

# The Library In Capacity Building Of Education In Bayelsa State

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**Abstract:** *Capacity building involves personnel (expertise) and machinery working together in institutional libraries to enhance organizational operations of the libraries. The skills required must work concurrently to achieve the library objectives in its functioning. So far, this is an area which is seen to be challenging the library operations in most states of Nigeria. And considering one of these states is Bayelsa State which has a peculiar terrain of swampy vegetation, surrounded by creeks and lakes. Hence, this paper builds a conceptual framework of capacity building and library restructuring and attempts to focus on some of the basics aspects of library capacity building in Bayelsa State and to do this the re-engineering of library administration in the wake of challenging and changing scenario should adopt the suggested recommendations.*

**Keywords:** *Library, capacity, building, education, Bayelsa state, Nigeria.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The two key concepts of this paper are capacity building and education. These concepts are interrelated because of the unsettled nature of education in Nigeria due to demands not being met leading to strikes and closure of institutions especially tertiary institutions. To address these lapses, the educational sector has to coin a course which will help build existing gaps and in doing this, the bedrock of knowledge acquisition needs to be looked into; which implies the library services noted for knowledge formation and dissemination. With these tools of knowledge, the library will be well able to address the issues that will help establish it in a better footing. To do this, the capacity of the library should be well built up. Then capacity can be said to be well founded.

‘Capacity building’ has become controversial. The concept of capacity building is a popular phrase in educational discourse. It is one of the most urgent challenges facing Bayelsa State and other parts in Nigeria today. It is indeed a challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as education is being revolutionized, compelling Nigeria to see the right kind of professional competent people, and educational institutions to meet the challenges. It must be realized that governments, non-state actors and foreign donors all tend to address capacity problems to explain why educational policies fail to deliver or

why aid is not generating sustainable impacts (InfoCotonu, 2003).

A nation is built and established based on the relevant foundational knowledge (education) acquired, processed and implemented through the right policies. One thing to watch out for is the real tool that will pave way for a better foundation. Looking at the access to knowledge development, the library is a tool that cannot be overemphasized, seeing its relevance to teaching, learning and research. It is an embodiment of knowledge that needs to be nurtured. (Fafuwa, 1974) states that a people with no knowledge of their past would suffer from collective amnesia grouply, blindly, into the future without guide posts of precedence to reshape their course. Only a thorough awareness of their heritage allows them to make their public discussion as they make their private ones. This statement shows the efficacy and impact knowledge have when they are documented and preserved. One of the ways is through a living library, a library that is fully operational, functional and meeting the needs of its end-users. This shows that a real library is known by its collections and repositories it holds (Morgan 1992).

According to Bulger (2000) Capacity can be defined as abilities, skills, understanding, attitude, values, relationships, behaviours, motivations, resources and conditions that enable individuals, organizations to carry out functions and achieve

their objectives overtime. Education on the other hand refers to both assimilating of some theoretical knowledge as well as ethical behaviour accepted by society. Umar (2004) observed that a number of professional development activities and programmes have been created; however, nearly all these activities and programmes revolve around continuing professional education (capacity building). Training and re-training, staff exchanges, links with similar and related professions etc. Salisu, (2000) regretfully, observes

## II. CAPACITY BUILDING: CONCEPT

The idea of capacity building has been characterized as the energy of something to perform or to create. From The UNDP's viewpoint, it is the capacity of people and associations or units to perform works viably, productively, or reasonably. Then again, it alludes to individuals, foundations, and practices that empower a nation to accomplish its advancement targets. Capacity building has both human and institutional measurements with the accompanying segments

- ✓ Skilled human resources
- ✓ Leadership and vision
- ✓ Viable institutions
- ✓ Financial and material resources and
- ✓ Effective work practices, including systems, procedures and appropriate incentives.

Human capacity refers to the individual's ability of performing the tasks in achieving developmental goals. Institutional capacity refers to the available organizational structure and processes that facilitate the achievement of developmental goals. Adequate capacity engenders self-reliance, and provides a country and its people the ability to make sound economic choices, create sustainable policies, and solve problems.

Capacity is the ability to cope with problems, also to move and transcend the immediate. Practically speaking, it could refer to something like competence in the library. Do we have the capacity to organize a "Library Talk"? Are we able to invite people outside our environment?

Even from outside the country, in other to host the event? Another dimension is the intellectual capacity to think through problems. In this regard, capacity can be attributed to institutions like libraries, individuals, and nations. Any one reading this paper is able to do so because of capacity of some sort.

"Capacity building" sometimes is used interchangeably with "institution building", "institutional and organizational development" and "institutional capacity building" (Jones and Blunf, 1999; Todele and Monyeno, 2009). Specifically, capacity building encompasses the human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional, and resource capabilities. A major objective of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options based on an understanding of environment potentials, limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned.

In Nigeria and other African countries since attainment of political independence, emphasis on the sphere of human

capacity building has been on formal education and training for building skills. Apart from establishment of tertiary institution with their functional libraries to provide academic training, there are also a number of post-experience and management development institution to help further build capacity. Some of these institutions are the National Center for Economic Management and Administration (NCEMA), Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Agricultural and Rural Management Institute (ARMTU), Centre for Management Development (CMD) and Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM). The last two offer specialized training to private sector officials. According to the World Bank Report (1998), local training and research institutions transmit the skills required for managing development, by offering specialized training. The significance of research in capacity building is in the advancement of knowledge and creation of ways of doing things. Research institutions contribute to capacity building through their research outputs in various ways (Obadan and Uga, 1997).

In both government and private sectors, capacity constraints exist. Many developing countries like Nigeria can boast of crop of educated personnel in different fields - science and technology, business law, accountancy, economics, engineering, librarianship and other disciplines - but there are still severe constraints as represented by shortages in a number of skills, especially in science and Technology-related fields. The situation has been compounded in recent years by the increasing trend of brain drain since the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 and the virtual collapse of the educational system at all levels since the early 1980s in many developing countries, as revealed by The National Capacity Assessment Report (2000). Democracy is a critical factor in the development process. Corruption is at the basis of our lack of ability to build capacity, and ineffective use of local experts. NGOs must train people, and should be encouraged to seek local input into whatever they are doing for a community.

## III. LIBRARIES AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The purpose of education is to pass on society's cultural values and accumulated body of knowledge to the next generation (children living and unborn), and to prepare them for meaningful adult life (Ogunsola, 2004). In addition, if we are to produce children who are self-reliant and better able to fit into their immediate environment and interact successfully with the world at large we need well developed and adequate library facilities like Learning Resources Centers, Media Resources Centers etc. One of the reasons why illiteracy rate is high in developing countries is because many people relapse into secondary illiteracy for want of adequate and relevant reading materials to sustain and consolidate their reading skills.

Without any doubt, the extent to which young people and workers today will be creative, informed and knowledgeable will be shaped by the boundaries of the content of library resources available within their environment or organizations. A wide range supply of resources are required to encourage independent study so that young people or workers in Bayelsa

State from early age can learn how to think and ensure that their convictions and views are formed as a result of active mental efforts. All these efforts can serve as a solid foundation for successful concept of capacity building in Bayelsa State. Accordingly, by the second-half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, western nations of the earth had experienced such a proliferation of books of all sorts that the nature of the librarians work was radically altered, being well-read no longer a sufficient characteristics for the post. The library of today should no longer be a library of the 17<sup>th</sup> century image.

Therefore, today's library especially institutional and special libraries needs to play active roles in capacity building in developing nations of the world. As postulated by Osundina, (1973) the library of today should not merely store documents and other research materials and preserve them, it must also devise means by which the contents of such documents can be rapidly and effectively transmitted to use. As far as the concept of capacity building is concerned, information has always played a very important part in human life. By mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the role of information increased immeasurably as a result of social progress and the vigorous development in science and technology. Developing countries should not be left out or behind in this development in Science and Technology. The pace of change brought by the advent of new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, work and thinks worldwide.

As pointed out by Aina (2004), it is generally known that the library and information profession barrows from a number of disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, Computer Science, Business Management, Mathematics, Statistics, Marketing, etc. Thus, anything that impacts on any of these disciplines would have direct influence on Library and Information Science (LIS) profession. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has radically transformed most of the service provided by a library, ICT is heavily utilized in the storage, processing and dissemination of information. Like a cyclone, the technology-driven environment has enveloped the library and is taken into unprecedented height its knowledge acquisition, management and communication. Even the vocabulary of librarianship is fast changing: "dissemination" is being replaced by "communication", "repository" by "database", "literature" by "knowledge", "search" by "negative" and so on. This reflects current approach for packaging the tools used for managing knowledge. It must be realized that for successful capital building concept, one does not have to leave the site of work before one could be professionally developed.

It is therefore imperative that professionals or workers must keep pace with the latest development in their profession or practice. For instance, the concept of "traditional librarian" is no longer tenable. Changes in the profession are happening both in magnitude and diversity. Correspondingly, the role of the librarian is changing, thus librarians and other professionals must transform themselves and the society through training and retraining in order to meet the expectations of their changing role. Professional development has been described as more or less a lifelong process, where individuals are exposed to changes all the time. Professional development or capacity building is mainly for personal and career advancement and improvement of any organization.

Hence, practicing professionals do not need to wait for sponsorship before they can develop themselves and this can be done by cultivating the idea of making use of the library facilities in their environment.

Given the fact the cost of training is enormous and only few employers could afford to send staff on training on a regular basis, there should be the possibility to improving one's career from one's work place. This is why the importance of libraries in providing the enabling environment becomes important. Thus, professional development or the concept of capacity building would be enhanced if it is linked to work situation, that is one does not have to leave the site of work before one could be professionally developed. As expected, libraries could promote the development of professionals or capacity building at all levels. Whether leading to the award of certificate or gaining competences in a particular topic. Furthermore, libraries could also promote the development of professionals or the concept of capacity building through distance education, surfing the internet and professional literature. All one needs in order to access the various sources of information is a computer with internet access and a web browser.

Professional literature constitutes one of the most important methods for promoting professional development. Most of the topical issues in any profession abounded in books; conference proceeding, audio and video tapes and the libraries should endeavor to make them available on the internet (World Wide Web). There is no need for subscription to access these journals. The progress of any nation as pointed out by Badawi (2004) depends on development of its people within communities, make regular use of them. To this end, the extent of education and professional development that libraries can bring about in any organization or academic institution depends on that extent to which the people utilize it. Convincingly, the greatest resource for any kind of development is the people. Insaadoo (2001) aptly observes that human factor in the development of any organic society institution is a very important element that ought to be addressed drastically to ensure optimum use and expression of individual talent and capabilities. It is distinct fact that society, institutions, or a nation could be endowed with logistics, natural resources and other factors that leads support to life and development in the broader sense. However, capacity building scheme that is geared towards the ultimate goal of the society, could be extremely difficult for such a nation to fully explore its resource and exploit them for socio-economic, cultural and political development.

There is no doubt about the fact that development is a product of education, and education is a process through which people/individual are formally and informally trained to acquire knowledge and skills. It is the realization of the enormous power of information that made libraries and information resource centres inevitably present in all sectors of a nation's economy. Thus today, libraries are found in all the three levels of our educational system namely, public, research and private organizations such as banks, insurance companies, manufacturing companies' etc. so the roles of libraries and librarians in the concept of capital building can never be overemphasized. The realization to the importance of libraries has made many professional bodies and association

including government at all levels to establish their own libraries and information resource centres due to the quest for relevant information and also cater for the specific information needs and capacity building of their workers or members. From the foregoing, it can vividly be seen that libraries have right from time aligned themselves with capacity building.

#### IV. THE LIBRARY AND MASS EDUCATION

A well functional library implies a good order of service it renders. This means that the books well arranged on the shelves in a systematic order and handled by library staff. This is very important to avoid man handling from user-community. The notion given by Chandonhy (2008) shows that the existence of a good library system goes beyond just having the physical facilities, but the presence of qualified and experienced personnel will promote efficient use to the library setting, regardless of a classroom, indicate the presence of knowledge that can be accessed at any time. And this shows that education can cover a large group of people's requirements. The education commission in 1964 previews the factors that libraries and mass education must work hand to hand; that is it must adhere to the following principles while working in conjunction with one another as indicated below.

- ✓ It must create attitude and interest which impact skills that enable the individual to be encouraged efficiently in his or her profession.
- ✓ It will enable the illiterate to be involved in fundamental national challenges of which their impact will be needed in the social and political life of the country.
- ✓ Skills in reading, writing and arithmetic will enable individuals to acquire knowledge for their continuous education as a vehicle and avenues of informal education. All these will promote mass education campaign while achieving the objectives of literacy awareness, functionally and improving the quality of the life learners.

Other information specialist should pay particular attention to sourcing information such as notice for training programs, professional meeting conference/seminar/workshops, forthcoming events and job advertisements.

Apart from the fact that information delivered from these sources is most useful for professional development, it is likely that these sources will also provide information on the changing pattern of the various professions concerned. For Librarians to function successfully, they must be flexible enough to update their skills with the ever changing technology. Library managers are hired because it is assumed that they are competent to manage effectively. The basic library management course taught in library schools is not enough to turn a librarian into a professional manager. Therefore, in order to succeed as a manager as pointed out by Adimorah (1989), he must engage in continuing education management, he must be creative, innovative, ingenious and a calculated risk manager. All these qualities can be acquired through capacity building programmes organized from time in developing and advanced countries by various organizations.

#### V. LIBRARY CAPACITY BUILDING IN EDUCATION: THE BAYELSA EXPERIENCE

Bayelsa State is one of the six states in the South-South geo-political zone that make-up the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria. It is a new state in comparison with other geo-political states. It also requires an information learning centers for knowledge acquisition and storage. Since information is knowledge gained or given according to the 21st century Chamber Dictionary (2006), it is very expedient that the library situation in Bayelsa State is in need of development. Ahiauzu (2009) sees the library as a place where information is to be shared, received or gained. This is because it is seen as a creative of knowledge, awareness, understanding and the dispel of ignorance.

The key reason of library is basically for information development in all ramifications. Ahiauzu (2009) sees it as a right of the people that must be given a free access to participate freely in the socio-economic and political activities of the society. According to Ahiauzu, information is for the furtherance of education, knowledge and learning process, more so, when the potential of the information is summarized to include:

- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Networking

The above facts as when examined has proved that information from ancient times gained greater control over their destinies. This also account for the quality and quantity of information available to a nation which will later provide for the social economic, and education etc. (Arosayin 1978).

It is true that Bayelsa state is core area in the Niger Delta Region, and its growing nature has place some challenges in the state of the libraries and educational institutions in service delivery in the region. Viable resource for information development particular challenges associated with it. As knowledge is an essential economic product, there is the need for the library in the development of the economy of the state. It is in this view that (Posiaha 2010) emphasize on the need for efficient library service are essential for the educational, political and social economic development of its people (both rural and urban). The library is a tool to close the gap between the urban-rural by bridging the gap to achieve effective library services for capacity building. Bayelsa State is already coping with the situations as it is in the Niger delta region.

#### VI. CHALLENGES FOR LIBRARY IN CAPACITY BUILDING IN EDUCATION, BAYELSA STATE

When in 1984 and 1985, National Conference on the theme "Towards relevance in library" were held in Kaduna and Zaria respectively, the aim was re-examination of the curricula of the existing library schools in order to ensure their alignment with the paradigm shift in national goals and priorities, (Ochai, 1986). The course content of such schools was expected to reflect national requirement in human capital, among others (capacity building). Through the goals and priorities change from time to time, the idea or relevance of

educational curricular to them continue to resonate. The Bayelsa situation is not different, considering the fact it is one of the state in Niger Delta zone with difficult terrain and development problems. Therefore the following problems are evident in the area.

✓ ADEQUATE FUNDING

It is observed that most libraries and schools in the state are experiencing inadequate funding and therefore slow down capacity building on education in the state which is also applicable to other parts of the country, considering the economic recession Nigeria is going through. (Kamba, 2011) observed that the issue of inadequate funding of education can only be handled at the level of government with leadership commitment.

✓ THE INCUMBENT NATURE OF BAYELSA STATE

This has limited the library role in capacity building in education, since the state is more of riverine in nature; access to schools in term of school enrolment is low and therefore limit library service and learning facilities in schools. The Niger Delta has five district ecological zones, namely, mangrove forest and coastal vegetation, fresh water swamp forest, and rain forest. Bayelsa is with many networks of rivers and creeks, it is the world's third largest Delta. Here accessibility is a major problem (World Bank 2008).

✓ UNSKILLED OF OUTDATED SKILLS

A major challenge has to do with the abundant number of unskilled of outdated skills among librarians. If one must play the critical roles of the library in the emerging environment as a gateway to visual collections and databases of electronic texts and journals i.e negotiating access to information user through choice of extensive electronic databases, librarians need to be skilled in exploitation of these resources. This brings to mind the needs for on the jobs skills acquisition for librarians. James et al (2012).

✓ POWER SUPPLY

This is a huge challenge facing the Nigeria economy of which Bayelsa State is definitely not left out, and the libraries are affected by this same problem. Also considering the swampy nature of the area electricity supply is a nightmare, especially institution located in the creeks. Therefore this affects the smooth operations of the library.

✓ INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Realizing that the availability of effective and efficient national information infrastructure is sine qua non for rapid social and economic development. Government in April, 2010 published the National Policy on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education. Vanguard Newspaper (May 2, 2012:17).

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are important to the library in capacity building in education in Bayelsa State.

- ✓ Funding should not be negotiation in addressing the issues of capacity building in library profession. All effort should be geared towards the building and upgrading of the library status
- ✓ Training and retraining of staff to meet the manpower needs in emerging technologies and related areas should be a continuous exercise in our libraries.
- ✓ Government should make a deliberate policy in the development of infrastructures in Bayelsa state libraries and educational institutions in rural areas. This will ensure that difficult terrains are accessible and libraries in these areas are able to compete with sister-libraries in other states.
- ✓ Collaborative strategies for enhancing provision of service through external support since libraries all over the world depends on each other as no single library can meet all the needs of its users at any given time.
- ✓ Restructuring the library would enhance the economic development through creation and contribution to cultural development of the area.
- ✓ Power supply is major resource for capacity building. Alternative measures like generating plants, inverters and solar system should be put in place to allow for the smooth running of the libraries.
- ✓ There should be a collaborative dialogue between National University commission (NUC), State Government and Institutions.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

It is glaringly clear that libraries in Bayelsa State compared to other libraries outside the state seem to be facing its own peculiar challenges. The territorial geographical location of Bayelsa speaks of itself. This has grossly affected library activities in the state and as a result slow down the growth and operation of library services. Bayelsa State libraries cannot be compared to other libraries because the first higher institution (The Niger Delta University owned by Bayelsa State) was established 54years after the establishment of Nigeria's first generation Universities in the Eastern, Western and Northern regions of Nigeria. This show that the past and present leaders were ignorant of the importance of education and which solely has affected informed storage of which the Library is a pivot. Library capacity building in Bayelsa state needs to progress and thus the stakeholders (state government, the library professionals and library users) need to collaborate to ensure library service is put in place and functioning as a modern library. In restructuring libraries in Bayelsa State, their relevance to economic development include but not limited to more job creation, cultural development, preservation of the culture and environment.

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