

Chapter 4

LIS Education for 21st Century Information Users

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is on library and information science education for the 21st century users. It aims at x-raying the nature of LIS program as practiced in Nigeria so as to ascertain the extent to which the graduates will remain relevant in practice. This is based on the fact that the present-day library and information users are getting technologically advanced, and graduates of LIS education are also expected to be technologically visible to the users. The following subheadings were considered: library schools in Nigeria and their programmes, need for restructuring LIS programme, new programmes/courses to be incorporated in LIS education, and challenges of restructuring LIS education programmes. Library and information science professionals are not only having to adapt to change in library services but they also require in-depth and structured education and training programmes that are in line with the current technological demands. This will help the professionals to provide the needed manpower for the nation's information occupation engagements and effective user assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

‘Users’ is a generic term for people that utilize one or more library resources and services. They are the important link in the information communication system and according to Edoka (2000) the ‘focal point’, prime aspect and most crucial component of any library or information system. They vary in, among others, gender, information need, professional environment, nature of work, psychological character, age, level of study, religion, race, socio-economic status, parental and educational background (Okorie and Njoku, 2016). As the desire to be educated is the order of the day, there is the possibility that most users undertake courses without any significant permanent change and can also obtain qualifications without improving on their job performance. There is therefore the need for well packaged relevant and current information for their academic pursuit and day-to-day activity so that they can achieve their goals of education. Thus, they require the assistance of a versatile and well-grounded librarians for quick and easy access to the myriads of information resources. The class of librarians to render the type of services needed by these computer age information users’ need to be educated in the current trends of library services delivery. Education system geared toward incorporating courses and internalizing rudiments of ICT in upcoming librarians will go a long way in ensuring their relevance in the 21st century librarianship.

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, values, beliefs, habits and skills that will enhance good performance within and outside academic environments. It brings about an inherent and permanent change in a person’s thinking and capacity to do things. Many may have a superficial concept of education; by equating it with doing a particular course or obtaining a particular qualification. Qualifications and courses offered/undertaken during training however do not always equate with effective education and learning. Quality education is something that cannot be fast tracked. It is very different from just having access to (or being exposed to) information about a subject area. It infuses knowledge into one’s brain and according to Mandela (1993), “It is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Anyone who understands education will understand that it comes from repeated exposure to well defined and unified course content and use of information or skills in line with the dictates of the time in question. Therefore, going by Mandela’s assertion, with well executed education and training, for Library and Information Science in Nigeria, the challenges of the 21st century information service delivery will have solutions.

Investment in the education of human work force has long term advantages. Organizations have realized that benefits such as enhanced market share, sales, productivity, quality and reduced employee turnover are results of investment in proper education and training programmes of the workforce that will carry out

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