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Abstract

Poverty has been identified as the major source of widening global inequalities and under-development at individual, organizational and national levels. The UN Sustainable Development Goals placed a great deal of priority in the eradication of all forms of poverty by the year 2030. The paper examined the roles of Nigerian libraries towards the achievement of this laudable goal. It canvasses the idea that poverty eradication is possible through the availability, accessibility and utilization of appropriate information resulting in requisite capacity building and empowerment of the Nigerian citizens. The paper identified specific interventions to be used by libraries in poverty alleviation to include: entrepreneurship empowerment, information literacy skills, information repackaging for the illiterate, lifelong learning initiatives, agricultural extension services, consultancy services, information dissemination services, provision of ICT skills education, improving reading culture and mobile library services. It concluded that libraries have the unlimited propensity to catalyse human capital development, productivity and reduction of poverty.

Keywords: poverty eradication, Sustainable Development Goals, academic libraries, Public Libraries, Special Libraries, MDGs, poverty, information availability and accessibility

Introduction

Poverty eradication has remained a growing concern to the global community. This stems from the realization of the multi-dimensional and debilitating effects of poverty on individual citizens and nations at large. Kayinwaye (2014) conceptualized poverty as a dreaded condition of absence of capacity to maintain basic level of descent living and concomitant denial of right to exercise full potentials. It creates vulnerability, exposing people to various diseases, ill-health, malnutrition, starvation, indecent accommodation, lack of potable water, infrastructure deficiencies, inadequate education, deprivations, inequalities, and decreased life expectancy. It dominates and incapacitates its victims. The poor do not have significant voice and influence in determining public policies and political priorities in their community. Poverty which is one of the symptoms of underdevelopment hampers the capabilities of nations for effective engagements in international relations.

The World Bank (2018) defined extreme poverty as depicting persons living on less than US$ 1.90 per day while moderate poverty relates to people on less than US$ 3.10 a day. It further averred that an estimated sum of 1.4 billion people had consumption levels below US$1.25 a day and 2.7 billion people lived on less than US$ 2 a day. The scenario clearly underscores the alarming rate of global poverty which necessitates the concerted attention of the United Nations and all member nations. Visualizing a situation of meeting a family's daily needs of feeding, transportation, sundry expenses for children based on US$ 1.90 (1.90×360 =684) appears an illusion but this reflects the reality of millions of families across the globe.

Poverty eradication presupposes an understanding of the causative factors of the phenomenon. The general causes of poverty as retrieved from literature include but not limited to: climate change, disasters, conflicts, wars, corruption, illiteracy, prevalence of diseases, overpopulation, droughts, unemployment, economic mismanagement, poor governance, poor infrastructure, lack of technology and capacity, leadership deficiencies, inequality of opportunities and environmental degradation (Olowa, 2012; Hoynes 2012; World Bank, 2005 and World Bank, 2007). The United Nations believes that eradication of poverty in all its forms remains the overriding priority and a necessary condition for sustainable development.

A precursor to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which enjoined all countries to attain the following objectives such as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, universal primary education, reduced child mortality, combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental stability and global partnership for development, all between 2000-2015 (UNDP, 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations was formulated in August 2015 after the MDGs were adjudged to have failed. It was also noted that there were

some marginal successes and achievements that must be consolidated. The major thrusts of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by the year 2030 (Ajiye 2014; Shittu, 2017 and Imhonopi, 2019). The SDGs have 17 derivative objectives and the number one is captioned **'No Poverty – End Poverty by all its forms everywhere.'**

There is an intrinsic relationship between poverty eradication and information. As long as people do not have information and are not empowered, they will remain perpetually poor. IFLA (2017) posited that access to information is a fundamental human right that can break the cycle of poverty and support sustainable development. Information is power and has the capability for social transformation and social engineering. Abata-Ebire (2018) averred that libraries represent a democratization of knowledge; providing equitable information to the rich and poor thereby empowering them to opportunities, skills and perspectives to wealth creation. Onoyeyan and Adesina (2014) asserted that no nation can develop without relevant, accurate and comprehensive information. The laudable SDG of "No Poverty'' – poverty eradication can only thrive on the wheels of adequate and appropriate information. Tise (2009) pointed out that academic libraries facilitate the conversion of information into knowledge through rudimentary information products and services in diverse formats for various applications. The extent to which people of the twenty first century will be creative, informed, knowledgeable and instrumental to national development will be determined by the availability and the content of the library services in their immediate locality (Nkiko, 2005; Royal Commission on National Development, 2005)

The primary objective of a library is to provide the right information at the right time in the right format to its users. It is therefore engaged in collection, processing, storage, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in appropriate formats, collocating same from various sources and locations for its multifaceted clientele. Libraries are indispensable for the functionality of society and sustainable development. Libraries are generically classified into four; namely, academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries and special libraries, Academic ones serve the tertiary institutions, the public type serves the general populace and is established by government, school libraries are provided in primary and secondary schools while special libraries are in specialized environments.

Furthermore, Drotner (2015) opined that libraries foster learning and development in the society by rendering different quality information related services to the citizens to enable them make informed decisions and solve societal problems, as well as enable the citizenry to play active role in the society. Also, Okuonghae and Igbinovia (2019) noted that libraries are taking up new roles to cater for societal needs which prompted measures like the library development strategy for 2015-2018 by the ENFIELD Council. This changing role of

libraries places them at the heart of every community development, thus, making them an agent of positive transformation and development. Libraries could significantly contribute in the eradication of poverty by providing citizens with needed information and information to make informed decisions. Similarly, Egunjobi, 2014, Eghosa, 2011; Bello and Jimoh,2013) observed that adequate and current information services delivered by libraries could influence proper planning, good decision making which could aid development and reduce poverty levels in communities. However, while studies (IFLA, 2016; Igbinovia, 2016; Okuonghae and Igbinovia, 2019) have investigated the contributions of libraries in the attainment of SGDs, investigation on how libraries could aid the eradication of poverty in Nigeria seems to be an issue open to scholarly investigation, as none seems to currently exist. Consequently, this study was conducted to investigate the role of Nigerian libraries in the eradication of poverty (SDG).

Statement of the Problem

A nation like Nigeria which is rich in mineral resources such as crude oil still has large number of its citizenry living below the international poverty line of less than $1.90 per day. It is curiously worrisome that Nigeria is described as the world's poverty capital according to world poverty clock (2018) report, having over 94million people in extreme poverty as at the time of this research. Knowledge empowers individuals and helps them to become proactive, gain control over their lives and broadens the range of available options for productive ventures. Libraries are intrinsically engines for fuelling imaginations, creativity and knowledge. It is against this background that the paper examined specific library interventions capable of accelerating the Sustainable Developmental Goals of ameliorating global poverty especially as it relates to Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to ascertain the role of libraries in the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain librarians' awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria;

2. determine specific roles libraries can play as intervention strategies to poverty eradication in Nigeria; and

3. find out the problems associated with libraries'/librarians' roles in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria in relation to poverty eradication

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research

1. What is the level of awareness of librarians about Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria?

2. What specific interventions can libraries undertake towards poverty eradication in Nigeria?

3. What are the problems associated with libraries/ librarians roles in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Sustainable development is a transdisciplinary concept that integrates social, economic and environmental dimensions to cover the diverse needs of today's world (Pawlowski, 2008; Sinakou et.al, 2018 and Mora et.al, 2018). The concept advocates that development must be planned in order to meet the necessities of the present generation without harming the future generation's capacity to meet their own need. This is interpreted to mean that any use of resources must be such that can generate, multiply and avert any detrimental cause which might impede future generation's ability to meet their own needs.

Imhonopi (2019) opined that Nigeria and many African countries actually recorded great achievements as regard the eight millennium development goals in areas like reduction in the number of the poor and the undernourished, the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE), increased primary school enrolment rate, marginal improvement in gender equality and women empowerment, reduction in mortality. Alamu (2017) however contended that Nigeria did not meet 25% of the MDGs due to persistent poverty and illiteracy.

The eradication of poverty is premised on the empowerment of the Nigerian citizen through capacity building rooted in availability, accessibility and utilization of appropriate information. Libraries as reservoirs of knowledge have pivotal roles to play in the eradication of poverty. Several studies (Chu, 2005, Annaniadu and Claro, 2009; Ugwuoke, 2013; Mohd and Udin, 2013; Khosravi et.al, 2016; Çoklar, et. al 2017; Manuaba, 2017; Mahoney, 2017 and Mora, et. al 2018) have aptly demonstrated the expected roles of the libraries in mitigating poverty. The summary of such roles include: entrepreneurship empowerment, information literacy skills, information repackaging for the illiterate, lifelong learning initiatives, agricultural outreach extension services, consulting services, improving reading culture, providing ICT skills education and mobile library services. Also, Okuonghae and Igbinovia (2019) noted that through the provision of quiet and collaborative spaces conducive to all types of learning, as well as provision of information services and resources, libraries are able to contribute to the attainment of SDGs. Conducive learning environment provided by academic libraries makes it convenient for people to learn and consequently, increase their mental capacity towards sustainable development.

IFLA (2005) averred that lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment to galvanize necessary capacities to meet technological, economic, social challenges, redress disadvantages and advance the well-being of all.

All developing countries are faced with the need to develop information infrastructure and an information literate population which are indispensable for continued educational and national development in the context of the global knowledge driven economy. It is only a well-enlightened and creative workforce that can translate to sustainable development. Libraries therefore become a non-negotiable index of capacity building, empowerment and poverty eradication (Nkiko, 2005).

Methodology

The survey type of the descriptive research design was employed in carrying out this study. This type of research design was deemed fit in a bid to elicit data from Librarians on the roles of libraries towards the eradication of poverty as it is in line with the Sustainable development goal of the United Nations. The population of the study comprised of 104 librarians from Public, Academic and Special Libraries who attended the 2018 Nigerian Library Association Workshop. The study therefore adopted the total enumeration sampling technique to study the entire 104 librarians. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire using both nominal and Likert scaling of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD). The questionnaire was divided into sections, with each section addressing each of the specific research objectives. The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and evaluation. The suggestions and opinion of the experts were used for the final draft of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was achieved and considered adequate for the study. Out of the 104 copies of the questionnaire administered, 90 copies were returned and found suitable for analysis, thus, representing a response rate of 86.5%. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Presentation of Results

Presented here are the analyses of data gathered for the study. The responses were retrieved, analysed and presented in accordance with the respondents' demographics and study's objectives.

Table 1: Types of Libraries

Statements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic	66	73.3
Public	11	12.3
Special	13	14.4
Total	**90**	**100**

Table 1 revealed the respondents' distribution according to the type of library they work for. From the table, it was gathered that 66 respondents (representing 73.3% of the total respondents), are from academic libraries, 13 are from special libraries while 11 are from Public Libraries. The implication of this is that librarians from academic libraries participated more in the study than those from Public and Special Libraries.

Results Based on Objectives of the Study

Table 2: Awareness of SDG Goals

Awareness of SDG Goals	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	79	88
No	11	12
Total	90	100

Table 2 revealed the librarians' awareness of SDG in Nigeria. The revelation from the table shows that 88% of the librarians that participated in the study are aware of SDGs in Nigeria, while 12% are not aware. This therefore implies that majority of librarians are aware of SDGs in Nigeria.

Table 3: Library Intervention Strategies towards Poverty Eradication in Nigeria

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Entrepreneurship empowerment	46	51.1	32	35.6	9	10.0	2	2.2	1	1.1
Inculcating Information Literacy Skills	54	60.0	34	37.8	1	1.1	0	0	1	1.1
Information Repackaging for the Illiterates	46	51.1	30	33.3	6	6.7	3	3.3	5	5.6
Lifelong Learning Initiatives	44	48.9	36	40.0	5	5.6	3	3.3	2	2.2
Agricultural Outreaches	35	38.9	34	37.8	7	7.8	9	10	5	5.6
Consultancy Services	34	37.8	43	47.8	6	6.7	4	4.4	3	3.3
ICT skills development of the youths	51	56.7	28	31.1	4	4.4	5	5.6	2	2.2
Improvement of Reading Culture of the populace/library users	53	58.9	27	30	3	3.3	2	2.2	5	5.6
Mobile Library Services	35	38.9	30	33.3	11	12.2	5	5.6	9	10

The data in table 3 revealed the library intervention strategies towards poverty eradication in Nigeria. While 60% strongly agreed that inculcating information literacy skills will aid poverty eradication in Nigeria, 58.9% strongly agreed that improvement of Reading Culture of the populace/library users is an intervention strategy towards poverty eradication. Similarly, the respondents strongly agreed that ICT skills development of the youths (56.7%), information repackaging for the illiterates (51.1%) and entrepreneurship empowerment (51.1%) are library intervention strategies for poverty eradication in Nigeria. Conversely, 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed that mobile library services is a library intervention strategy for poverty eradication in Nigeria. This implies that the library intervention strategies towards poverty eradication in Nigeria include inculcating information literacy skills in the citizens, improvement of Reading Culture of the populace/library users, ICT skills development of the youths, information repackaging for the illiterates and entrepreneurship empowerment.

Table 4: Specific Library Roles in Poverty Eradication

Statements	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Entrepreneurship empowerment	20	22.2	70	77.8	90	100
Inculcating Information Literacy Skills	31	34.4	59	65.6	90	100
Information Repackaging for Illiterates	9	10	81	90	90	100
Lifelong Learning Initiatives	19	21.1	71	78.9	90	100
Agricultural Outreaches	8	8.9	82	91.1	90	100
Consultancy Services	13	14.4	77	85.6	90	100
ICT skills development of the youths	71	78.9	19	21.1	90	100
Improvement of Reading Culture of the populace/library users	24	26.7	66	73.3	90	100
Mobile Library Services	9	10	81	90	90	100

Table 4 revealed the specific library roles in poverty eradication. The revelation from the table shows that ICT skills development of the youths is a role played by the libraries towards poverty eradication as agreed by 78.9% of the respondents. However, the respondents disagreed that agricultural outreaches (91.1%), mobile library services (90%), information repackaging for the illiterates (90%), consultancy services (85.6%), lifelong learning initiatives (78.9%) and entrepreneurial empowerment (77.8%) amongst others are specific roles played by libraries for poverty eradication in Nigeria. The implication of this is that, Libraries, with respect poverty eradication in Nigeria, engage youths in ICT skills development. However, other roles such as agricultural outreaches, mobile library services, consultancy, lifelong learning initiatives and entrepreneurial empowerment which are within the purview of library services for poverty eradication are not delivered by libraries in Nigeria.

Table 5: Problems Associated With Libraries/Librarians Roles in the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Libraries are encumbered no time for SDGs	20	22.2	26	28.9	5	5.6	13	14.4	26	28.9
Outside the purview of the library functions	11	12.2	12	13.3	8	8.9	20	22.2	39	33.3
Parent organizations do not believe in SDGs	13	14.4	23	25.6	5	5.6	18	20	31	34.4
lack requisite skills for interventions in SDG	19	21.1	25	27.8	9	10	17	18.9	20	22.2

Table 5 revealed the problems associated with libraries/librarians role in the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. The table shows that 22.2% and 28.9% of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that libraries are encumbered no time for SDG. In the same vein, 21.1% and 27.8% strongly agreed/agreed that libraries lack requisite skills for interventions in SDG. On the other hand, 33.3% and 22.2% strongly disagree/disagree that poverty eradication is outside the purview of the library functions. Similarly, 34.4% and 20% strongly disagree/disagree that parent organizations do not believe in SDGs. The implication of this is that libraries lack the requisite skills for interventions in SDGs and has provided no time for SDGs, thus affecting libraries' overall contribution to the eradication of poverty in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study indicates that librarians are aware of SDGs in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with IFLA (2016); Igbinovia, (2016); Okuonghae and Igbinovia, (2019) who indicated that librarians as drivers of SDGs are farmiliar with the 17 global goals established in 2015 to improve our world. Furthermore, the finding corroborates Shittu (2017) and Imhonopi, (2019) assertions that librarians as information practitioners are aware of issues bothering development and sustainability around the globe. This is however a good step to achieving sustainable development as awareness creation by Librarians and libraries is crucial to the actualization of the SDGs, as citizens are more likely to be able to make informed decisions and choices, solve problems and plan adequately when they are informed.

The study also revealed that the library intervention strategies towards poverty eradication in Nigeria include inculcating information literacy skills in the citizens, improvement of Reading Culture of the populace/library users, ICT skills development of the youths,

information repackaging for the illiterates and entrepreneurship empowerment. This revelation is in support of Khosravi et.al, (2016); Çoklar, et. al (2017); Manuaba, (2017); Mahoney, (2017) and Mora, et. al (2018) observations that library intervention strategies such as ICT skills development, information literacy skills training and promotion of reading culture could aid the actualization of SDGS. Also, this finding is in tandem with Okuonghae and Igbinovia (2019) that libraries contribute to achieving SDGs by providing quiet and collaborative spaces conducive for learning as well as by providing information resources for library users.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that among all the library intervention strategies, engaging youths in ICT skills development is the only specific role played by libraries in the eradication of poverty. This shows that libraries contribute to ICT skills development in the country. This finding is in conformity with Mahoney (2017) observations that libraries are major drivers of ICT skills development.

The study gives an empirical backing to the insinuation that there is an avalanche of problems affecting libraries contributions to the actualization of SDGs. The study revealed that libraries lack the requisite skills for interventions in SDGs and has provided no time for SDGs, thus affecting libraries' overall contribution to the eradication of poverty in Nigeria. This finding does not conform with Okuonghae and Igbinovia who noted that poor networking among library professionals and inadequate/irregular training are problems hindering the contributions of libraries in the actualization of SDGs.

Conclusion

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal number one envisages total eradication of all forms of poverty by the year 2030. This presupposes that the phenomenon of poverty has global dimensions and is antithetical to sustainable development. Poverty dehumanizes and militates against the welfare and progress of its victims. It thrives on ignorance, mediocrity, lack of skills, traditional prejudices, absence of vision and deficient value systems.

All human development is based on the acquisition, dissemination and use of knowledge. Poverty eradication, therefore, would also be one area which would benefit tremendously from access to relevant and appropriate information.

The paper identified plethora of practical interventions to be adopted by libraries in the concerted effort at reducing to the barest minimum the scourge of poverty. The interventions include but not limited to: entrepreneurship empowerment, information literacy skills, information repackaging for the illiterate, lifelong learning initiatives, agricultural outreach

extension services, consulting services, improving reading culture, providing ICT skills education and mobile library services.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Libraries need urgent revitalization to guarantee delivery of information to the grass root especially the poor and disadvantaged person

2. There should be massive awareness and sensitization programmes to stimulate libraries to engage in SDG activities beyond their traditional functions.

3. Vigorous capacity building initiatives to empower librarians of various cadre across the country to offer strategic and innovative services capable of promoting sustainable development.

4. Adequate funding of libraries as a critical national information infrastructure is a bedrock for the emergence of a literate, creative and innovative citizenry, which will on the long run lead to the eradication of poverty.

5. Deployment of emerging technologies and creation of appropriate linkages are fundamental imperatives for the 21st century libraries. The fostering of linkages with groups and informal sectors in the economy would bridge knowledge gap and foist partnership of mutual benefits.

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