key to a successful economy. Sustainable development agenda that wave across economic sectors in Nigeria has given priorities on access to information, which the libraries are captains in the boat. By demonstrating the contribution libraries make across the goal framework through campaigns and meetings with government officials, libraries could be in the best position to partner with the government and others to implement national strategies and programmes that benefit information seekers.

Access to information is one of the prime factors to consider in sustainable development goals. According to IFLA (2015), increased access to information and knowledge, underpinned by universal literacy, is an essential pillar of sustainable development as evidenced by target 16.10 of the Sustainable Development Goals: 16.10: “Ensure public access to information and protect



fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreement.” Access to information is crosscutting and can help support all of the SDGs. IFLA () believes that increasing access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by the availability of Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 128 information and communications technologies (ICTs), supports sustainable development and improves people’s lives. The Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development shows that libraries, information intermediaries, and development organizations are united behind the inclusion of access to information in the development framework.

Overview of Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria

Globally, Economic development is concerned with the constant commitment to advancing human existence with quality of life, including socio-cultural, political, economic, and general welfare of the people. Sustainable economic development refers to a comprehensive economic, social, cultural, and political process that focuses on improving the quality of lives of the entire population and of the individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in the development process and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there-from. Sustainable development is a long-term continuous development of society, aimed at the satisfaction of humanity’s needs at present and in the future via rational usage and replenishment of natural resources, and preserving the earth for future generations (Erhun, 2015).

Though the attention of this study focuses on the economic aspect of sustainable development, it is important to know from the wider perspective that sustainable development involves both environmental protection and economic development. According to Singh (2014), sustainable development means attaining a balance between environmental protection and human economic development and between the present and future needs. Singh further stated that sustainable development also refers to equity in development and sectorial actions across space and time. It requires the integration of economic, social, and environmental approaches towards development. Glenn, and Daniel (2005), opined that sustainability is a development effort, including those aimed at protecting the health and the environment that should be undertaken in a manner that will not frustrate the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Sustainable development is the process of judicious use and conservation of natural resources for the overall improvement in the quality of life for the present and future generations on a long-term basis. The concept of sustainable development was formulated as a welding tool as well as a framework for the realization of economic growth in an environmentally viable world. Three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development are recognized worldwide in the transition towards a sustainable society (Erhun, 2015).

Library Integration in to Sustainable Economic Development Policies

With the underlying economic realities in Nigeria for growth that is inclusive, sustainable, and conducive to national development; libraries deliberately focus on generating, storing, and disseminating information across different sectors of the economy and bringing about a significant reduction in poverty and increased improvement of the economy. Issues such as how best to promote growth that is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable are increasingly at the center of the international debate (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017).

With the impact of libraries across sectors of the Nigerian economy, it is surprising that the involvement of libraries in sustainable development policies in Nigeria has not been



sufficiently defined. Effective inclusion of Library and information services for sustainable development policies are continuously lacking (Mngutyo et al., 2020). Consequently, Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 129 remains a need to embrace the role of the library and further enhance the economic policy profile of Nigeria with regard to various dimensions of sustainability in economic sectors. The library extends its roles to see that all sectors in Nigeria have ubiquitous access to information resources and services tailored to the need of every sector. The growing presence of special libraries within private and public establishments makes it possible for the library to reach the specialized information needs of the organizations.

Libraries are all together helping to circulate needed information services to the respective sectors of the economy leading to the growth and development of the nation. Valantin (2014) notes that the ability of the government to develop effective policies and plans depends on its capacity to interpret information relevant to the country's economic, social, cultural, and financial situation. According to the author, strong national information centers such as libraries and Information infrastructure allow access to information in all sectors and provides the basis for competent planning and decision-making. Libraries, however, require sound policies to provide the necessary framework for the development of information and communication systems and services to meet developmental needs. Human knowledge is invariably enriched by information; hence, the collective intellectual abilities of a nation that is; human capital, which will also depend on access to information through a well-equipped library.

The Role of Library in Selected Economic Sectors in Nigerian Perspective

This study focuses on selected sectors of the economy with the view of identifying what impacts have been made so far on sustainable economic development. The sectors in view includes education, agriculture, health, culture and tourism.

Agricultural Information Support for Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria

Agriculture in Nigeria has been given prominence among the sectors of the economy and the roles of libraries in agricultural research and extension of rural agriculture services is quite enormous. According to Adeniyi and Ojo (2015), agricultural libraries provide information services to farmers, students, livestock producers, and agricultural business organizations, research workers subject specialist teachers, for the purpose of meeting the challenge of man, food, and hunger and to make for sustainable development.

The real need for sustainable development in the agricultural sector has created pressures on agricultural education, research, and extension services in rural communities. Based on that, libraries are established in agricultural universities, colleges, institutes, the Ministry of Agriculture, and allied institutions to promote the study, teaching, and research in agriculture. Aguolu (2000) opines that library play major roles in the sustainable development of the Agricultural sector by generating and disseminating agricultural information or knowledge to agricultural extension workers, researchers, students, farmers as well as to policymakers in government. Furthermore, Adeniyi and Ojo (2015) stated that libraries in the Agricultural Sector train and educate the students, researchers, and other agricultural information seekers on how to search and retrieve the required information and also make available documented sources of information that could lead to better agricultural education and sustainable development Libraries strive to ensure free and unhindered access to indigenous knowledge and skills on agriculture. Adeniyi and Ojo (2015) emphasized that for sustainable development in the agricultural sector; there must be access to indigenous knowledge on agricultural



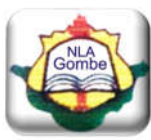
information. Okore et al. *Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 130 (2009) opined those libraries should promote access to indigenous knowledge by creating an environment which permits face-to-face forum and network formation to discuss and debate on issues that might be useful to members of the community, for example, the use of talk shows in promoting intergenerational dialogue between the young and the old on different subject areas ranging from agriculture, ecosystem, Medicare and conflict resolution. Libraries should also use other sources of indigenous knowledge, including indigenous experts, opinion leaders, and village elders, farmer to farmer interaction involving neighbors, friends, or village gathering in social places. This will lead to sustainable economic and agricultural development.

Education Information Support for Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria:

The role libraries play in the sustainable development of the education sector is quite enormous and clear. For instance, Anyim (2016) provides a clear picture of the roles of the academic library in the higher institution and states that university library is an intellectual resource center of the university that supports teaching, learning, and research for enhancement of knowledge frontier of students, teaching and non-teaching staff of the university. More to the impact of the library on the sustainable development of the education sector is the ubiquitous access to information through virtual libraries, which has made research more interesting and availability of knowledge at researchers' fingertips (Anyim, 2018). The Library helps the education sector in Nigeria in the training of professionals in different fields through its provision of information materials required for the academic program of the institution, provision of research information materials required for the academic programs, dissemination of the existing and new information, provision of adequate security for accessible information materials and provision of resources and research support for students and faculty (Anyim, 2020).

The library continues to contribute to the sustainable development of the education sector even in emergency situations through its digital means. It was discovered that the hope of academic institutions for sustainable progress during emergency periods is pointing towards the digital divide within the country in which applications of mobile technologies play vital roles. As digital innovation is a present theme in education with a focus on higher education institutions, libraries are not reluctant in making access to information easier especially, in a time of total lockdown like the one brought about by the covid-19 pandemic. However, libraries have devised a means of using the potentials of mobile technologies for accessing, retrieving, sharing, and dissemination of information in order to ensure that the education sector does not suffer as a result of a lockdown or any other emergencies (Anyim, 2020).

The education sector in Nigeria has been in the revolutionary process to digitalize educational resources so that access to information becomes less cumbersome. Due to growing concern for quick access to knowledge and increased desire to meet the information needs of academic scholars, the way in which information is stored, retrieved, and disseminated has been transformed. As more academic programmes are being introduced in the institution of higher learning such as continuing education, distance learning, etc., libraries play a prominent role by providing both printed and electronic resources to support the programs. The use of electronic resources for distance learning programs involves the provision of e-resources in conducting problem-solving research by the students and other users of the library. This also reflects how *Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 131 readily accessible electronic resources are presented to the members of the academic community for the purpose of learning, teaching, and research (Anyim, 2020).



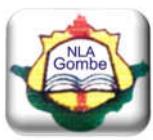
At the meeting with state governors in Nigeria, and the Global Business Coalition on Education in 2015, with the theme: “Every Child of School Age must be in School” the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan made this statement. “This meeting is a vital landmark in our determined efforts to increase opportunities for all Nigerian children, in accessing their constitutional rights to free and compulsory basic education...In anticipation of the Global Business Coalition’s offer of support; we have identified some priority areas of intervention. These include the construction of new schools and rehabilitation of existing ones, the provision of teaching and learning resources (library resources) and training of teachers...” School libraries are the youngest of the major types of libraries that have made a significant impact on sustainable development in the education sector in Nigeria, especially at the time when the emphasis on universal education is a prerequisite for national development. Meanwhile, the school library serves as the media or resource center to the very heart of the educational enterprise and also functions as the school’s central learning laboratory (Dike et al., 2020).

The libraries facilitate the planning and implantation of learning programs that will equip students with the skills necessary to succeed in a constantly changing social and economic environment. Through resource-based programs, students acquire skills to collect, critically analyze and organize information, problem- solving and communicate their understandings. Libraries provide educators with access to relevant curriculum information and professional development materials within and outside the educational system: and opportunities to cooperatively plan implement and evaluate learning progress, which integrates information resources and technologies. The library contributes to sustainable economic development by supporting education advancements, human resource development, business, entrepreneurship, technological innovations, and social skills. This marks a major shift in the perception of libraries as centers for mere passive and recreational reading, to active research institutions and socio-economic development agents. The libraries champion the development of the nation by enhancing the cause of education and academic research. The standard of education of a nation determines the standard of life attainable in such a nation. In that regard, Orji and Maekae (2013) opined that a nation develops in relation to its achievement in education. The library is crucial for the intellectual moral and spiritual advancement and elevation of the people of a community. It is an indispensable element of the absolute well-being of the citizens and that of the nation at large. Soblaje and Ogunmodede (2015), observe that without libraries, no meaningful educational effort can be carried out, as library services improve knowledge and skills for positive productivity as a tool for economic revival. The pivotal role played by libraries is one of the factors which help in the development of a society.

Health Information Support for Sustainable Economic Development:

Concerning Sustainable development in the health sector, which seems to be farfetched without libraries providing adequate attention in terms of health information to support the activities of the sector. The Library Association of Ireland (2020) opined that without medical or specialized health libraries and librarians, health Electronic Research Journal of behavioral Sciences, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 132 information would not be readily accessible for policymakers, patients, health sector personnel, and other users. Health care librarians organize and provide health information services to all categories of information consumers within and outside the health sector, with a focus on health professionals, patients, researchers, policymakers etc.

With the beehives activities of health care professionals, it is not surprising to see that the health sector generates a large amount of health information and records annually through research and practice. The health care librarians acquire useful health information sources such as online



databases and other information formats, process them and make them available and accessible to the healthcare professionals and patients (and other users), organize these health information records, and make them available and accessible to the users when needed (Ilogho et al., 2020). Medical libraries are examples of special libraries that provide specialized information services to meet the unique needs of their users. For instance, the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) library in Enugu, the US National Library of Medicine, World Health Organization (WHO) library, libraries in Medical Research Institutes, etc. These libraries acquire, organize/process and make the health information accessible to healthcare givers, patients, and researchers in the respective organizations.

The health sector in Nigeria requires quality information as this sector ensures the well-being of the people. A healthy nation is one with available and accessible health care information, and that makes the library a very important tool for attaining sustainable economic health development. The libraries ensure quality delivery of information to aid the health workers to discharge their duties effectively. Adio et al. (2007) noted that citizens need access to information on clinical effectiveness in order to improve the quality of care and to stay well-informed on developments in specialist areas. Many diseases that cause serious health problems to people are well documented in most Academic libraries in Nigeria. The adverse effect of these diseases on Nigerians caused low productivity among the labor force.

Culture and Tourism Information Support for Sustainable Economic Development:

Culture and tourism are in terms of their basic characteristics are two complex and layered fields of modern civilization, and they have a positive effect on the overall social and economic development. Culture and Tourism are connected with lifestyle, geographic area, education, and society; and they are necessary machinery for sustainable economic development (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010). As culture and tourism involve the overall intellect of the society, the sum of all material, spiritual resources, and lifestyle of a nation, the library ensures that information resources and services that promote culture and tourism are provided. Library maintains information relevant to the placement of culture on the market with cultural and artistic product, which has cultural and economic value; promotes and revived cultural goods and the landscape of a town that will be etched on tourists' minds; and provides information that helps to explore, know and learn something new about national and local cultural values of the region tourists are visiting.

The tourists have different motives for traveling and staying in the cultural-social areas contain aspirations for fulfilling a large number of different and vehement human needs and wishes. It can be a wish for gaining knowledge, discovering and getting to know various regions and civilizations, a visit to various cultural events, art, adventure, change, freedom, the change of the itinerary, etc. Among the special ones is a trip to the past, small-town visits, and other countries, a visit to natural and cultural areas, exploration trips, seminars, getting to know the life Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 133 and work of an artist, and for the sake of rest, recreation as well as for health reasons and the like (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010). The library supports the tourists by providing access to information that cater to any given tourism goal or objective. Libraries, as cultural institutions, are essential in the sustainable development of the culture and tourism sector in Nigeria.

By digitalizing their book collection, libraries have become an important agent behind social progress based on knowledge managed by digital technology. In such a way, they enable direct online access to library material, studying accessories, and other information that takes an



active part in presenting a specific region to tourists. The role of libraries in the development of cultural tourism has rapidly increased in the last several years because tourists more and more gather a lot of information on a destination before deciding to visit it. There are numerous ways for libraries to attract tourists. An example may be an organization of tourist visits providing them to get to know the cultural and historical heritage of a region, the history and structure of the library itself, its book holdings, and its services. If libraries organize exhibitions, they should be part of the tourists' visit. Before the very visit tourists can be provided with a short video presentation as an introduction to the things they are about to see. Visits should be organized on several occasions during the day and adapted to different types of visitors. The programs of the visit should involve both adults and children and they should be made according to the type of visitors (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010, pp.104-114).

The libraries play important roles in promoting the culture and tourism sector, by providing vital information to visitors seeking information on how to locate some tourist sites, hotels, and industries among others. They produce a directory with regard to the addresses and locations of various cultural and historical sites. Libraries can work with communities, local tourist guides, and other stakeholders to mainstream libraries and make them more visible in the major tourist trails. In addition, libraries support the development of tourism by providing information of interest to tourists such as history or basic facts of the place, hosting cultural events, preserving and holding local cultural artifacts or photos, hosting cultural and other events of interest to tourists. Libraries can support the development of tourism by providing information of interest to tourists such as history or basic facts of the place, hosting cultural events, preserving and holding local cultural artifacts or photos, hosting cultural and other events of interest to tourists.

Hindrances to Effective Provision of Information Services towards Attainment of Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria

The Nigerian libraries of today are faced with many challenges in the discharge of their duties in delivering effective information service to the wider society. These factors militating against the effective provision of information services include among others; inadequate provision of information resources, poor funding, inadequate power supply, lack of reading culture, inadequately trained personnel in librarianship, financial constraints, inadequate library services, the poor distribution network of libraries, lack of viable databases for research works and publishing industry that can publish and provide survey and reports. There is no area of library operations to which the computer has not been applied with tremendous gains. These and more have greatly affected the effective information service delivery to the larger society.

Conclusion

Electronic Research Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Volume 4 (2021) ISSN: 2652-7782. <http://erjbehaviouralsciences.com/> 134 Libraries firmly support broader development targets on access to information across various sectors of the Nigerian economy. Libraries are the institutions in society that assist people to exercise their right to information, and safeguard and provide access to cultural heritage. The growth of libraries in evolving information and cultural environment is essential, as key stakeholders providing access to information, education and research, and social participation. If access to information and libraries are not included, it is more than a missed opportunity. It is incumbent on the government to take the libraries seriously and fund them to provide public access, information and skills if it must make its mark in the golden frame of sustainable development of the economy.



Recommendations

Based on the prevailing hindrances against an effective provision of information services, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The government should integrate the libraries in sustainable economic development policies.
- ii. The libraries in different sectors of the economy should be treated as a priority during budget allocations.
- iii. There is a need for adequate funding of the library in different sectors of the economy in order to acquire necessary resources and facilities that facilitate the distribution of required information to the users.

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