**Research Paper**

# Challenges of ICT in a Depressed Society

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**ABSTRACT**
*This paper examines the various concepts that are associated with the topic such as concept of Library and Information Science Education and Concept of Information Communication Technology. It highlights the emergence of Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria, effects of depressed economy on Library and Information Science Education, importance of Information Communication Technology in Library and Information Science Education, impact of Information Communication Technology on Library and Information Science Education, areas of application of Information Communication Technology in Library and Information Science Education. The paper further x-ray the challenges of Information Communication Technology on Library and Information Science Education to include inadequate funding, high cost of hardware's and software's, internet connectivity, lack of technical expertise, inadequate facilities, among others. As a way forward, the paper recommended constant training of Library and Information Science Educators, adequate Information Communication Technology should be acquired, government and well meaning individuals should provide financial support.*
*Keywords: Library and Information Science Education; Depressed society; challenges of Information Communication Technology*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science Education as a field and area of study is indispensable in this competitive era of knowledge and information management and the technological advancement in the area of ICT has made significant changes in the profession towards achieving the desired objective and to meet up with the modern trends of effective information services delivery.

Education in Library and Information Science has taken a new turn in the face of far-reaching developments sparked off by the trend towards globalization. Although the challenges for libraries in Africa have been enormous, they are not insurmountable given our human capacity to adapt to change. It is largely true that libraries in Africa are adapting to change particularly on innovations brought about by the application of ICT. Library and information science professionals are not only having to adapt to change in library services but also require in-depth and structured education and training programmes for occupation engagements in all

library types. However, one important aspect of such professional discourses derive from the search for suitable, relevant academic and professional programmes is one that should be made available in our library schools in response to societal needs based on the various library types (Lawal, 2008).

According to Etim (2002), Library and Information Science Education is the study of organized collections of books and other non- book materials. Through this study, a person acquires approved skills, standard or level of attainment for maximum utilization of information resources in skills with which a learner, student, pupils, researcher of information must possess before being considered information literate.

Library and information science can also be seen as the study of issues related to libraries and information services. This includes academic studies regarding how library resources are used, how people interact with library systems, and the organization of knowledge for efficient retrieval of relevant information. Librarianship is the application of library science which comprises the practical services rendered by librarians in their day-to-day attempts to meet the needs of library patrons or users (Igbeka, 2000).

Information and communication technology involves the handling of information (which includes text, graphics, audio and video) and communication processes using technology such as computers, internet, multimedia and voice over internet protocol (Osunade & Oluwasesin, 2006).

According to Ekoja (2007) information and communication technology is the equipment used for capturing, processing, storing, transmitting and accessing information, which has offered librarians and other information professionals' tremendous opportunities in information handling. Ebijuwa (2005) on the other hand

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defined ICT as tools used for collection, processing, storage, transmission,and dissemination of information. In the view of Achebe (2005), Information and Communication Technology is defined as thetype of technology that links the computer to the global telecommunications network to make it possible for users to acquire process, compare, store and disseminate oral, printed and pictorial information. They are the electronic means of capturing, processing, storing and disseminatinginformation.

## EMERGENCE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATIONSCIENCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The origin of library schools in Nigeria could belinked directly to the UNESCO Seminar of 1953held in Ibadan, which recognized the need for the development of libraries and theestablishment of professional training courses inNigeria, especially the establishment of a training school for librarians. This resulted in the formation of West African Library Association (WALA) presided over by John Harris, and saddled with such responsibilities as establishing a library school for the training of professional librarians in the sub-region. With financial support from the Carnegie Corporation,John Harris sponsored Harold Lancour in 1957 to carry out an extensive survey of library conditions in West Africa. Lancour (1958) recommended the establishment of a library school connected with a university, with the resources, personnel and prestige to develop a high quality, professional training agency.

Hence, the establishment of Ibadan libraryschool in 1959, (now Department of Library,Archival, and Information Studies) to offer paraprofessional training and bachelor, master and doctoral degrees to enable students become professional librarians. The school was established to help the development of libraries by training librarians and investigating problems of librarianship and bibliography with special reference to West Africa and with particular attention to the leadership level (Ibadan University Annual Report, 1963/1964).

Prior to this, there had been rudimentary training programmes for Library Assistants coordinated by some libraries. There was also Associateship (British) Library Association (ALA) certificate programme organized by University of London. This afforded some Nigerians, among other Africans, to enroll for the programme which was of two parts. Theexamination for the first part took place in Nigeria while the second part was at Great Britain (Ahmed, 2012).

Similarly, Sharr compiled a report in 1963 on the library needs of the Northern Nigeria. Part ofthe report's recommendations led to the establishment of the library school in Zaria in 1968. By the mid 1970's, both the Ibadan and Zaria library schools could no longer cope with the growing demands for library personnel's training needs of the country, owing to the increasing number of academic and research libraries in the then newly-established universitiesand similar tertiary institutions includingresearch institutes. Then came a periodproliferated with the establishment of library schools across the country, owing to the growing number of higher institutions granted operational license in Nigeria, which propelled agreater need for more personnel.

According to Nkanu, Iyishu & Ogar (2013), the strength of the philosophy of Nigeria's educational system, the quality of education at all levels has been oriented towards inculcating appropriate educational aims to which the philosophy is linked. The attainment of these educational aims can be viewed from a broader perspective in the expectation that, for Nigeria education system to fully utilize available opportunities arising from the use of emerging technologies in the information age, the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be given top priority. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must be seen as one of the most important tools that can positively influence education and all sectors of the society. However, acquisitionof information literacy skills will assist library and information science professionals to effectively apply ICT-based technologies to the provision of library and information services.

Impact of ICT on Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria. The impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to people generally and students inparticular cannot be overemphasized (Etebu, 2010). This is true because ICTs facilitate quick and easy access to a wide range of information/information resources worldwide. In fact, it is now difficult to imagine a world without information technology. In this digital age, tertiary institutions strive to be up-to-date in their curricula. The provision and use of ICT is part and parcel of the entire system, to both the students and the institutions. It is one thingto recognize the importance of ICTs and anotherto know if they are effectively used by students and academics.

If ICTs are put to effective use, the essence of acquiring them is to a large extent justified vice-versa. ICT provides libraries with capabilities for the location of information, storage and retrieval of information, and dissemination of information. Internet access enables libraries to locate information stored in other computers around the world. With online search facilities, information stored at different locations can be easily retrieved. Through the use of web pages, e-mail, and CD-ROM, libraries disseminate information. Digitization of library information resources, which converts print resources into electronic form, means that such information can be accessed from homes, offices, or anyworkstation connected to the Internet.

Furthermore, Issa, Amusan, Aliyu & Ladan (2014) stressed that librarianship has always depended on the current technology to function effectively. With the increasing use of modern technology for information

management,librarianship, like other professions, has never been the same again. There is no doubt that in the face of information explosion, modernlibrarianship heavily relies on the use of ICT to function. Therefore, in order to keep pace with the global trend in the profession and to enhance job performance, training and education of library personnel should be designed and adjusted to reflect the trends in terms oftechnological advancement. The influence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is now manifested in every sphere ofhuman endeavour including the field of Library and Information Science (Bavakutty, Nasirudheen & Abdulmajeed, 2008). Abubakar (2009) on his part observes that we now live in a changing society where information technology has taken the centre stage and is accompanied by massive increase in knowledge which leads to a newparadigm in the field of Library and informationScience.

Mohammed (2008) in his view noted that the advances in the sciences and in the application of Information and Communication Technologiesparticularly the Internet, intranet and other network technologies have continued to impact positively on the methodologies of library and information service delivery, education andtraining of information professionals as well as the area of information seeking behaviour and use.

## II. DEPRESSED ECONOMY

Depressed economy may also mean the same thing with economic recession. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER, 2016), defined recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy lasting more than a few months, which is normally visible in real domestic product, real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales.

Depression is regarded as a more severe version of recession. According to Mankiw (2003), depression is a repeated period during whichreal GDP falls. Many factors contribute to economic depression but inflation is the major cause. This could be as a result of increased production cost, high energy cost and national debt, (Chizoba, 2016). In Nigeria today, government has already accepted that the country in undergoing recession owing to drops in government revenue, this is largely due to a drop in oil price in the international market.

## EFFECTS OF DEPRESSED ECONOMY ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION

The consequence of global depressed economy on Nigeria educational system is very devastating. Nigeria being a mono-cultural economy relies mainly on crude petroleum exports. With the declining revenue accruable from crude oil sales at the international market, the survivor of educational sector (Library and Information Science Education inclusive) is threatened. The facilities necessary for effective teaching of library and information science education are not adequately available in most library schools in Nigeria due to the state of the economy of the nation. The problem is aggravated by high cost of these facilities (hardware's and software's) poor internet connectivity, inadequate funding of library schools resulting in poor budgets and their inability to run ICT compliant programmes.

## AREAS OF APPLICATION OF ICT IN LIS EDUCATION

Library and information science Education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new generation oflibrarians to effectively use the new information technology. Application of ICT in library education is not new, but the level of applicationand success is worrisome. These applications can be categorized as follows:

### Library Automation

Library automation is the application of computer s and other related devices to the technical processes, public services and other "housekeeping" functions in libraries. This has to do with acquisitions, organization of materials (storage and retrieval), reference, indexing and abstracting, compilation of bibliographies, circulation system, among others. Both students and educators will need to have the skills of applying ICT to all library operations and activities in other to be relevant in this information age. And also, this will enhance efficiency in information acquisition,processing and dissemination.

### Operation of Online Databases

As part of the electronic processes ofinformation dissemination to user communities, it has become every important that library schools should subscribe to some online data bases to teach their students their operations and importance in getting very relevant and current information in different subject areas. These databases can be in broad or in narrow subject areas such as HINARI in medicine; AGORA in Agriculture; ERIC in Education, (Ochogwu, 2016).

**CHALLENGES OF ICT ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION INNIGERIA**

The situation of Information and Communication Technologies and Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria entails the prevailing conditions of the faculty staff, the students, practitioners and LIS schools themselves in the formulation of effective curriculum that will provide effective competencies in rendering services to users. However, Library and Information science schools still face many challenges in trying to provide appropriate and sustainable solutions for improving curriculum and skills that will support development in all ramifications (Manir, 2011).

This scenario has been attested by Diso (2007) that, Nigeria is characterized by underdeveloped economy, unstable political culture and chaotic socio-cultural environment, with low productivity and low capacity utilization, lowindustrialization, poor infrastructure, unemployment and underemployment and pervasive poverty. Other such characteristics include high rates of illiteracy, insecurity, popular (general) apathy, traditionalism, poor reading culture, poor information environment and at the state level, poor policy formulation and implementation. All these problems have undermined the development of library and Information science schools in Nigeria especially with regards to the deployment of ICTs.

In the view of Saka (2015), there are no adequate facilities provided, and, as such, the acquisition of ICT skills is low at undergraduate levels. This is because of the inadequate computer laboratories, which has led to low level of ICT skills/practices. It is paramount to note that the traditional mode of teaching in our library schools today cannot withstand themodern trends as computers and other ICT facilities are needed in training the prospective LIS graduates. Regrettably, the number ofcomputers in the ICT laboratories in Nigerian library schools cannot cater for the teeming population of students.

One of the major obstacles on the use of ICT in Library and Information Science Education is financial cost. These cost includes among other, provision of computer hardware and software, cost relates to internet connectivity and cost of training personnel that will handle the ICT equipment.

Another challenge is the lack of technical expertise by the library educators to teach ICT related courses to students. In their observations,Nwokocha, Onwubiko & Unagha (2014; 175) said that some of the library schools that have ICT facilities cannot practically impact the knowledge to their students effectively.

## III. CONCLUSION

The emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in all facets of human life has always been a welcome development and its introduction into library and information science education in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. Not only has ICT transformed the information world, it has made the search for information much easier. In the library profession, the application of ICT has brought about quick dissemination of information and effective services delivery, hence its sustenance.

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