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The Importance of Libraries in African Languages and Traditions in Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT Libraries play an important role in as far as knowledge generation, conservation and dissemination of the traditional African knowledge is concerned. Moreover, the development of internet infrastructure in the remote communities advanced the ability of the rural people to interject to the existing body of knowledge. The paper underlines the challenges encountered in documenting the African traditional knowledge using African languages. The importance of libraries in the generation and dissemination of knowledge is accentuated. The 'Traditional knowledge' is used changeably with 'Indigenous Knowledge' in this paper. This paper used the systemic literature review method making use of the background and theoretical review methods. The study recommended that African languages be popularized, so as to make them familiar in disseminating the indigenous knowledge. African languages as well as other western languages should be equally used to generate, store, and circulate Indigenous Knowledge. The purpose of the paper was to review the existing literature on how creation, preservation and dissemination of indigenous African knowledge can be facilitated by the utilization of libraries. Moreover, the employment of internet infrastructure in rural areas will provide the rural people with the opportunity to make a tremendous contribution to the body of knowledge available. The paper also highlights the challenges that are related to the documentation of indigenous knowledge in African languages. The role of library and information professionals are also emphasized. The paper contends that the languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible inheritance. Using indigenous knowledge in development enterprises enables indigenous peoples and local communities to actively participate in the decision-making process. 'Traditional knowledge' is used changeably with 'Indigenous knowledge' in this paper. The method used for this paper was investigated through a systematic literature review by utilizing a combination of both the contextual and conceptual review methods. The study recommends that the African Indigenous Languages be utilized in mass media like radios, televisions and newspapers to allow the rural community/society to comprehend the message being communicated appropriately, considering that most of the people in the rural areas are unable to read and write. That, libraries should be utilized in acquiring, storing and disseminating indigenous knowledge in both the African and other languages to enable access to the knowledge by all.