

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS

LIBRARIES AS TOOLS FOR POLICY FORMULATION AND
TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN NIGERIA

TANKO AHMED fwc

Volume No.3 Issue No.2 June 2014

www.iresearcher.org

ISSN 227-7471

THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL "INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS"

www.iresearcher.org

© 2014 (individual papers), the author(s)

© 2014 (selection and editorial matter)

This publication is subject to that author (s) is (are) responsible for Plagiarism, the accuracy of citations, quotations, diagrams, tables and maps.

All rights reserved. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the applicable copyright legislation, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher. For permissions and other inquiries, please contact

editor@iresearcher.org

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS is peer-reviewed, supported by rigorous processes of criterion-referenced article ranking and qualitative commentary, ensuring that only intellectual work of the greatest substance and highest significance is published.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS is indexed in wellknown indexing diectories



with ICV value 5.90



Directory of Research Journals Indexing

and monitor by



LIBRARIES AS TOOLS FOR POLICY FORMULATION AND TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN NIGERIA

TANKO AHMED

Senior Fellow, Security & Strategic Studies Department, Research Directorate,
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru-Jos, NIGERIA

(NIGERIA)

ta_mamuda@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The 'modern library' has advanced beyond the traditional repository for books and associated materials to an interactive institution of the knowledge and information age. Library services are indispensable in the data-dependent process of 'policy formulation' as Governments embark on unique approaches to service delivery for national development. The Goodluck Administration has made its stance in a 'transformation agenda' to move the country forward. Situating the theme 'Strengthening Institutional Frameworks and the Transformation Agenda in Nigeria' within the hardcore function and activity of the National Institute, this paper treats the triad of 'modern library', 'policy formulation' and 'transformation agenda' in conceptual construct. The paper addresses the three concepts in relation to required library services; effective policy formulation process; and a result oriented transformation agenda, with recommendations and strategies for implementation. Its findings include the omission of 'knowledge and information processes' on the list of 'enablers for development and inadequate dissemination of periodic reports to critical policy Centres, like the NIPSS Library. The paper recommends that regular review of the main transformation agenda be conducted in order to strengthen the programme for effective thrust and calls for timely dissemination of periodic Reports to critical agencies, like the National Institute Library.

Key Words: Library; Policy Formulation; Transformation Agenda

1. INTRODUCTION

'... *Policy presupposes knowledge ...*' – Muhammad-Bande (2013)

Background

The modern library, as information repository and processor, has assumed a rightful and critical status of an 'institution', even surpassing the Media in the 'ranking', particularly in provision and processing of secondary data. It is a data-based societal institution and the 'nerve centre' for all intellectual activities, delivering its services faster and wider, on the platform of the information and communication technology (ICT) revolution.

The modern library is, therefore, a home-based agency for all professions and activities, including policy formulation in the new 'knowledge based' society. Policy formulation is the development of policy or steps taken to improve the effectiveness of existing process by which governments translate their political visions into programmes and actions to deliver outcome, or transformation. Transformation agenda usually aims at complete change of situations from one form to another with a view to improving them.

Literature on library services (Line and Line, 1979; Young, 1983; Allen, 1984; Lor and Sonnekus, 1997) emphasize on 'information management' in strengthening knowledge and ideas in all human endeavour. Aberman et al (2009) expound policy formulation on ideas of power by policymakers and power of ideas by research or knowledge workers; and Imobighe (2011) ties transformation agenda to effective change, based on sound policy circle. The correlation of the library, policy formation and transformation agenda warrants that 'policy presupposes knowledge' (Muhammad-Bande, 2013). This paper builds on the hypothesis that 'efficient *library services* provide knowledge and ideas as input or precondition for sound *policy formulation* process that is needed for an effective *transformation agenda*'.

Statement of the Problem

The 'modern library' has advanced beyond a traditional repository for books and associated materials to an interactive institution in the information communication technology (ICT) revolution. Within this premise, library services are indispensable to the information-based process of 'policy formulation' in full circle. Governments come and go with their unique approach to service delivery in the general development of the nation and its citizenry, the present regime has made its stance in the mobilizing echoes of the 'transformation agenda'. Situating the theme 'Strengthening Institutional Frameworks and the Transformation Agenda in Nigeria' beneath the hardcore function and activity of the National Institute. This paper treats the triad of 'modern library', 'policy formulation' and 'transformation agenda' in conceptual construction. It discusses libraries as tools for policy formulation and transformation agenda in Nigeria with the following points of inquiry and objectives:

Points of Inquiry

1. What are the concepts and relationships of libraries, policy formulation and transformation agenda?
2. What roles do libraries play in policy formulation?
3. Why are libraries considered as tools for policy formulation in the Transformation Agenda in Nigeria?
4. What is the way forward?

Objectives

1. Define and correlate the concepts of library services, policy formulation and transformation agenda;
2. Establish the role of library services in policy formulation;
3. Discuss libraries as tools for policy formulation in Transformation agenda in Nigeria;
4. Proffer recommendations and strategies for their implementation on the way forward.

Significance of the Study

This paper is designed as an integral part of a thematic seminar on the contributions of the NIPSS Library in pursuance of the main theme of the NIPSS Senior Executive Course No. 35 – 2013: '*Strengthening Institutional*

Frameworks and the Transformation Agenda in Nigeria. Its significance rests on its impact of library services that is central to the statutory functions of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies; and the multiplier effect on policy options and leadership training for the NIPSS participants in particular, and the nation at large. A salient and critical aspect of this particular theme is its reflection of NIPSS's role and contributions in the annals of public service in Nigeria; as it is through this process that the thinking capacity of senior public and private sector officers are enhanced.

Methodology and Structure

As a mainly 'conceptual work' the paper employs the use of secondary data obtained through library research, selective interviews with experts and the Internet, from which deductions are made to arrive at articulated assumptions on the theme at hand. The paper is structured into six main sections, which includes an Introduction, with background, problem statement and guiding questions; conceptual discourse, on the key terms of library, policy formulation and transformation agenda; and modern libraries in policy formulation process. Other sections include the transformation agenda in Nigeria; modern libraries as tools for policy formulation and Transformation Agenda in Nigeria; and conclusion consisting of summary, recommendations and strategies for implementation.

5. CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Modern Library

A **library** refers to an organized collection of information resources made accessible to a defined community for reference, providing physical or digital material in a **physical** or a **virtual space**, or both (Allen, 1984). Modern libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources, as they extend services beyond the physical walls of a building. They provide materials and services accessible by electronic means and assistance by librarians in navigating and analyzing very large amounts of information with a variety of digital tools.

A library can be established, acquired or organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, a corporation, or a private individual. **Public and institutional collections and services** may be intended for use by people who choose not to—or cannot afford to—purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material that no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs; create favourable environment for studying; offer common areas to facilitate group work and collaboration; and make available facilities for access to electronic resources and the Internet.

A **national** or **state library** serves as a **national repository** of information, and has the right of legal deposit, which is a legal requirement that publishers in the country need to deposit at least, a copy of each of their publications with the library. There are wider definitions of a national library, putting less emphasis to the repository character (Line and Line, 1979; Lor and Sonnekus, 1997). The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) discusses common tasks, defines and promotes common standards and carries out projects

helping libraries across the world to perform their duties. The first national libraries had their origins in the collections of the sovereign or some other supreme body of the state.

A **research library** is collection of materials on one or more subjects (Young, 1983) in support of scholarly or scientific research, with primary as well as secondary sources. Large university libraries are also considered as research libraries and belong to the Association of Research Libraries <http://www.arl.org>. **Special libraries** in the direct service of public policies or government agenda, like the Transformation Agenda, include all the libraries, data bases or any form of collections of materials in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). One outstanding source in this category is at the National Planning Commission, where the formulation and coordination of the Transformation Agenda takes place. The uniqueness of the **National Institute library** obtains from its combination of national, research and special library features. It is particularly critical in this aspect, being the repository and information processing centre for the national policy and strategic studies, therefore serving as the main hub for policy formulation in Nigeria.

Policy Formulation

Policy is generally considered as a principle of behaviour or conduct, thought to be desirable or necessary, especially as formally expressed by a government or other authoritative body. The Network for Information and Digital Access (NIDA) defines a **policy** as a plan of action or a statement of aims and objectives providing a framework for practice and developed with the intention to guide, influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters (NIDA, 2011). **Policy formulation** is the development of certain policy or review of existing policies for better results, as policies are made, executed or reviewed in a process that includes setting of goals or agenda formulation, adaptation, implementation and evaluation. Imobighe (2011) explains **policy formulation stage** to involve the definition or clarification of goals; description of trends; analysis of conditions; projection of future developments; evaluation and selection of alternatives; and choosing the preferred option.

Policy formulation is a 'data dependent' process without which the services of libraries, the goals of all policies cannot be set, articulated, implemented or reviewed. Corkery (1995) identified ten critical stages of policy formation as follows:

1. Issue / problem identification;
2. Search for causes of issues / problems;
3. Fact gathering and analysis, including linkages with other policy areas;
4. Identification of options to address issues / problems;
5. Process of choice of preferred policy option;
6. Specification of policy objectives;
7. Design of implementation strategies;
8. Process of policy decision making;
9. Existence and use of monitoring and feedback mechanisms; and
10. Policy review and reformulation

According to Corkery, by paying attention to the policy formulation process and anticipating how obstacles will be met and overcome, the process will have more quality, relevance, acceptability and effectiveness. Adding that,

policy framework is critical in determining the performance of government programmes as development of a country depends on the quality of the process involved in policy formulation (Corkery, et al, 1995)

Transformation Agenda

Transformation is the act of transforming or effecting change from one form, substance, nature, or state into another in which variables or coordinates are substituted in order to effect transformation. An **agenda** is a list of items to be done in specific order including time frame; or matters needing attention in a particular manner of execution. A **transformation agenda** is expressed in simple mathematical equation in which a problem, situation or condition is transformed into another equation which is an answer or desired result, for it to be solved. For example:

Given the two equations $x + y = 6$ and $x = 2y$, the first equation can be transformed into $2y + y = 6$ by substituting $2y$ for x . The equation $2y + y = 6$ only contains one variable and thus can be solved: adding the y terms together yields $3y = 6$, and dividing the terms on each side of the equals sign by 3 gives $y = 2$ (Encarta, 2008).

Applied to real world situation the two equations represent two conditions of 'before' and 'after' in a process conducted by means of articulated planning or *policy* and execution of change or *transformation*. This is the nature of the relationship or correlation between *policy formulation* and the *transformation agenda* in which policy makers propose courses of action to address issues.

6. THE MODERN LIBRARY IN POLICY FORMULATION

Policy Formulation and Information

In the 'knowledge-policy' landscape, Jones (2009) explains that the link between knowledge and policy in development is determined by the following three paradigms:

1. **Rational** - which holds that the relationship is essentially 'knowledge driven' as knowledge provides instrumental input that serve to improve policy; and that policy making works in 'problem solving' mode based on logic and reason;
2. **Pluralism and Opportunism** - challenging the rationality of the policy process as involving pragmatic decisions based on multiple factors in the face of uncertainty; that knowledge incorporation in policy is generally 'good'; and
3. **Politics and Legitimization** - indicates that power is infused throughout the knowledge process from generation to uptake; that knowledge reflects and sustains power and therefore useful in policy process.

It suffices then to establish that at the policy formulation stage knowledge plays a role in structuring various alternative policy options and in suggesting the causal links between the policy and its outcomes. For example, Aberman et al, (2009) point out that the Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) supports the implementation of Nigeria's national development plans by strengthening policies and strategies through:

1. Enhanced knowledge, information, data, and tools for the analysis, design, and implementation of pro-poor, gender-sensitive, and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and strategies in Nigeria;
2. Strengthened capacity for government agencies, research institutions, and other stakeholders to carry out and use applied research that directly informs agricultural and rural policies and strategies; and
3. Improved communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries on agricultural and rural development policy issues (Aberman et al, 2009).

This is further inferred by Nwosu and Ogbomo (2010), that national development channeled by transformation agenda in policy format is very much influenced by available knowledge and information. That is, for the transformation agenda in Nigeria to be effective, it has to be carried on the platform of knowledge and information services conducted by the library, particularly national, research, or special libraries, including the National Institute Library.

4. TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN NIGERIA

The Transformation Agenda was launched on Thursday, 2 February 2011 as the Goodluck Administration's attempt to curtail lack of continuity, consistency and commitment, known as the 3Cs, by means of prioritizing policies, programmes and projects in short-, medium- and long-term perspectives. It covers the period 2011 to 2015 and draws inspiration from the Vision 20-2020 and the First National Implementation Plan (NIP). A Presidential Committee is charged with responsibilities for:

1. identifying key policies, programmes and projects to be delivered within the four year period of 2011-2015;
2. Phase the projects and programmes to ensure that they inform the Administration's future budget proposals during 2012; and
3. Propose a suitable monitoring mechanism for identified projects and programmes, including regular presentation by Ministers to the Federal Executive Council on their relevant areas of activity.

The driving force for monitoring and evaluation framework of the transformation agenda is the National Planning Commission, which is encased in the entire government bureaucratic machinery. The Report also cited the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in tracking priority policies, projects and programmes and the compilation, production and dissemination of annual, bi-annual and quarterly reports, which are critical to the role of Libraries in policy formulation. The Transformation Agenda is a policy subject to the formulation process that is data-dependent beneficial of information service delivery that is found in the functions of modern library, particularly specialized (and critical) libraries like the National Institute Library. In the Nigerian policy arena, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) holds the statutory mandate for policy research; training of policymakers; and information processing service on policy matters, including the publication and dissemination of policy related materials.

As the main thrust of this work is 'knowledge and information' based, it is observed at this stage that information processing service was not particularly cited on the list of *enablers* for growth and development in the

Transformation Agenda Report (p. 19). This could be detrimental to the curtailing of lack of continuity, consistency and commitment or the 3Cs, as earlier expressed by the Government.

4. MODERN LIBRARIES AS TOOLS FOR POLICY FORMULATION AND TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN NIGERIA

Librarians, as information professionals, deliver expertise in monitoring, regulating, shaping and implementing knowledge-based activities, thus libraries know and understand what information to be provided to meet the needs of the government for developing the nation (Basri et al, 2012). Libraries support planned actions, like transformation agenda, by providing access to universal information to carry out social, economic and political activities in the course of achieving development goals of nations (Pajaro and Betancourt, 2007). They play the important role as providers of electronic information and access points; and act as gateways to knowledge and information resources on the global information superhighways.

But, not all governments are able to see the importance of libraries as they lack understanding of the value of information, making it necessary for Librarians to help improve government's appreciation of information and the role it plays (Owen et al, 2012). Weaknesses in the overall transformation agenda pertaining information processing services associated with the utilization of library services – non-inclusion in the list of enablers for growth and development; absence of annual, bi-annual and quarterly reports in key libraries like that of the National Institute (Mamman, 2013) involved in a full-year policy and strategic study on the transformation agenda. This gap alone suffices to weaken the thrust of the transformation agenda.

5. CONCLUSION

Modern libraries are critical agencies for knowledge and information services required for policy formulation and transformation agenda. This paper establishes that efficient *library services* provide knowledge and ideas as input or precondition for sound *policy formulation* process needed for an effective *transformation agenda*. The Transformation Agenda of the Goodluck's Administration is a **policy** subject to formulation process; and data-dependent as well as beneficial to information services found in national, research and specialized libraries, like the National Institute Library.

It is however observed that knowledge and information processing services were omitted on the list of **enablers** for growth and development in the Transformation Agenda Report. This could be detrimental to the curtailing of lack of **continuity, consistency and commitment**, or the 3Cs, as earlier expressed and upheld by the Government, against the principle that 'policy presupposes knowledge.

It is, therefore, highly recommended that regular review of the main transformation agenda be conducted in order to strengthen the programme for effective thrust. A way to do this is to make sure that the various annual, bi-annual and quarterly reports meant for monitoring and review of the programme should be adequately and timely distributed to relevant information processing service Centres, like the National Institute Library for use in policy formulation and review.

References:

- Aberman, N; E. Schiffer; M. Johnson; and V. Oboh (2009), 'Mapping the Policy Process in Nigeria: Examining Linkages between Research and Policy', *Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) Background Paper No. NSSP-012, November*
- Allen, R. E. (1984), 'The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English'. Oxford: Clarendon Press; p. 421.
- Basri, M; Yusof, Z. M; and Zin, N. A. M. (2012), 'Information Policy: The Diminishing Role of Library', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol. 2, No. 19 (Special Issue), October.*
- Corkery, J; Land, A; and Bossyt, J (1995), 'The Process of Policy Formulation: Path or Institutional Maze?' Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management.
- Encarta (2009), 'Transformation (Mathematics)', *Microsoft Encarta*, [DVD] Redmond: Microsoft Corporation, 2008
- Imobighe, T. A. (2011), 'The Nature of Policy and Strategy: A Brief Explanation of Kuru's Bi-Focal Programme', Lecture Brief to NIPSS Senior Executive Course No. 33, February 14.
- Jones, H. (2009), 'Policy-Making as Discourse: A Review of Recent Knowledge-to-Policy Literature', A Joint IKM Emergent – ODI Working Paper, No. 5, August Retrieved from www.wiki.ikemergent.net/files/090911-ikm-working-paper-5-policy-making-as-discourse-pdf on 7 December 2013
- Line, M. B.; and Line, J. (1979), 'Concluding notes', *National libraries*, Aslib, pp. 317–318
- Lewin, D. (1986), 'Music Theory, Phenomenology and Modes of Perception', *Music Perception* 3, Pp. 327-392
- _____ (1987), 'Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations', New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- _____ (1991), 'Some Problems and Resources of Music Theory', *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, 5/2, Pp. 111-132.
- Lor, P. J.; Sonnekus, E. A. S. (1997), 'Guidelines for Legislation for National Library Services', IFLA; Assessed 1 September 2013.
- Muhammad-Bande, T. (2013), 'Graduation Address' at the Graduation Ceremony of the Senior Executive Course No. 35-2013, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), November 23
- Mamman, E. S. (2013) Institute Librarian, NIPSS, Kuru confirmed that no quarterly Reports sent to NIPSS, December 18th.
- Network for Information and Digital Access (NIDA) (2011) 'NIDA Supporting Societies' Needs: A Model Framework for Developing Library Policy', A Publication of the Network for Information and Digital Access (NIDA). Retrieved from www.nida-net.org on 18 November 2013
- NPC (2011), The National Planning Commission, Federal Government of Nigeria, Abuja.
- Nwosu, O. and Ogbomo, E. F. (2010), 'The Impact of the Information Society on the Library and Information Science Profession', *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal): Paper 436. Retrieved from <http://libphilprac/436> on 16 December 2013
- Owen, B. B; Cooke, L. and Matthews, G. (2012), 'Information Policymaking in the United Kingdom: The Role of the Information Professional', *Journal of Information Policy*, 2:51-78.

- Pajaro, R. and Betancourt, V. (2007), 'What is a National Information Policy' in Abali, I. F. (Ed), Building National Information Policies: Experiences in Latin America', Kingston: UNESCO, Pp. 20-27
- Young, H. (1983), '*ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science*', Chicago: American Library Association. p. 188
<http://www.arl.org>. Association of Research Libraries (ARL); Retrieved on 21 September 2013