COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

ABUBAKAR MOHAMMED BITAGI

Library Services Department, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State.

AND

PHILIP USMAN AKOR (PH.D.)

Library Services Department, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State.

Abstract

This study identified the important role collection development (CD) in enhancing the attainment of the aims and objectives for which Nigerian universities were established. It was observed that the financial support towards this direction is dwindling on annual basis. Other efforts made were, said to be unreliable and ineffective compared to needs. The resultant effect of this is lack of expected current information resources to support universities objectives. Meanwhile, various efforts made to equip university libraries such as the 10% directive, the role of Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) and Education Trust Fund (ETF), among others were examined. The negative attitude of Principal Officers (POs) towards CD and the misuse of available funds were discussed. The paper concluded that unless due attention is given to remedy the ugly CD situation, research and development necessary for the development of all sectors of national economy may be stagnated. However, recommendations, such as disbanding the ETF, as currently constituted and its replacement by proposed Basic Education Trust Fund and Company Tax Fund (CTF) with new guidelines was mode. It was also proposed, among others that a dedicated account be opened for each university library; setting up of a viable Library Development Committee (IDC); allocation of at least 10% of internally generated revenue to library collection development by each university.

Introduction

Collection development is an umbrella term used to describe the processes involved on how new or additional information resources are acquired into the library. These processes include selection, ordering, receiving, checking, accessioning and other rudimentary activities that library materials undergo before they are finally handed over to the Technical Services Unit by the Collection Development Unit (CDU) for further processing. It could therefore be argued that the CDU of all libraries form the basic foundation upon which other library units are built. By definition, the Encyclopedia of library and information science (1971) said that Collection Development (CD) is the fruit of individual munificence and is the sum total of library materials (such as) books, catalogues, reports, recordings, microfilm reels, micro cards and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc. in more specific terms however, Farugi (1997) opined that collection development is a universal process in the library world whereby the library staff brings together a variety of materials to meet patron demands. The underlining objective of collection development in all university libraries should therefore b;? the possession of all presently current information resources, print and non-print basically necessary for the university community (lecturers, students and supportive staff) to function effectively and efficiently in their prescribed and assigned responsibilities.

Since universities are established with the primary objective of providing conducive environment for teaching a variety of students in different subject areas and professions and at the same time undertaking research in various sectors of national economy that Is expected to pave way for national development, it becomes mandatory for university libraries to provide 'c:urrent, relevant and related information resources to back up these objectives. The efforts of the library in achieving this objective could only be realized, first and foremost if there is some high level financial and moral support from the sponsors and the mother institution. It is in the bid to drum up this support that the Federal Government recognized that the library is at the heart of education enterprise and therefore made it mandatory for proprietors of schools, including herself, states, private organizations and individuals to provide functional libraries in their educational institutions in accordance with the established standards (National Policy on Education, 2004).

From the look of things, the financial support for the development of collections in the Federal University libraries is continually dwindling on annual basis from the colonial era to the present. Infact, the financial situation and its consequent effect on collection development in Nigeria became so critical and glaring that at a time, Ojoade and Ochai (2000) observed that the poor state of the library and library services in this country is no longer news (and) a casual reader of the Nigerian library literature knows it (while) the "empty" library shelves say it all. The question to ask is what might have led to this pathetic situation and what needs to be done to improve on the situation?.

Background Information

Education and the library worldwide have been deemed to be partners in progress. It is like there cannot be effective educational system without the library and vice versa. Designers of educational institution saw and still see it as incomplete without the provision of library services. To reinforce this argument, Williams-Osula (1999) opined that the library is the nerve-centre of any academic community especially at the tertiary level while Bitagi and Garba (2008) likened the relationship between the two as that of identical twins that share almost everything in common. In a similar dimension, there cannot be effective library services without expected library resources either in print or non-print form. In Nigeria today, collection development in university libraries has been hampered by numerous problems. These problems include government policies on acquisition of materials, the world economic meltdown, sky rocketing prices of library materials as a result of inflationary trend and of course the fact that most required books and technical journals especially in the areas of science and technology are written and published abroad. These problems have resulted into a situation where available library materials are mostly outdated while yet most of the shelves are empty. It could be argued that through the internet, users could access large amount of current information in their respective areas of specialization but the issue is how prepared are most of our university libraries in meeting individual information needs as at the time the user desires it through this means?.

This question becomes imperative because majority of university libraries are yet to automate their services due to financial and logistical problems. Even those that have automated cannot cope with the level of demand of the users. It is in the light of these numerous problems

that Akinade (2000) in a study discovered that many libraries are facing crisis of major proportions. He further asserted that there are situations where libraries are deteriorating infrastracturally and financially, while many have not been modernized in consonance with the new information technology system. The present situation in most Nigerian university libraries cannot be further from this truth.

Efforts made to Equip University Libraries

Universities, by objective are established to facilitate teaching, loaming, research and development in all fields of human endeavour. Put together, all these objectives could not be achieved without enough literature to serve as solid foundation. Hence, the idea of establishing a befitting library for each of the universities to provide information resources that would supplement what is taught and learnt in the class, supportive data on laboratory findings, and other basic facts on day to day development in various human endeavour. In view of that, several efforts have been made by the sponsors, professional librarians and the academic community to ensure that these necessary information resources are provided in libraries in the required quantity and quality. Along the line however, there seems to be a below expectation in the achievement of this objective from and by the parties involved. Below are summaries of major efforts already made and how they have not been satisfactorily implemented.

1.   Federal Government Allocation to Universities

At the beginning of the establishment of universities in Nigeria, the budgetary allocation to universities seemed fairly adequate to cover the development and maintenance of their libraries. There was therefore no need to specifically direct the universities to spend a particular percentage of such allocations on libraries. Then, libraries specially of the first generation universities could afford to buy the needed textbooks and equally subscribe to large quantity of journal titles. This situation remained so until middle and late 70s when Nigeria enjoyed oil boom. Thereafter, and with the introduction of second and third generation universities there arose the need for increased universities Funding which the Federal Government could not cope with. This led to a change of both attitude and policy in funding the university libraries.

2.   The 10% Directive

In order to ensure that library services are not left behind or

abandoned, within the meager financial support to the universities the Federal Government directed that all Federal universities should dispense 10% of their annual recurrent grant to their libraries. The National Universities Commission was and is still to ensure adequate implementation of this directive. Currently, whether this directive is still enforced or not is reflected by the absence of new books on shelves, inability to subscribe to national and international journals, non-supply of working tools and the inability to modernize library services in line with current trends in other parts of the world.

3.   World Bank Loan

Ojoade and Ochai (2000) observed that by the mid 1990s the lack of adequate attention for university libraries had literally reached a crisis point to the extent that many university libraries were recording a near zero percent growth rate due to the economic woes of the country even though attempts were made at restructuring the economy through the infamous International Monetary Fund conditionalities, such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This pathetic situation led Nigeria, according to the authors to take a loan of US120m dollars for the development of Federal University Libraries in 1990. The relief provided by this facility was however temporary as in due course more money was needed to sustain the acquisition of current textbooks, Information Communication Technology facilities.

4.   Petroleum Trust Fund (RTF) Assistance

Through the RTF, the going was fairly good for universities in term s of refurbishing of infrastructures and provision of those facilities and equipment that actually support the realization of educational objectives. The problem of RTF was however, that it was not an organization devoted to educational development alone but to cater for all the other sectors of the national economy. It must however, be mentioned that university libraries had a fair share of RTF funds through the supply of books and other library materials.

5.   Education Trust Fund (ETF) Intervention

As its name connotes, ETF is a body charged with the responsibility of ensuring that educational institutions are catered for in terms of assistance in infrastructural development including provision of library materials. Towards this end, the ETF has made substantial allocation of its funds for universities development giving particular allocation to libraries annually. The unfortunate aspect of ETF funds is the recent revelation that more than

six billion Naira (N6b) of the funds allocated to universities have not been accessed (Yakubu, 2009). The question to ask is why has the ETF funds not been accessed?. May be the ETF has placed too stringent guidelines for the funds to be accessed. Meanwhile, the collection development in university libraries is affected by whatever reason that might have resulted into the inaccessibility of the fund.

6. Library Fees

In most Nigeria universities, students are charged, on annual or sessional basis, library development fees. Even though the amount contributed by students may be too meager to fathom collection development in university libraries, if the money realized is judiciously used for the purpose it is meant, it will bring about a marked improvement in the collection of some few library materials. It is however, unthinkable that some few universities management have not released this contribution for library development. It could therefore be argued that some universities divert this money to other areas not relevant to the accreditation of students courses and provision of reading materials for effective learning.

7. Publish or Perish Syndrome

The concept of publish or perish was an idea sold to the universities with a view that if each lecturer could afford to write in his/her area of specialization, there will be less dependence on foreign books and collection development in libraries could be easily beefed up. While efforts have been made in this direction, it must be emphasized that currently this policy has only encouraged academics to write more of journal articles than complete books so as to earn quick promotion. The greatest diversionary tactics employed by the academics is to come together and edit journal or conference papers into bound volumes which come out once in a while. The hope of enriching library collections with locally written materials is therefore dashed.

8. E-Library

The electronic library otherwise known as e - library came about with advancement in Information Communication Technologies. It is the hope that when an e - library is put in place, users will be able to access and download useful current information from anywhere in the world without necessarily leaving one's study. It is an idea that is supposed to revolutionize information creation, storage, retrieval, dissemination and utilization. However, as indicated earlier, many university libraries for one

reason or the other have not been able to make available this facility to their teeming users. Though e - library may have its own disadvantages, it is the view of this author that if put in place, it will solve, to a great extent the problem of accessing current information in various fields of human endeavour.

9.   Others

A lot of other methods have been embarked upon by various university libraries in beefing up their collection development. These methods which could be regarded as conventional have not significantly contributed to the development of library materials if compared with the expected needs and standard. These include gifts/donations, exchange of duplicate copies of materials, library cooperation/interlibrary loan and internal revenue generation. While some of these methods have ceased to be practiced extensively such as exchange of duplicate of materials, others such as gifts/donations may either come with strings attached, outdated or not even relevant to the receiving library.

Some Major Problems

a.   The Role of the Principal Officers (POs)

Under normal circumstances, the librarian of each university is one of the Principal Officers. His main duty in the Pos meeting is to advance proposals for the provision of library resources and services for approval. The contribution by other POs determine to a great extent the success or otherwise of the librarian's proposal. In the early days of university education in Nigeria, proposals by Librarians were regarded as sacred, considered and approved by his colleagues since they were fully aware and recognized the fact that the extent of research and related academic work could only be successful if there were lot of literature to give a good foundation to be built upon. Nowadays however, one is surprised to hear not only that such proposals are turned down but also some members of management are against the support for library development. Their argument is that "there is nothing new in that library". The question is that if there is nothing new in that library, wouldn't you support the provision of such new things in the library to support your academic activities?.

b.   Misuse of Available Funds

It is an established fact that professionals in various fields know more about the rudiments of their professions. In librarianship, the argument has been to provide library users with the most current, relevant and related

information resources in their various areas of specialization. In that wise, it could be cogently argued that librarians in conjunction with the users know more of the type of materials required for addition into the library stock. Unfortunately however, in Nigeria, bodies such as the Education Trust Fund etc undertake a central acquisition of library materials for distribution to our universities. Some of these materials include computers, which usually function for a short while before they pack off. Books and other reading materials supplied through these means are mostly outdated. The international donors such as the Book Aid International (BAI) are not better in this respect since used materials or those that are not even used in their libraries are removed and donated to the poor countries like Nigeria. Much money is used to sponsor the selectors to such countries and conveying such bulky materials into the country. In some universities too, supply of library materials including books are contracted out to general contractors who don't, recognize the value of what they are asked to supply. After all, to the contractors, book is book not caring to know about the bibliographical details. The resultant effect of this approach leads to the supply of outdated, unrelated and even unwanted books. Imagine a book published in 1980 supplied in 2007 to a university library.

Conclusion

From the foregone, it could be observed that the sponsors, esp dally the Federal Government have paid lip service in facilitating the performance of prescribed and assigned responsibilities of universities with relative ease. This is because there is no how serious teaching/learning and research activities could be undertaken without current, relevant, related and adequate literature, as basis for solid foundation. Even with the much talked about and currently unimplemented 10% allocation of the universities funds to library development, there is evidence, based on continuous inflationary trend that it is inadequate. The ETF which is expected to provide a cushion effect toward this direction has more than enough institutions to cater for, for its impact to be adequately felt in university libraries. The conventional methods of acquisition of library materials such as gifts/donations, library cooperation and inter-library loan etc have not made any significant impact on collection development in Nigerian university libraries and have since proved to be unreliable and inefficient. This deplorable situation of collection development efforts in university libraries has become so worrisome that Gbaje (2007) opined that the inability of the Nigerian Government to stock libraries with relevant literature, particularly in the academic institutions has

a great implication for learning, teaching, research and development. It follows therefore, that if due attention is not given, to remedy the situation, research and development that is necessary for the development of all sectors of national economy will be adversely affected and may lead to a state of stagnation in the wheel of progress.

The Way Forward/Recommendations

It must be emphasized that all the mentioned methods that have been used to equip university libraries with necessary information resources to boost academic activities are not entirely useless. What needs to be done is a review of some of these methods in addition to total commitment towards their implementation by all the stake holders. This has become necessary because it does not matter how big a university library is or the quality of its staff, the most important requirement is for it to posses both, in quality and quantity information resources from which the beneficial community could be served: In line with this observation, Ifidon (1997) opined that it is absolutely essential for a library to posses the resources that enable it to meet its goals.

1.   In order to achieve efficient and effective collection development in the universities, the first step should be a reawakening of the desired recognition on the part of the sponsors of university education and university communities for the role libraries play in the upliftment of education at that level, if the aims and objectives of such education is to be realized. In this direction, Ojoade and Ochai (2000) pointed out that how much funding a library gets from government or the funding body is not necessarily determined by the health of the economy but also by the views about the library and services held in government circles and the priority government attaches to the services.

2.   The issue of funding must once again be looked into with a view of identifying sources of providing sufficient money to acquire library materials that are not only necessary for teaching and learning but also those that would form a concrete foundation upon which research and development will be built. In view of that, the ETF, as presently constituted should be disbanded and replaced with a body to be known as Basic Education Trust Fund (BETF) to handle primary and secondary schools while ministries should undertake the financing of their research agencies from their budgets. Another body, to be named after the donors should also be constituted to take care of the tertiary institutions including Universities.

Polytechnics and Colleges of Education only. Presently, since the ETF generates its funds from companies, the new name should be Companies Task Fund (CTF). That is giving due recognition and courage to those who contribute to the fund. Meanwhile, the situation that has led to universities and other institutions' inability to access the present ETF as expected should be investigated and solutions proffered to avoid future occurrence since we cannot continue to be poor in the midst of plenty. Additionally, to boost the funding base of the CTF, the two percent profit from companies charged for educational development should be increased to two and a half $(2^1/2)$ percent while the half should now be dedicated to primary and secondary schools. The sharing formula of the remaining 2% should be 50:30:20 for Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education respectively. This recommendation has put into consideration the size of Universities, their prescribed and assigned responsibilities and the fact that their libraries are even bigger in both size and expectations. At universities level, not less than 20% of what accrues to them should be allocated for collection development to ensure the sustainability and further development of their libraries.

3.   The directive or law that provide for the much talked about ten percent (10%) of each institution's contribution to library development from the Federal Government allocation to universities must be reviewed with a view of making it a punishable offence for university authorities that refuse to comply absolutely. To make sure that the directive is strictly adhered to, a dedicated library account should be opened for this purpose while the 10% should be deducted from source and lodged in to that account. However, it is instructive to mention that withdrawal from such account must be approved by the management of each university. In view of that, a viable Library Development Committee (LDC) should be instituted by each university to ensure that approved and released funds are spent for the purpose it is meant. The LDC should be made up of the University Librarian as Chairman, all Deans of Faculties/Schools, the registrar, Bursar and Internal Auditor to serve as members. In effect, the composition of LDC should be such that guarantees checks and balances when it comes to handling and spending the financial resources that accrue for library development.

4.   All universities having realized the essence of their establishment should endeavour to allocate a meager ten percent (10%) of their internally generated revenue to the acquisition of current information resources for the

library. This will make it possible for Faculties or Schools representatives to stop running here and there when accreditation team is about to assess library facilities for approval of their courses.

5.   Even though it has been argued that internally generated revenue by libraries can never be alternative to government funding (Ojoade and Ochai, 2000), it can be further argued that the meager revenue generated by libraries, if effectively utilized, could assist in providing some basic services such as repairs of equipment, provide materials for keeping the library clean and provision of other miscellaneous materials which may include locally produced catalogue cards, book cards, book pockets and acquisition of those things required to prepare books for the users.

6.   Students' contribution which is paid alongside the registration fee on annual basis should henceforth be paid into the proposed library account by the authorities after collecting such monies from students within two weeks after the registration has closed.

7.   The idea of publish or perish should be reviewed in such a way that publishing should not be a criteria for promotion only but also for the benefits of students who would derive from such publications. In view of that, a declaration of the state of emergency in the publication of books and related materials in each individual's area of specialization should be declared by the Federal Government not only in universities but the whole nation. Meanwhile, the publication allowance as presently given to lecturers should be handsomely beefed up to boost their morale and extended to other contributors.

8.   The e - library has become a necessary unit of each university library and should be provided as a matter of necessity. This unit, where it is *not* yet available should be developed in phases such that the whole idea will not be abandoned mid stream due to financial constraints. Those that have embarked on e - library service should give room for expansion in order to cater for the increasing user population.

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