

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE GAP IN NIGERIA: A SOCIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study is a position paper that examined the roles of libraries in bridging knowledge gap in Nigeria from a sociological perspective. It was aimed at advancing rapid knowledge and encouraging exponential societal growth with the library playing a pivotal role. The discourse was anchored on the functionalist theory by Talcott Parsons (1951). The paper deployed ex post facto as its research design. The materials for this study were generated through secondary sources such as journals, text books, book chapters, newspapers and internet sources. Literature were critically analysed using relational content analysis to prove the importance of libraries in promoting intellectual freedom and preserving indigenous knowledge. The outcome of the interrogation showed that libraries are no longer just a place where books are stored but an institution that is saddled with the responsibility of acquisition and dissemination of information to bridge the knowledge gap in the society. It was further highlighted that insufficient funding, limited access to digital resources, lack of corroboration and lack of skilled professionals are some of the challenges of libraries towards achieving its full potential as a catalyst in bridging the gap in acquisition of knowledge and its transfer. It was concluded that the ability of the library to serve as a knowledge-divide in the society is anchored on its ability to balance the integration and dissemination of knowledge to encourage societal growth. It was, therefore, recommended that there is need for increased government and non-government funding, leveraging on digital tools, establishment of more local libraries, grassroots sensitisation and partnership strengthening among key players such as libraries, governments, and private sectors.

Key words: Libraries, Knowledge Gap, Knowledge Transfer, Advancement, Sociological Discourse.

Introduction

Access to information is a fundamental driver of advancements and developments especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where information asymmetry hinders productivity, innovation, and inclusive development. In fact, Knowledge is considered the key to human development. For some time now, knowledge has widely been recognised as the most important factor in production in an economy. Its production and utilisation is, therefore, essential for development. ‘Knowledge is the new asset and globalisation rules have set off a race to lay claim to knowledge’ (UNEC, 1999).

Libraries and information services are key enablers of sustainable development. They enhance access to knowledge, fostering digital literacy, supporting research, and promoting inclusivity. They serve as vital institutions that empower individuals and communities to bridging the knowledge gap and facilitating informed decision-making. From the perspective of Olusegun (2025), libraries and information services play a critical role in advancing sustainable development by facilitating access to knowledge, fostering life-long learning, and supporting informed decision-making. Significant challenges however, persist in bridging the knowledge gap, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities.

Gone are the days when libraries are just passive repositories; they are now hubs of activity that foster research culture, encourage innovation, and bridge gaps between academia and industry. Johnson (2018) underscores the transformative role of libraries in cultivating a vibrant research culture. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative events organized by libraries provide platforms for interdisciplinary interactions, nurturing an ecosystem where researchers and innovators can engage in critical discussions and knowledge exchange. Libraries actively promote creativity, hands-on learning, and cross-disciplinary collaboration, thus contributing to the cultivation of an innovation-driven society (Adebayo, 2023).

Furthermore, University of Illinois Library (2021) emphasizes that libraries play vital roles in facilitating knowledge transfer and collaboration between research institutions and the business community. By offering access to resources that cater for the needs of researchers, entrepreneurs, and innovators, libraries contribute to the practical application of research insights and the translation of discoveries into real-world solutions. The historical evolution of libraries reveals their significance as custodians of knowledge, repositories of cultural heritage, and facilitators of learning.

Libraries have long been associated with the preservation and dissemination of information, contributing to societal growth and education. However, the digital age has brought about a paradigm shift, transforming libraries into digital gateways that provide seamless access to an expansive universe of information, transcending geographical boundaries and enhancing inclusivity. Libraries' embrace of technology has empowered them to cater for the diverse needs of researchers, innovators, and learners in a rapidly changing world. It is against these backdrops that this discourse sociologically examined the role of libraries in the bridging of knowledge gap in Nigeria.

2. Method of the Study

This study is a position paper on roles of libraries in bridging knowledge-gap in Nigeria: a sociological discourse. Ex post facto was used as research design. The materials for this study were generated through secondary sources such as journals, text books, book chapters, newspapers and online sources available for this article on roles of libraries in bridging the knowledge gap in Nigeria and data were analysed using relational content analysis with the aim of drawing conclusion and providing solutions on how libraries can become catalysts for knowledge fertilization and encourage exponential development in Nigeria.

3. Conceptual Clarifications

Libraries

A library is an organized collection of diverse materials—like books, films, and digital resources—that provides access to information and learning through physical spaces and virtual platforms, serving users for educational, research, and recreational purposes. Libraries offer structured access, professional assistance from librarians, and a variety of services and programmes, adapting to new technologies to meet evolving information needs. In fact, from the perspective of Amiri (2025), a library denotes an organized collection of resources, accessible to a specific community for reference, borrowing or research.

Libraries are probably utilised to advance various opportunities by all through the services. There are various benefits offered by libraries, including: improvement on quality of life; users being able to access information that they cannot find anywhere else; making possible lifetime learning in both children and adults; and most importantly, it is the backbone of Knowledge sharing in a society. Nevertheless, a contemporary library is seen as a store house of knowledge where access to information is guaranteed. It is a social institution that

carefully select, acquire, process and store information resources for retrieval and utilization by her user community. Library provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both. A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats (Omekwu & Ugwuanyi, 2009).

The library is the centre for providing information for all. The library houses information in different format that deals on different aspect of life. Materials like daily newspapers are collated by the library and consulted by the library users to be informed on daily happenings. Magazines and pamphlets are also acquired by libraries to keep their readers informed. However, Library can be simply defined as a collection of information resources processed and organized for easy retrieval in order to meet the information needs of the users.

Types of Libraries

National Library: A National Library is the apex library of a nation. It is established by a country to serve as a National repository. It is usually established and funded by the executive arm of the government at the national level with branches spread across the nation. The person in charge of the National library is called the National Librarian. The library has legal right to collect documents issued in a country such as books, periodicals and other information material for the preservation of a country's intellectual output for posterity. It also has the responsibility of issuing ISBN and compiling national bibliography of a nation and a typical example is the National Library of Nigeria. Chime (2014) has provided the following functions of the National Library:

1. It publishes the national bibliography and acquires foreign document of national importance and interest.
2. It collects, preserves and makes available records of human culture published in the country abroad by the nationals of the country and about the country.
3. It serves as a national bibliographic information centre, provides leadership and advice necessary to achieve coordinated library and information department.

Public Libraries: Like the National Library, the public libraries are government owned and funded at state level with its presence in state capital and branches in local government headquarters. The public libraries are headed by library directors. This type of library is for every type of users; the collections meet their information needs including farmers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, business men and all other members of the public.

The public library performs at least four basic functions:

- Promotion and encouragement of reading habits among the people of the community
- Promotion and provision of resources for enlightenment and leisure
- Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage; and
- Promotion and use of public libraries as education agencies for individuals.

Special Libraries: Special Libraries are libraries established to meet special information needs of its users. As the name implies, they provide special services to special group of users. Special libraries are mostly established in special Institutions to meet professional information needs. Everything about the library is special: collections, subjects, users and parent body. Therefore, they are meant especially for research on a particular field of study and often for a limited group of users. The special library is headed by a professional librarian. Examples of such libraries include: law libraries and medical libraries. Chime (2014) has outlined the functions of special libraries as follows;

- It provides comprehensive and balanced information resources relevant to the activities of its parent organization.
- It is relatively concerned with periodical and technical report literature as book can quickly become out-dated in the long process.
- It equally conducts retrospective literature search for users as appropriate.

Private Libraries: These are individuals' collection of information materials. The purpose of such collection is to foster personal development, research, references and consultancy services. Sometimes, the collections of a private library are bequeathed by the owners to public or academic libraries.

School Library: The School Libraries are established in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools by the school authorities to support teaching and learning and help pupils and

students develop reading habits at tender age. They also make teaching materials available for teachers as teaching aid. Materials found mostly in school library collection are books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, with more emphasis on audio visual and graphic materials (pictures, photographs, realia and diagrams). The nature and size of a particular school library collection will depend on many factors such as school's objective and philosophy, school's programmes and activities, pupil's needs and interests. Some school libraries function as a learning resource centre and it is headed by a Teacher Librarian.

Academic library: These are libraries established by tertiary institutions like colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. They are established as an integral part of a tertiary institution with the responsibility to meet the information and research needs of its students, faculty and staff. Their collections are tailored towards the achievement of institutional goals of teaching, learning and research.

- It aids the parent institution in carrying its academic programme
- It provides research information materials needed by the faculty and researchers.
- It provides information materials for aesthetic and personal self- development of the clientele
- It creates room for inter-library loan and cooperation among other academic libraries.
- It provides learning/reading accommodation and full range of information and learning resources. The interior must be tremendously durable, thoroughly accessible and aesthetically balanced for study.

Children's libraries: Children libraries are established to provide information materials specifically for children. They are often established by individuals, NGOs and governments. The collections of the children library are unique and carefully selected to satisfy their unique personality. Considering the users which are mostly pre-primary and primary school age children, their collections are mostly story books, picture books, colour books, children books, fictions, toys, puppet, audio-visual materials, etc. The essence of developing such library is to inculcate reading habit among children while enhancing their cognitive and psychomotor development. They also provide facilities for recreation and entertainment.

The Knowledge Gap

Knowledge gap refers to the disparity in access to information, education, and technological resources among different individuals, communities, and nations. This gap is often influenced by socioeconomic factors, digital infrastructure availability, and literacy levels. In the context of sustainable development, the knowledge gap can hinder progress by limiting opportunities for education, innovation, and informed decision-making. Communities with restricted access to reliable information may struggle to adopt sustainable practices, access quality education, participate in economic opportunities or engage in civic activities. Addressing this gap is essential for ensuring inclusive and equitable growth and fosters all-round societal development (Tetbirt, 2025).

The Sociological Discourse

Sociological Discourse denotes how we think and communicate about people, things, the social organization of society, and the relationships among and between all three (Cole, 2019). Discourse typically emerges out of social institutions like media and politics (among others), and by virtue of giving structure and order to language and thought, it structures and orders our lives, relationships with others, and society. It, thus, shapes what we are able to think and know at any point in time. In this sense, sociologists frame discourse as a productive force because it shapes our thoughts, ideas, beliefs, values, identities, interactions with others and our behaviour. In doing so it produces much of what occurs within us and within society.

4. Theoretical Framework

This work adopted the Functionalist Theory by Talcott Parsons (1951) as its theoretical framework. Talcott Parsons built on earlier work by Durkheim (1893) and Robert K. Merton (1957). His central idea is that every institution in the society exists to perform specific functions that help the entire social system to survive and maintain equilibrium. In other words, the functionalist theory argues that the different parts of society are primarily composed of social institutions, each designed to fill various needs. Family, government, economy, media, education, and religion are germane to understanding functionalist theory and the core institutions that define sociology. According to functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society. If it no longer serves a role, an institution will die away. When new needs evolve, new institutions will be created to meet them. In linking the theory with this work, it is not out of place to state that the library is an institution that fulfils the need of the society by helping in bridging the knowledge gap of the

society. This framework views libraries as vital social institution performing key functions such as knowledge transmission, social integration, education, and equilibrium maintenance within the Nigerian society. According to Nagabhushana (2021:78), “a library is a social institution. It should contribute to productivity-drive by informing top-management of the latest trends in diverse enterprises, by ploughing back into the minds of researchers, designers and technologists every piece of relevant new thought, promptly and pin-pointedly”. In fact, Dukari (2019) has it that libraries acquire, organize, store, and disseminate information in the required form to users (print, CD-ROM/DVD, web form) for use; and no other institution performs such long-term systematic responsibility. It is against these backdrops, that one may boldly infer that the presence of a knowledge-gap in the society, could create dysfunction, and on this ground and other roles of the library already outlined, the library could, without mincing words, be seen as a social institution that plays a vital role in the society and restores equilibrium

5 Conventional Roles of Libraries in Society

Library from time immemorial has been considered as a social institution. It has an immense role in the modern society and regarded as the “gateway of knowledge” for the community. With the generation of new information sources including web-based resources there is a huge change in the role and form of the libraries. Today people in every sphere of the society irrespective of their age, profession, and so on, from child to adult, from teacher to politician, businessmen to housewives use the libraries. Everybody use and need the services of a library. In today’s age of information both print and non-print materials are kept in a library. Conventional documents like books, journals, newspapers as well as nonconventional documents such as maps, charts, etc. are maintained together in a library.

Library and society are both interlinked and interdependent. Library exists for the need of the society. A library can be referred to as a well acknowledged “social agency”. It plays a vital role in shaping our society. It transmits and disseminates the accumulated knowledge through books and other materials. In ancient times, libraries acted only as the custodian of books and other written documents. Writings on clay tablets, papyrus, parchment, velum, paper, etc. were preserved in those libraries. Libraries existed as accumulation of personal collection of kings, in temples, religious centres. There was limited accessibility to these collections. Only the elite who were involved in acquiring knowledge had access to it. Gradually, with the increasing

democratization of education, libraries became accessible to the general public and there was awareness about libraries.

Libraries have long been seen as pillars of knowledge and education, providing society with the tools and resources necessary for personal growth, academic achievement, and community development. In an age defined by rapid technological change, the role of libraries has evolved significantly, adapting to meet the needs of the modern world while preserving their foundational mission of fostering access to information. Today, libraries are not just places where books are stored; they are dynamic community centres that support education, encourage lifelong learning, and contribute to the cultural and intellectual vitality of society

Summary Roles of Libraries

The roles of libraries are as follows:

Education: Library supports both formal and informal education and provides facilities for life-long education. It helps in the self-development in various stages of education.

Dissemination of Information: Libraries provide current and accurate information to the intended users according to their subject of interest. They act as an information centres or referral centres for specific source of information like Information regarding employment, social programmes, public utility services, etc.

Promotion of Culture: Libraries act as cultural centres and promote participation and appreciation of various arts. It helps to broaden our views and develop creative abilities by reading and thinking. It also helps in cultural upliftment by organizing extension services like lectures, seminars and book exhibition.

Recreation: Libraries help in utilizing the leisure time properly by providing books on fiction, magazine, newspapers, etc. Audio-visual materials are also kept in the library for use.

Preservation of Knowledge: Libraries maintains archives of old and rare documents thereby preserving the literary heritage for posterity. It stores the literary works in various formats which helps the researchers to do their work.

Aids to Research Work: Based on Ari (2017) perspective, Libraries assists research scholars in their work in the following ways:

- Libraries procure research materials such as books, journals, etc. and facilitate easy access and discovery of research materials.
- Provides physical space to work.
- Assists in gathering of vital information.
- Provides information and advice regarding publishing, copyright, open access, citation.
- Provides access to high quality contents vital for research
- Build up a collection and provide books and other non-book materials to the people who need them.
- Helps to develop and promote the spread of knowledge, education and culture.
- Provide facility for both formal and informal life-long self-education in the community.
- Furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects to all.
- Support for adult literacy initiatives.
- Provide reliable information to a variety of users irrespective of their age, caste, creed, religion, sex, profession, etc.
- Provide students with books and other reading materials that are relevant to the course curriculum in the academic institution.
- Help faculty members in preparation of their instructional courses.
- Support for job seekers via free access to the internet to search for and respond to job applications.
- Support to the disadvantaged.
- Preserve the literary works and the cultural heritage for posterity.
- Support for community involvement through the provision of information about the local area
- Provide Information Services – business, economic, social and other information to the needy.
- Supports research and development.
- Facilitate advancement of culture in the community.

- Fulfilling recreational needs and utilization of leisure time.

6. Libraries in Bridging Knowledge Divide

The library is no longer just a place where books are stored or just an old repository where knowledge is archived but recently the library plays a very important role in the society by making sure that the knowledge divide in the society is abridged and it does this functions through the following means as provided by Ashikuzzaman (2016):

1. **Promoting Education and Lifelong Learning:** One of the most significant ways libraries contribute to the cultural and intellectual development of society is through their promotion of education. Libraries provide access to a wide range of resources that support formal and informal learning. For students, libraries are essential resources, offering textbooks, academic journals, reference materials, and access to specialized databases. University libraries, for example, house vast collections of scholarly articles, research papers, and e-books, which facilitate academic pursuits and foster intellectual development among students and faculty alike. Beyond the academic world, libraries contribute to lifelong learning. Public libraries, in particular, are accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds, offering educational programs that cater to a wide range of interests and needs. These programmes often include literacy initiatives, digital literacy training, language courses, and job readiness workshops. By providing opportunities for individuals to continue their education throughout their lives, libraries encourage personal growth and intellectual curiosity. This fosters a culture of learning and helps individuals stay informed and engaged with the world around them.
2. **Providing Equal Access to Resources:** One of the most powerful ways libraries bridge gaps between social, economic, and cultural groups is by providing free and equal access to information. In many societies, access to knowledge and resources is often determined by economic means, where those from wealthier backgrounds can afford the best educational tools, books, and technological resources. Libraries eliminate this barrier by offering free access to books, computers, the Internet, and various other educational materials. In underserved or marginalized communities, libraries often

serve as the only access point to information for individuals who cannot afford personal technology or educational subscriptions.

3. In economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, public libraries offer free access to computers and high-speed internet, allowing individuals from lower-income backgrounds to complete job applications, research career options, and engage in online learning. This access is crucial in bridging the digital divide, where people in lower socioeconomic groups often struggle to obtain the technology and resources needed for educational and professional advancement.
4. **Providing Resources for Social Mobility:** Libraries also contribute to bridging the gap between different social and economic groups by providing resources that foster social mobility. In communities where individuals face barriers to educational and professional opportunities, libraries offer resources that help level the playing field. These resources may include access to online learning platforms, career development workshops, job search assistance, and résumé-building services. Libraries often provide free or low-cost access to career certifications, technical skills courses, and vocational training programmes that can help individuals from lower-income backgrounds to advance careers and improve their economic prospects.
5. In addition, libraries offer support to those seeking to further their education by providing materials for standardized tests, college application resources, and guidance for applying for financial aid. For individuals who may not have access to such resources at home, libraries serve as vital support systems that empower them to pursue higher education and career advancement, ultimately helping to reduce social inequality.
6. **Enhancing the Public Engagement and Critical Thinking:** Libraries are also instrumental in fostering intellectual development through public engagement and the promotion of critical thinking. They provide platforms for public dialogue, hosting events such as debates, lectures, and panel discussions on a variety of subjects. These events allow individuals to engage with complex issues, share ideas, and challenge their assumptions. By promoting open discourse, libraries help develop the intellectual capacity of society, encouraging individuals to think critically, ask questions, and form their own opinions.
7. Moreover, libraries often serve as a source of reliable, well-researched information. In an age of misinformation and digital noise, libraries offer a trusted space where

individuals can find accurate, unbiased information. They provide access to curated collections of literature, scientific journals, and other resources that help people understand complex topics and make informed decisions.

8. **Facilitating Access to Knowledge and Information:** Libraries also make a significant contribution to society by providing equitable access to knowledge and information. As the world becomes increasingly digital, the divide between those with access to information and those without becomes more pronounced. Libraries help bridge this gap by providing free access to books, internet services, online databases, and other digital resources. They serve as safe, welcoming spaces where people of all socioeconomic backgrounds can come to learn, research, and explore ideas. This access to information is particularly vital in areas where resources are scarce, and education is limited. Libraries offer a place where individuals can gain skills, conduct research, and explore new fields of interest. By offering free access to knowledge, libraries contribute to the intellectual empowerment of individuals, allowing them to engage with new ideas, broaden their perspectives, and participate more fully in society.
9. **Supporting Creativity and Innovation:** Libraries also serve as catalysts for creativity and innovation. In many ways, they have evolved beyond traditional spaces for reading and research to become hubs of creativity and collaboration. Makerspaces, a growing trend in libraries, provide access to tools and technologies such as 3D printers, coding stations, and video production equipment, encouraging users to explore their creativity and develop new skills. These spaces allow individuals to experiment with digital media, create prototypes, and engage in collaborative projects that can lead to new ideas and innovations. Additionally, libraries host events and programmes designed to inspire creativity, such as art exhibitions, author talks, and writing workshops. These events provide individuals with opportunities to engage with art, literature, and new ideas, further enriching the cultural fabric of society. By offering such programmes, libraries nurture creative expression, helping to develop new ideas, artistic works, and innovations that shape cultural and intellectual trends

7. The Challenges in Bridging the Knowledge Gap

Despite their vital role in bridging the knowledge gap, libraries and information services face significant challenges that hinder their ability to bridge the knowledge gap effectively. These

challenges limit access to reliable information, reduce digital inclusion, and restrict the ability of libraries to serve diverse populations. These challenges include:

1. Financial Constraints – Insufficient Funding for Libraries and Information

Service: According to Finance is the life wire of every establishment including land, labour, capitals, entrepreneur and Information (Osuagwu, 2002). Fund is obviously the major element in every establishment and for the library it is no different. Many libraries, especially in developing regions, operate with limited budgets, which affect their ability to expand services, update collections, and invest in digital transformation. Insufficient funding leads to out-dated books, inadequate technological infrastructure, and staff shortages. Without sustainable financial support, libraries may struggle to maintain operations, adapt to changing user needs, and implement programmes that promote digital literacy and lifelong learning. Government and institutional investments are crucial to ensuring that libraries remain relevant and accessible to all. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) reiterate that Nigeria is a developing nation and at times the level of funds allocated to the library by the government is grossly inadequate.

Similarly, late release of funds by the government is another problem. It means things can't be done when required. Most times Library plans are hampered by late release of funds. In the history of Nigeria libraries, the problem of fund has remained a bad phenomenon.

2. Lack of Skilled Professionals: Skills shortage describes a situation in which the supply of (specialized) skilled employees fails to meet the demand within a specific industry or sector. In other words, it's when there aren't enough people available — who possess the necessary and desirable skills and proficiency — to fill job vacancies. In the library, the work of information provision, space management, website maintenance, and user engagement cannot be effectively carried out by a handful of underpaid, overstretched, and demotivated librarians. Staff members work for years and retire without replacement. Support staff are employed under precarious conditions, receiving minimal benefits and experiencing erratic wage payments.

The alarming shortage of staff in libraries across the federation has become a pressing concern (Adeoye, 2025). This is not only unsustainable but detrimental to the quality of service provided to users. As the role of libraries evolves with technological advancements, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals who can effectively

manage digital resources, provide research support and engage with diverse communities. Many librarians and information professionals, however, lack opportunities for continuous training in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, data management, and digital archiving. Capacity building initiatives, professional development programmes, and knowledge sharing networks are essential for equipping library staff with the skills needed to meet modern information demands (Olusegun, 2025).

3. **Limited Access to Digital Resources – Lack of ICT Infrastructure and Internet**

Connectivity: The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the way information is accessed, processed, and disseminated, leading to a significant shift in the way societies function. This technological revolution, however, has also expanded already-existing social and economic disparities by widening the gap between those who have access to digital technology and those who do not (Afolabi, 2017). Libraries have traditionally been essential for fostering social justice and filling knowledge gaps by giving people access to digital technologies, internet connectivity, and training in digital literacy. Igwe (2018) argues that libraries are in a unique position to close the digital divide in the modern day, however due to limited access to digital infrastructure that is not the case in everyday practice.

In fact most libraries in Nigeria lack the basic infrastructure and the much needed internet connectivity which in itself is a quagmire.

One of the main barriers to bridging the knowledge gap is the lack of access to digital resources, particularly in low income and rural communities. Many individuals and institutions still face difficulties in obtaining reliable internet connectivity and necessary technological tools.

Without adequate information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, libraries struggle to provide digital services, online learning opportunities, and access to e-books, research databases, and open-access resources. This digital divide disproportionately affects marginalized groups, limiting their ability to benefit from global knowledge networks (Olusegun, 2025).

4. **Limited collaboration opportunities:** Collaboration by libraries can help to avoid duplication of effort and provide efficiency in savings, streamline work processes and free up time for more value added activities. It can also increase the profile, visibility, credibility, and influence of the library and library staff internally and externally,

beyond the existing user base. This and many more are the advantages of effective library collaboration but where such is limited, the libraries will have a very tedious and cumbersome job at hand especially as it concerns knowledge bridging because effective collaboration helps to widen the scope and allows different libraries to cover more grounds and in reaching out to more clientele.

8. How to Overcoming the Challenges

No human problem is without solution; where there are challenges there must be prospects that will help in addressing those challenges. Some of the ways these challenges could be overcome are captured by Olusegun (2025) as thus:

1. **Adequate and Timely Funding:** The library has always been a place where funds are needed for upgrading and sustenance, thus Proper and timely funding is important for libraries to acquire resources, develop staff, maintain facilities and implement modern technology, ensuring they can effectively meet the evolving information needs of their communities. Inadequate funding leads to compromised services, out-dated collections, and an inability to adapt to digital transformation, highlighting the critical link between financial support and a library's ability to function and serve its users.

It has been argued that if the government can grow above petty politics and fund the library as at when due, it will be able to allow the Library the necessary leverage they need to function optimally.

However, libraries also have been encouraged to seek other source of funding like Donations, Grants and Subscriptions fees etc.

2. **Proper Staffing and Training:** Effective staff management is essential for any library to operate efficiently and meet its goals. Libraries, whether public, academic, or special, rely heavily on their staff's expertise, cooperation, and coordination. Good staff management ensures that library services are provided seamlessly, patrons are satisfied, and the institution remains a vital resource for the community. The core components of staff management in libraries are essential for ensuring that the library operates efficiently and meets the needs of its users. It plays a crucial role in determining the

quality of services offered by a library to its patrons. Proper staff training ensures that the library's staff is skilled, motivated and well-organized, which directly influences how well the library meets the needs of its users. From enhancing customer service to ensuring efficient operations, staff management is at the heart of creating a positive experience for library patrons.

A well trained team can deliver high-quality, efficient and personalized service, making the library a valuable resource in its community. Conversely, poor trained staff can lead to inefficiencies, lower service quality and dissatisfied patrons. Ultimately, the quality of library services hinges on how well its staff are trained, supported, and managed to meet the evolving needs of their patrons.

- 3. Investing in Digital Transformation and Open-Access Initiatives:** The future of libraries lies in their ability to balance the integration of new technologies with their core mission of providing access to information and fostering intellectual engagement for all users.

The transition to digital resources has revolutionized the way users access information. Digital libraries provide users with the flexibility to access materials from anywhere in the world, often instantly, thus overcoming geographical and time constraints. Additionally, digital technologies have made it easier for libraries to preserve rare and fragile materials through digitization, ensuring long-term access while minimizing the risk of physical deterioration.

Digital transformation is essential for expanding library services and ensuring equitable access to information. Libraries should invest in high-speed internet connectivity, e-learning platforms, and digital literacy training programmes. Open-access initiatives, such as online repositories, digital archives and free educational resources, can help bridge the knowledge gap, especially in underserved communities. Governments and institutions should support the development of digital libraries that provide unrestricted access to research, scientific publications and educational content.

- 4. Strengthening Partnerships between Libraries, Governments, and Private Sectors:** Collaboration between libraries, governments, and private organizations can enhance resource availability and service delivery. Governments can integrate libraries into national education and development policies, providing sustained financial and infrastructural support. Partnerships with private sector organizations, such as

technology companies and publishing firms, can enable access to digital tools, research databases, and capacity-building programmes. International agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also play a role in funding library projects and supporting global knowledge-sharing networks (Olusegun, 2025).

9. Conclusion.

Libraries and information services play a vital role in bridging the knowledge gap and contributing to national development and advancement providing equitable access to information, promoting digital literacy, supporting research, and ensuring inclusivity. However, they face several challenges, including limited access to digital resources, financial constraints, a shortage of skilled professionals, policy and institutional barriers, and limited collaboration. These issues hinder the ability of libraries to effectively serve communities and hamper the knowledge divide.

To overcome these challenges, strategic interventions are necessary. Strengthening partnerships between libraries, governments, and private sectors and providing efficient and timely funding. Investing in digital transformation and open-access initiatives can improve access to information, especially in underserved communities.

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