

# Generation and Dissemination of African Languages and Tradition of Library

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**KEYWORDS** Culture. Indigenous Knowledge. Library Resources. Oral System. Rural Communities

**ABSTRACT** The objective of the study was to establish the factors that affect the creation and distribution of African languages and tradition in the library. Libraries can effectively participate in several ways in the oral history such as: collection development of published material, performing as a storehouse/repository for the main resource materials, as well as sustaining a programme which note down oral history. A systematic literature review by making use of a mixture of both the contextual and conceptual review methods were utilised for this study. The findings revealed that the library has a crucial role to play in the creation and distribution of African languages as well as culture. Culture is a vehicle of communication in a community. The challenges encountered by the libraries in creating, preserving and disseminating African languages and tradition were also stressed by librarians. The study recommended that the library collections should be composed by incorporating the print, automated and oral forms that accommodate for indigenous knowledge. The cultural heritage resources should also be preserved in a way that equally maintain their attractiveness to visitors as well as the principles for which they were preserved.

## INTRODUCTION

People coming from an African background are not automatically ignorant, because they have a specific amount of education in their particular various information situation. Public libraries developed in contemporary civilizations to encounter the requirements of well-educated clients. Kwanya et al. (2017), Mostert (1998) and Kwanya (2013) opine that the distinctive western public library is appropriate for those society fellows who are knowledgeable, well-read and bourgeois, while the recently well-educated and uneducated associates of the society are not taken into consideration. The libraries as the guardians of culture be obliged to acquire a steering role in the promotion of IK in that way making libraries to be more appropriate to societies in Africa (Kwanya et al. 2017; Tapfumaneyi and Rupande 2013).

*“Indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Indigenous knowledge contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions, and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities” (Owiny et al. 2014).*

## Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to examine the factors affecting the generation and dissemination of African languages and tradition in the libraries and how to overpower them for improved language and tradition creation and dissemination. Exclusively the study strived:

- To find out factors affecting the generation and dissemination of knowledge in African languages and tradition in the library.
- To discover the constraints to knowledge generation and dissemination in African tradition in the library.

## Literature Review

According to Priya and Rabindra (2010), it is indispensable to disseminate the practise of traditional wisdom for individual causes by means of specific events like for example, “seminars, workshops, debates, lectures”, exhibitions and others in which how traditional wisdom is utilized in life is shown. As a result, the librarian has the responsibility of training the people in the local community to be able to use the contemporary technologies to assist in the invention and distribution of traditional wisdom. This will be in favour of the youth who understand the use of technology in general.

In oral societies, the dissemination of indigenous knowledge is practically completely by face-to-face communication which makes it very difficult for people to change in a comprehensive way parts of the indigenous knowledge. This also results in the transformations in its subject matter which are supplemented by the “homeostatic” development of being unable to call to mind and converting those parts of the indigenous knowledge to be no longer indispensable, or appropriate. On the contrary, well-educated people cannot just dispose of, engross or transfigure the past in the same way. Instead, with literate people, their associates are confronted with everlastingly documented forms of the ancient knowledge and its beliefs (Ayirebasia 2008).

The World Bank Report, the WCIP also identified other essential features of IK:

- “IK is exclusive to a given culture or society;
- It cannot easily be codified for fear of loss of some vital properties;
- IK is fluid and does not work in formal organisations because it is too unstructured
- IK is the life blood of a community” (World Bank 1998: n.d).

By the same token, Agrawal (1995: 9) identifies the following characteristics of IK:

- “IK is embedded in a particular community and exclusive to that community.
- People are dependent on this knowledge for survival.
- This type of knowledge does not conform to certain situation or surroundings because the indigenous people believe in a certain standard or ideal.
- There are no contradictions in what the indigenous people believe, no opposing or conflicting ideas in their belief system.
- These people are committed to and practise their knowledge systems on a daily basis. They live by these rules and laws and are governed by the elders in the community. These laws and rules do not change over time to suit a situation as they are deeply rooted in the belief system of the indigenous people”.

According to Youngblood and Henderson (2000), indigenous societies utilise spoken communication and practical knowledge such as for example traineeships, rituals, tradition, and more to maintain and transfer their knowhow. On the other hand, the new generation of societies are gradually

losing these talents, due to lack of enough time that they spend when attending to their studies because they spend more time at academic organisations, like for example, universities, colleges and other institutions of learning as compared to the time they spend learning from the traditional elders of their communities. “*Preservation of indigenous knowledge is critical, because it ensures the continuation of the community and its knowledge*” (Owiny et al. 2014: 236).

Lwoga et al. (2010), opine that “*poor attitudes, knowledge culture and personal characteristics (age, gender, status, wealth, political influence and so on) also affect perceptions, actions and access to knowledge in the local communities*” (p. 176).

This view was also expressed by Meyer (2009: 5) in her study and adds that “*information flow in an oral context is controlled by attitudes, perceptions, norms, values and belief systems inherent to indigenous people.*”

Regrettably for African librarians in Africa, this spoken information has been mainly abandoned in our libraries. Beforehand conservative librarianship has been comfortable with the final “dead end” of the researcher’s endeavour, that is, knowledge that has disseminated from spoken to audio periods, and ultimately to the printed book. In as far as the interviews are concerned, audition and documenting of actual confirmation, the African librarian has not exposed suitable attention (Iwuji 1989: 205).

Indigenous knowledge systems rotate about native community’s means of support in the fields of variety of “management, crop production, handcraft production, fishing, wild plants, primary healthcare, and herbal medicines” (Kgathi et al. 2007). According to Meyer (2009), numerous challenges have an effect on the documentation and distribution of native knowledge in as far as information dissemination in an oral situation is regulated by standpoints, insights, standards, principles and trust techniques fundamental to native folks.

### **Factors Affecting Dissemination of African Languages and Traditions**

The situation of nearly all libraries affects their accessibility to be weak because most of the people from the community will not be able to reach the place very often. On this issue, the

(LIS) Transformation charter (2014: 55) indicated that, "The location of many public libraries has been influenced by former apartheid spatial planning with the result that many areas, such as former townships, informal settlements and rural areas are under-served or not served at all. There are a number of municipalities where there are no libraries at all, a situation affecting more than two million people. Linked to the inequities flowing from geographical location is the historically uneven resourcing between established libraries in the suburbs, and those in townships and rural areas."

Indigenous Knowledge is more concerned with the sustenance of the long-lasting traditions from predecessors and its transmission to the next generations in diverse appearances. Therefore, the word Indigenous Knowledge has diverse synonyms such as, "traditional knowledge, local knowledge, community knowledge, rural peoples' knowledge, farmers' knowledge" (Mahalik and Mahapara 2010). As a result, this knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next through the word of mouth, more so the knowledge dies when the elder person who possessed the knowledge passes away.

"The information infrastructure in most developing countries has certain fundamental deficiencies. There is a lack of postal and telecommunication systems. Those that are available do not function properly. There is little funding, particularly foreign exchange, for the maintenance of channels of communication distribution. There is inadequate trained manpower and an absence of properly stocked libraries. In some of the developing countries, the morning newspaper arrives in the evening or the following day" (Adimorah and Ugoji 1997: 53).

The provision of relevant, current and timely information is hindered by the roads and bridges that are in very bad conditions. This is also aggravated by the fact that in the majority of rural villages, the villages are formed by the clusters of households of families that join together and form a village which makes it difficult for these villages to receive services let alone information services. Moreover, the advancement of technology in the information centers has also made things worse because in many rural areas, the information technology was not properly installed, while in some other parts of the country were not used due to technophobia (Adimorah and Ugoji 1997; Kota 2019).

In most of these countries there is no organised national information policy as such. Primary

information is provided directly by organised information agencies in developing countries, such as libraries, documentation centres and archives, broadcasting corporations, departments of information and telecommunication, culture, education, external affairs trade and commerce, industries, finance planning, tourism and government printers. This results in unnecessary duplication of effort, since these organised information agencies are not coordinated (Adimorah and Ugoji 1997).

According to Adimorah and Ugoji (1997) and Kota (2019), the change agents that are found in the rural areas regard information centers as opposing their availability which makes it difficult for libraries to operate effectively. Where these information centers are in use, they operate within that area.

As was revealed in the literature, Raju and Raju (2010) and Kota (2019) supported the issue of the use of technology in dissemination of traditional knowledge and stressed that many people in South Africa are unable to afford access to the internet and consequently, many turn to the library for internet access. Kota (2019) is of the opinion that a new method in creating prevailing and contemporary libraries is essential bearing in mind that there is unsatisfactory access to data, internet services and existing public facilities in South Africa. There has been substantial development in internet dissemination in South Africa, on the contrary the main problem is that only a small portion of the inhabitants benefit from internet access. Wild (2013) supported the above view and opines that the internet is expensive, in such a way that people in the community cannot afford the prices since the prices are way beyond the reach of the majority of the inhabitants in South Africa. Purchasing few data package is costly as compared to purchasing a huge data package.

Considering Indigenous Knowledge practices, the library professionals are responsible for the documentation of Indigenous Knowledge making use of recordings as well as visual documentation. In the meantime IK procedures are circulated by means of: "video, library website, print media, direct mail, public lectures, exhibitions and displays, and exchange" which is very frustrating to people who are used to exchanging information using their native language through the word of mouth (Adebayo and Adeyemo 2017). According to Greyling (2010), unlike in the developed countries where libraries play a vital role in disseminating

information, the situation in Africa is different from the situation in developed countries regarding the use of libraries as a result of scarce resources, inadequate utilisation of libraries by the community as a whole.

Malekani and Mubofu (2019) is of the opinion that insufficient capital in majority of the libraries irrespective of their type and nature are encountering monetary difficulties as a result of insufficient funds distributed for managing them. Again, this is confirmed by Lawal-Solarin (2016) who argues that notwithstanding all the responsibility performed by the libraries in sustaining excellence in academic activities, this result in unpleasant negligence of it in different third world countries, owing to certain intense problems that both community and public libraries encounter such as insufficient funds distributed for the smooth running of the libraries. Moreover, Lawal-Solarin (2016) opined that other issues comprise insufficient number of experienced librarians, inadequate space and non-ICT integrated libraries.

Regardless of the excellent functions performed by libraries, there is an unpleasant disregard of it in nearly all the developing countries, as a result of various factors like the insufficiency of finance, insufficient number of skilled librarians, shortage of current facilities, inadequate space and the absence of ICT incorporated libraries (Lawal-Solarin 2016). Apart from competition that the libraries encounter, there are also issues like the challenges with budget and personnel cuts together with a thrilling transformation in customer wants and anticipations (Koloniari et al. 2019).

### **Intellectual Property of Indigenous Knowledge**

According to Torsen and Anderson (2010), Copyright is the intellectual protection of the works of the authors which are found in different forms. Copyright comprises of many rights that are responsible of a variety of aspects depending on the situation in which copyright is applied.

Anderson (2010) stresses that native citizens believe in the fact that in as far as the intellectual property is concerned, they are entitled to legitimate rights to most of the issues that are concerned with safeguarding intellectual property laws. It is also understandable that according to Anderson (2010), with regards to intellectual property law, the indigenous people are more concerned with the unsuitable practice of cultural artefacts, ceremonies, initiation

events symbols and may cause transgression to that specific society responsible to those cultural activities.

The other challenge is that people owning the traditional knowledge are mostly illiterate, they cannot read and write, while on the other hand from the scientific viewpoint, for one to be considered as the owner of knowledge, for example, a plant used for making medicine to heal a certain type of illness, should also possess the written documents documenting the chemical formula.

Anand (2009) indicated that the major challenge with regards to traditional knowledge is the way in which it is spoken. Traditional knowledge is usually communicated through the local language which is unique to that particular community. It is communicated via relative members from one generation to the next. Therefore, it is more likely that the wisdom be overlooked and gets lost as time goes and when the individual owning that wisdom passes away or grows older in such a way that he loses memory due to aging. According to Nakata and Langton (2005), "Libraries may not have time or resources to find IK in existing collections and to find people to provide information to give access to it". Moreover, the traditional knowledge may also cause problems with regards "how are the material to be identified, copied, organised. Stored, and retrieved" for us by a particular community (Nakata and Langton 2005).

Arantes (2010) revealed that documentation, similar to some social practice be appropriate to a certain cultural world and is steered by trust, regulations as well as benefits not essentially disclosed shared by societies whose tradition it depicts. Owing to credentials, it is possible to investigate whether results for a problem at hand can be associated with a different country or time. Credentials enable the sharing of knowledge as well as a method of protecting IK (Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CEFIKS) 2006). Moreover, credentials of IK enhance preoccupation of information for comprehensive enquiry and possession by the author. To prevent loss of indigenous wisdom it needs to be well recorded, investigated as well as circulated.

### **Statement of Problem**

Considering the factors affecting the generation and dissemination of knowledge in African languages and tradition in the library, it appears that



the transmission of indigenous knowledge is affected by the foreign and postcolonial wisdom that does not take into consideration the cultural wisdom as well as the intentional or involuntary destruction of community wisdom. On the other hand, this knowledge is in vulnerability of vanishing if appropriate actions are not devoted to record, reserve, and make it approachable to existing generations as well as to forthcoming generations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the factors that affect the creation and distribution of African languages and tradition in the library.

### **Research Question**

What are the factors that affect the generation and dissemination of African languages and tradition in the library?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method employed for this paper was examined via a systematic literature review by making use of a mixture of both the contextual and conceptual review methods. A considerate and informed analysis of appropriate literature positions the researcher in a background of conflicting study. Data were gathered through various sources such as the databases, internet, books, journals, magazines and newspapers. The following databases were used to search information: Google scholar, Ebscohost, Open Access resources, Eric and databases. Literature carefully searched was purposely centred on the thematic areas taken from the specific objectives of the study.

## **RESULTS**

The findings indicate that there is a need to take into consideration the importance of preserving the indigenous knowledge joining hands with the other structures found in the community. Community libraries and public libraries can be a perfect fit for preserving and disseminating IK to the community as a whole. According to Durban (2017), elders in the society should be regarded important in the preservation of both the language and traditional knowledge by encouraging them

to contribute in the process. Moreover, personnel in the public and community libraries can also contribute in the protection of language and tradition by linking it on the websites.

The establishment and development of social media technologies generate recent chances for promotion organisations, corporations, NGOs, and communication organisations, incorporating schools and libraries, to team up with rural populations. It is visualized that when time goes on the African librarians will form an association so as to keep in pace with the current progresses taking place in the area of librarianship.

In rural Africa, cooperation concerning libraries, Non-Governmental Organisations, as well as the advancement establishments that provide contemporary technologies like for example, social media, Internet access and out-dated technologies like fax, telephone, and video may possibly be an economical version for recording, storing, and disseminating indigenous knowledge sources.

To facilitate societies to generate, retrieve, and distribute information, both librarians and information organisations require original training and continuing specialised training concerning the significance of indigenous knowledge as well as how to record indigenous knowledge making use of social media and outdated technologies.

The information suppliers have to acknowledge the services of both the libraries and librarians. They should also engage them in the distribution of information to rural area. Rural library should be well equipped with radios, televisions as well as the backup generators for the utilization of electronic resources. As a result, this will facilitate the librarian to purchase and disseminate up-to-date information for people in living in villages.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study found that the fast-growing utilization of social media as well as mobile technologies establishes chances of arranging native and global relationships that can enable the procedure of generating, handling, conserving, and distributing of information and expertise that are exceptional to societies in the African continent (Owiny et al. 2014).

As a result of the availability and accessibility of the new technology, some indigenous peoples have taken advantage of these new technologies

that include “ICTs; for example, by using digital video and audio recording devices and Internet technologies to capture, store and retrieve aspects of their arts, language and understanding” (Oppenheimer 2010: 77). It is not surprising that Durodolu and Mojapelo (2020) stressed how the unavailability of technology in South Africa can be a challenge in the dissemination of important information.

Other factors influencing the dissemination of traditional knowledge are the processes utilized by indigenous people to safeguard their particular works. This is in harmony with literature that the protection of cultural innovative terminologies is one of the main challenges because copyright is “Eurocentric”, in which it is more concerned with individuality and material, which oppose the traditional and indigenous social customs (Greyling and McNulty 2011; Balogun and Kalusopa 2021). However, the most important purposes for the encouragement of protection of native traditional knowledge is to avoid the wisdom from being manipulated through assumption for the purpose of monetary gains by the World Intellectual Property Organization who do not form part of the indigenous community (Masango 2010).

In as far as Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights is concerned, this view is supported by several others who believe that indigenous knowledge poses critical challenges that are associated with copyright and intellectual property rights in as far as the gathering, conservation as well as provision of access to Indigenous Knowledge (Balogun and Kalusopa 2021; Okore et al. 2009; Anyira et al. 2010; Adeniyi and Subair 2013). Against this background, it is understandable that as a result of technology such as electronic management, storage and distribution of traditional wisdom has resulted in matters of copyright and intellectual property rights becoming more complicated and difficult. Occasionally, it becomes challenging to find out the possession of traditional knowledge.

Therefore it is not strange that the absence of expert librarians, specifically those who have the know-how and commitment to integrate oral culture in both the library sources and facilities to rural societies, establishes knowledge gaps as well as further restricts the reach concerning library services in countryside in Africa. On the contrary, libraries are regarded as the traditional tower of strength of any organization and community as they

disseminate values and beliefs from one generation to the next. Therefore, libraries are considered as refuges of every information. Unfortunately the responsibility of the librarian in Africa, has been restricted in the extent that librarians have to be active in as far as already organised knowledge and information overlooking the native knowledge which is in abundance of the societies in which they function (Tapfumaneyi and Rupande 2013).

Yunnus (2017) is of the opinion that Africa is faced with the most important undertaking, that of the establishment of maintainable approaches to conserve and disseminate native knowledge. Wilk (n.d.) is of the opinion that, traditional skill and knowledge is not stagnant, it is vigorous, and supported by means of frequent invention as well as investigation. Consequently, the endeavours at technology transmission that “*ignore local circumstances, local technologies, and local systems of knowledge are often doomed to waste enormous amount of time and resources*” (Wilk n.d. 2). By the same token, the ongoing disappearance of indigenous knowledge systems in African societies embracing indigenous medical knowledge may possibly curtail from the fact that people, typically the senior citizens in the societies are the storehouse of traditional medical knowledge. This type of knowledge is disseminated through the oral communication from the teacher, the possessor of the knowledge to the apprentice who usually is the member of the family. Nonetheless, since this knowledge is stored in human mind and is not documented in a tangible source, it is easily lost when the person possessing it dies (Masango 2019; Anyaoku et al. 2015).

Anwar (2010) emphasised that, the Information Management occupation that concentrates in establishing human knowledge as well as an information means for clients are properly situated to contribute extremely in indigenous knowledge protection from recognition to utilization. Contemporary instruments and methods are supposed to be established by the professionals so as to meet the requirements of Indigenous Knowledge management. Libraries can play the paramount role in as far as the indigenous knowledge concerning oral history is concerned.

There are a number of factors that influence the library’s participation in as far as recording oral works is concerned which in turn make such contribution compulsory. Supporters acknowledge that the librarian has professional shortcomings in

managing of verbal knowledge. This is consistent with literature that, the promoters of the library's contribution in recording oral writings also acknowledge the financial restrictions that have an effect on numerous libraries and understand completely the continuous growing variety of accountabilities that have to be borne (Mbilyini and Mwabungulu 2020; Anwar 2010; Alemna 1993).

It is also apparent that the most conventional method used for acquiring the traditional information is by means of face to face settings as well as the formation of networks with the community leadership making use of contemporary technologies. It is therefore understandable that, regardless of the compliance of the librarians to acquire and record traditional wisdom, there are problems, like for example, absence of suitable apparatus to acquire indigenous knowledge as well as scarcity of adequate finances to finalize several partly employed projects concerning Indigenous Knowledge "(editing videos and consolidating them into a one complete film)" (Mbilyini and Mwabungulu 2020; Jain and Jibril 2016).

At some point in the process of teaching the peoples, individuals accountable for the oration is supposed to try to influence and persuade members of the societies that knowledge of how indigenous traditional knowledge would benefit the community is important since it could curtail 'third parties' from abusing their knowledge (Masango 2010). Ebijuwasi (2015: 8) opines that "*libraries should look beyond collection development and show the need for a service which is more relevant to indigenous communities*".

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there is a challenge in as far as the dissemination of language and traditions using libraries. Several factors affecting the smooth dissemination of language and tradition in the library were also indicated. This knowledge is vulnerable because it is stored in human mind and when the person who possess that knowledge dies, the knowledge dies too. These findings could also be indispensable to national and regional organisations responsible for reducing the charges of creating, preserving and disseminating indigenous knowledge. There is a rising agreement that traditional wisdom knowledge is critical to the community and financial advancement of Africa.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature discussed above, regarding factors affecting the generation and dissemination of African languages and tradition in the library the researchers recommend the following:

It is recommended that traditional languages be utilized for mass media broadcasting and television news to empower rural inhabitants comprehend the meaning well since investigation has revealed that several village folks are illiterate cannot read or write; that up-to-date and out-of-date information acquisition and broadcasting channels should be utilized by information representative operating in the remote villages. The librarian must research and be accustomed to each portions of the communication sequence, starting from the foundation of documented information, via its dissemination, its dispensation as a result of numerous kinds of organisations, and its ultimate integration and application.

### LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to those factors that affect the creation and dissemination of African languages and tradition only in libraries. Therefore, the study pursues to share light on the availability and the vulnerability of indigenous knowledge. Only indigenous knowledge is covered in this study.

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**Paper received for publication in April, 2021**

**Paper accepted for publication in September, 2021**