

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN LIBRARY SERVICE AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND RELIANCE

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Abstract

Education is a vehicle through which a person develops abilities, attitudes, and positive values, that enables him to be reliant, and once he is able to be skillful, he will be useful to the society, which will in turn contribute to the rehabilitation of the economy of the nation; it is in this regard that this paper tends to examine how information technology education in library services and manpower development will aid in economic rehabilitation and reliance of any nation, it examines the concept of information technology, manpower development, economic rehabilitation and reliance. The paper also looks at how information technology education will aid in the rehabilitation of the economy of a nation.

Introduction

Information Technology is used to describe a range of new technology and their application, such as the use of computer, micro-electronic derives, satellite and communication technology.

It is seen as the most recent development in human ability to record, access, manipulate and communicate information (Oyedele., 2000) it is on this note that the world is seen as being transformed into an information society. In this information age, it's important for individuals to know what information technology can offer towards manpower development in Nigeria's education sector.

It is in this regard that Library Services has a great role to play, through manpower development towards economic rehabilitation and reliance because of its role in the provision of relevant information to the user community.

Presently, because of the need for individual to be trained as skilled workers, if the economy of the nation must be renewed, there must be a rise in the information needs of the users, particularly in higher institutions, where the quality of their academic achievement depends to a large extent on the quality of the library.

Manpower Development

According to Longman Contemporary Dictionary, Manpower Development is the development of agency or energy of people in doing work. It is also the rate at which people can work, with the available resources in population, or the availability of able bodied people.

While the Chambers Dictionary, sees it as the development or training of workers available for a particular kind of work. It relates to the long range development of semi skilled and unskilled manpower requirement of the economy, and to plan educational priorities and investment in human resource development so as to enlarge employment opportunities in the future.

Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance

According to the Oxford Dictionary it is a situation of restoring the economy of a country, it can also be seen as an avenue of reinstating the economy of a nation, to a normal life, through training of the citizens, this training will make them to be self reliant.

On the other hand, the economy can be reinstated, through retraining of workers, to acquire more skills, that will be useful in their place of work. Nevertheless, it should be noted that what makes a nations' economy is the skilled manpower, who are ready to work more so, for an economy of any nation to be restored, individuals must be self-reliant. No wonder Webster's Encyclopedia (1994), sees it as a truthful

dependence on oneself or power or the ability of a person to be confident in himself. This indeed, is the ability of one to depend on his own capabilities, judgement, resources and skills, in a bid to enhance political, economic, social, cultural, and moral independence of a nation.

Uses of Information Technology

Information technology is the use of computing telecommunications to provide rapid and easy electronic storage, processing and transferring of information. It can also be seen as the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, and retrieval, based combination or computing and telecommunication technology (Ekwueme, 2002). In the information environment, this technology is divided into three categories computer, storage media and telecommunications. These three work together. The computer performs processing operations on data, it is also used to store and retrieve information, process transactions, sort data etc. It has the Central Processing Unit (CPU), that has a definite amount of data capacity it can carry. To this, it requires additional storage media such as magnetic disk, tapes and audiotapes.

Then for the telecommunications, it facilitates the transfer of communication of data and information e.g. the Internet facilities. Information technology, handles information at an amazing speed.

Application of Information Technology In Library Services

The trend of events in the present information age as noted by Adio (1998) and Eyilayo (1998) revealed that, Information Technologies have become a norm in virtually all areas of human endeavours. As a result of this development. Information Technology have been introduced in all areas of operations e.g. industries, institutions, law, medicine, home etc. including the library.

In the library, the activities start from the registration of users, acquisition of book processing, storage and dissemination/usage of information, have all been computerized in most academic libraries. The utilization of information technologies have been acknowledged by most scholars. This can be seen in the words of Afolabi (1985), that, "it cannot be denied that we exist in a global village and no country can now develop in isolation. Development today takes place in the full glare of international attention. In the more developed countries, where information is extensively used, much of the access is through electronic means. It cannot be denied that computers have greatly enhanced the gathering, storage, retrieval, dissemination and indeed the creation capabilities of information services".

To this the speed and accuracy that the computer has brought to bear on human activities cannot be overemphasized.

Information Technology, therefore, has a lot of potentials for libraries especially, the academic libraries.

It is a known fact that libraries have been in the information business several years before any known modern institutions. Without any doubt, Information Technology has numerous benefits to offer in all fields of human endeavours and the application of such result to an amazing success (Gamma et al, 2001). In their contribution, Cochrane (1992) identified the following as some of the advantages of compute as an Information Technology: -

1. Allows easy integration of various activities.
2. Facilitates co-operation and the formation of library network
3. Helps to increase the range of services offered.
4. Provides marketing opportunities for its users.
5. Increases efficiency in services offered.

Due to the increased range of users in academic libraries, the Information Technology has come in as a solution to satisfy the information needs of these users.

Nigerian Education System and Manpower Development and Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance

Attempts have been made by Nigerian educators to move away from the classified view of the curriculum to the Roman view. This is because the romantic view perceives education as an integral part of life with preparation for the adult world and creativity. (Datol, 2000), Lawton (1973) views this type of curriculum as child centred curriculum and its organized around real life topics and project oriented.

The introduction of the National Policy on Education (6-3-3-4) was to make education functional as an integral part of the Nation's effort to accelerate socioeconomic growth. It was geared towards connecting

school and life, connecting instruction and productive work, and to determine the essential basic principles of educational reform. This indicates that the National Policy on Education is geared towards the development and production of skilled manpower, which is intended to replace the academically oriented curriculum and which helps to bring students nearer to the world of work. This shows that whether the student gains access to the university or not, he or she will be able to acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for a profitable and or gainful employment.

With the nature of this curriculum the school leavers are expected to be skillfully developed, seen as an instrument of restoring our economy, self sustained, and to enter into the world of work with ease. To this, education in a long way will help to encourage manpower development right from school.

The Use of Information Technologies in Libraries, and Manpower Development as a Tool for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance

There is an ever-increasing pressure on library use, because of the information needs of users. This has resulted to expansion of demand, in both volume and variety of library services and increase in number of library users from all walks of life. These users are information thirsty for their human development as skilled workers. The library anticipates satisfying their wants of knowledge. It is worth to note that the library is not only an information centre but also a centre of excellence upon which all academic activities are revolved. The National Policy on Education (1981) and the NCCE (1994) have identified the library as one of the most important aspects of educational services, established to help in manpower development through supporting the teaching, learning and research activities, in the parent institutions. This objective of the NCCE & NPE is achieved through systematic acquisition, storage, organization and dissemination of information in all fields, pertinent to the goal of the institutions.

The NCCE has the following guideline for running libraries in academic institution.

1. Ensure that its collection and services are designed to meet the objectives and information requirement of the institutions.
2. Ensure that the resources and facilities provided are maximally used through proper organization and dissemination.
3. Evaluate from time to time the success of the library in meeting the library and information needs of the users.

The aforementioned objectives can best be achieved in-relation to manpower and economic rehabilitation development, through the use of Information Technology to gather information. No wonder Busar (1993) opined that 'libraries all over the world should anticipate to move with time upon the realization of significance of Information Technology as to library operation for better services since economic rehabilitation deals with human development as skilled workers it is obvious that no skill comes into existence, without knowledge and information. This is why the saying that "knowledge is power" is in the air. As such, the utilization of IT in libraries, especially through the internet and library co-operation comes into play. More information on various skills can be searched from the internet.

Information is important to the development of any nation, since it is assuming a central role in the emerging economic and social order of the society.

According to Civrlizza (1979). The globalization of the economy has resulted to parallel process of information globalization in which 'Information superhighways'¹ are being built to communicate with and supply information required by "Global connectivity". Hardly any nation can now develop without adequately organizing its information infrastructure.

Indeed Zulu (1994) has identified that throughout history. Information Technology has shaped the destinies of nations and mankind as a whole. To such nations and individuals they have a competitive edge over their rivals.

Information Technologies, when utilized adequately in libraries will positively contribute to manpower development, in the following ways:

1. Helps in individual development, as skilled workers.
2. Helps individuals to become experts in the use and handling of their profession.
3. Gives users information on variety of employment opportunities.

4. Helps in a long-range development of skilled manpower requirement of the economy.
5. Help to plan education priorities and with the information from the Information Technologies give opportunity of a wide range of investment in human resources development, so as to enlarge employment opportunities in the future.

In every society, the general approval of manpower development is of three fold. Jhingan (1999) identifies them as follows:

1. In every nation the shortage of manpower in sectors of the economy should be identified.
2. Surpluses of manpower in all sectors should be identified.
3. The strategies for manpower development should be mapped out.

When these are identified there will be ample opportunities for people to develop themselves efficiently.

Strategies for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance

There are three strategies pointed out by Jhingan (1999) as a step to human resource development, they are:

1. **Building of incentives:** People should be encouraged to engage in such productive activities which are needed to accelerate the process of economic development.
2. **Training of employed manpower;** Here there is need to upgrade such productive activities which are needed to accelerate the process of economic development.
3. **Development of Formal Education:** There should be, the building of a system of formal education. From the above, skilled workers should be encouraged by ways of good salary, incentives, and high social status. This will help to a large extent to avoid brain drain.

Conclusion

Conclusively to upgrade the performance of employed manpower in the country effort should be made to develop management-training programmes, training courses, etc. All this is to provide on the job training programme. This is where the universities, colleges and vocational institutes come in, as they can encourage this through part-time, extension and evening classes. This is obtainable in many institutions. More so for our economy to be rehabilitated the library, as a tool is available using information technology as a channel to help to supply the required information that will aid in rendering its services, to individuals.

Further, in Nigeria there is a dire need of skilled manpower to run the economic training students formally, to be employed and useful in the society, so that our economy will be revived.

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