

SURVIVAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN A COVID PRONE SOCIETY

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Abstract

Libraries have really provided a lifelong learning process for individuals and societies as a whole having the individuals equipped with solid or concrete ideas, opinions and knowledge in an information based economy, productivity and employment thereby forming the basis for education. In fact, Library and Education are interdependent on each other, hence Education without Library and Library without Education are paralyzed. The sudden and unexpected outbreak of the virus forced the library professionals to initiate the fact of shifting from their traditional mode of operation to digital platform to ensure the sustainability of their clientele. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher finds out that almost every institution, industry and public domain has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which library sector is not exempted thereby leaving this paper to evaluate the current state of library system.

Keywords: Society, COVID-19, Library, Education, etc.

Introduction

The COVID-19 (Corona virus) outbreak is having a global effect of which library system is never exclusive. Library is considered as a hub of research and information so its roles can not be overemphasized in the educational system. Basically, library is established to help students to get involved in new learning not minding the social, cultural and economic difference. According to Neil (2007), libraries are repositories of information that exist to provide information services to users.

Information is power and a major asset to any individual that knows how to harness and organize it. Libraries however are information storage domain therefore academic system can never exist without them. With the outbreak of the virus, libraries have been the gateway of relevant information and facts for conducting research and development on the subject matter. The library system has gained ground or importance by acquainting the researchers with the opportunity to explore and exploit medical and scientific research while seeking for the preventive measures of the virus.

Due to the effect of COVID-19 on the system of library education, there is a paradigm shift on its operations, some library management have drastically change their traditional system to electronic operation just to keep the users abreast with the trends and happenings irrespective of their geographical locations. The role of traditional libraries is never disputed with the fact that it form the basis of digital libraries. The technological advancement and

innovations have transformed the old system of library into the present Smart Libraries which offers wide range of innovative services to the public. The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the internet and particularly the World Wide Web (WWW) have revolutionized library activities.

The Concept of COVID-19

The World Health Organization (WHO) had declared that COVID-19 pandemic is caused by a discovered virus called Corona virus. The virus came into existence on 31 December 2019 when WHO was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan City, China. A novel corona virus was identified as the cause by Chinese authorities on 7 January 2020 and was temporarily named "2019-nCoV". The aged people underlying medical problems like Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancerous are more prone to this serious illness. It had been discovered that the common symptoms of COVID-19 include high fever, tiredness, dry cough, aches and pains, sore throat, shortness of breath, nausea and a runny nose. The spread of this disease from person to person occurs through contact with the droplets of the infected persons, I.e, via sneezing and coughing.

Library

The word library comes from "Liber", the Latin word for "Book"(Encarta,2009). A library is a collection of sources, resources and services as well as the structure in which it is housed. According to Everhart (2010), library is seen as a collection of resources in a variety of formats that is organized by information professionals or other experts who provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic or intellectual access and offer targeted services and programs with the mission of educating, informing or entertaining a variety of audience and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole. The library is unarguably and indubitably one of the intellectual wonders of life and one of the greatest and remarkable innovations and inventions that proved indisputably man's creative audacity (Ajidahum, 2011). Library does not merely mean a collection of books but rather it is a learned institution equipped with treasures of knowledge maintained, organized and managed by trained personnel in order to educate the general public. There are major *types* of library and the most recognized are: Public library, Special library and Academic Library

Public library

A public library which is often called "People's University ", is a democratic institution established for the people by the people to conserve and organize human knowledge. It is a library with the vision of ensuring the satisfaction of the patrons. Among its broad based functions to perform in educating the general public, the following can be included;

- It supports educational, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations
- It encourages recreation and constructive use of leisure time

- Keep abreast of progress in all field of knowledge
- Facilitates informal self-education of all people in the community
- Meet the informational needs of all.

Special Library

A special library has been historically and still remain the integral functioning unit of an organization in which it's found, dedicated to the proposition that it exists only to offer the information which the organization needs in order to build, prosper, advance and achieve its ultimate ends. Special library differs in its mandate from other libraries on the following:

- Information here are up-to-date more than the textbooks, periodical literature or published reports
- It ensures quickest dissemination of information
- It files information rather than materials which calls for the introduction of special techniques

Academic Library

Academic libraries according to Ogbonna (2009) are defined as libraries established in institutions of higher learning such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, etc. Some library scholars define academic libraries as libraries that provide the academic needs of the students which includes the school, university, polytechnics and colleges of education libraries. Prospect (2014) opined that academic libraries are seen as the heart of learning community, providing a place for teaching, learning and research activities.

The academic libraries however have the aim of meeting the academic needs of the particular institution for which it is created to serve. These libraries are manned and managed by trained professionals referred to as academic librarians (Papoola,2010). There are many *forms* of libraries:

Traditional libraries

Traditional libraries are the forms of libraries that give emphasis on storage and preservation of physical items particularly books and periodicals. In traditional libraries, information materials are physically assembled in one place for users to access as well as consult. Traditional libraries according to Papoola, (2014) is also seen as hardcopy libraries where materials are in printed forms.

Digital libraries

Many academic libraries are actively involved in building repositories for the institutions' books, papers, theses and other works which can be digitalized thereby making the collections available to the general public with little or no restrictions in accordance with the goals of the open access.

Singh, K.K. (2019), defines digital or electronic libraries as libraries where one can have access to books, journals, novels, articles and any other information over the net. The digital libraries immensely vary in sizes and scope depending on the kind of library it is situated in. They can be managed by either an individual or organization.

Education

Education according to John Dewey (2002), is defined as a process of inviting truth and possibility by encouraging and giving time to discovery. Education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its future. It is indeed a powerful agent of change which improves both the health and livelihood of individuals and also contributes to social stability and drives long-term economic growth as well as ascertain the success stories of the people. Merriam Webster's dictionary defines education as the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools. Education is also deduced to be the process of facilitating learning, acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits which involves teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. Paulo Freire(2000) opined that education is synonymous to "Banking" i.e, making deposits of knowledge.

Nevertheless, education is deliberate, hence tries to build understanding, ensure accurate judgement as well as enable actions.

Library Education

Library is a power house of education and as such a compliment and adjunct to school which aids learning and reading processes therefore requires a foundational skill for learners' guidance (ALA). This is to ensure that learners are rooted or groomed with the idea of literary appreciation, hence, teaching library use or education will help to achieve effectiveness in the use of library by the potential patrons.

Library Education also called library instruction is a term interchangeably used as " library orientation ", " user education ", user assistance and " bibliographic instruction" which is an instructional program designed to teach the library users how to locate the information they need quickly and effectively. Eden and Feather (2003), defined library education as the activities involved in teaching library clients how to make the best possible use of library resources, services and facilities including formal and informal instructions delivered by

librarians. Library education however means the utilization of information resources and services available in a library.

Need for Library Education

Metzger (2002) states that library education helps to enlighten the users on the available services in a library so as to enable them to develop fully and widen their horizon of perceptions, interests and skills. It helps to actualise the first law of the library according to S.R. Ranganathan that states that "Books are for Use". Library education ensures maximum patronage by the users. It helps to create literacy among people. Users get maximum satisfaction through library education as they get to know the contents of the library.

Effect of COVID-19 on Library Education

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease, the traditional library system was popularly in use, hence electronic/digital libraries are now introduced in the system due to the medical implications of using the old system (traditional library). The traditional system which involves the physical interaction between books and human beings are obviously affected for the fact that the virus being, infectious in nature with its mode of transmission invariably pose a huge risk to the health conditions of the library users. With the society prone to COVID-19, many users at a time therefore have the chances of contracting the virus either directly from the infected persons or indirectly from infected objects and surfaces used by the infected users thereby leaving the environments unhealthy for learning and as such has been averted with the introduction of electronic technologies making it possible for the digitalization of the library resources and services.

It is observed however that few libraries that could not settle for the electronic system due to their financial constraints try to ensure that the COVID-19 preventive measures are put in place to safeguard the health of its users. Library professionals at this present time have availed themselves the opportunities of trying to restructure and improve their skills to effectively reach out to their users via workshops, seminars, conference, exhibition and display.

Recommendation

It is factual that technological advancements have revolutionized the library services in this digitalised era but the place of traditional library is irreplaceable no matter the changes, so certain things need to be put in place. Users need to be redirected on the use of library either via orientation, lectures, workshops, conferences, seminar and exhibition. Government should try as much as possible to provide the libraries with its allocations so as to achieve effectiveness in the library services. Libraries should hereby establish at least an association that will serve as their mediator which will advocate for their prior needs in the government house. Enough facilities like computer systems, comfortable chairs, software, etc should be provided and maintained in the library. Library staff need to undergo series of trainings just to equip them with the skills of clientele's management.

Conclusion

It is believed that the prime aim of libraries is to give the right information to the right users at the right time whether traditionally or electronically and as such needs a critical approach to library instruction to ensure the appreciation of the library services. Library plays vital role in data acquisition, storage, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information among the library users. This papers stated the needs for library education which is mostly for the library to retain and sustain their patrons as well as achieve the satisfaction of the library users.

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