

LIBRARY SERVICES, INNOVATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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CHAPTER TWO

APPRAISING THE ROLES OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CONTENDING THE SPIRAL EFFECTS OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

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Introduction

In recent times, the world is severely affected by series of unwanted events and happenings, and one of such happenings is the outbreak of Coronavirus, commonly known as Covid-19. Coronavirus pandemic is both catastrophic and a threat to life, existence, global economic sustainability and all other facets of the society. It is said to be a high-dimensional global public health challenge, only comparable to the World War 2 in gravity and cruelty (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020a). Coronavirus pandemic brings fear to the aged, the young, the sick and the hearty. It submerged the supremacy of developed countries and does not spare the helplessness of the third world nations such as Nigeria. In the school system, globally, Coronavirus pandemic could pose real threats to all aspect of academic activities, even as witnessed in the closure of schools and other public institutions during the early stage of the outbreak of the disease occasioned by government directed lockdown.

Following the ease of the lockdown, which hits the world as a parameter to curtail the spread of the virus, Nigeria was still cautious in all areas including calling of students back to schools in the later part of the year 2020. At present, Nigeria is battling with what is popularly called "Delta Variant of Covid-19" which has been described by the WHO (2021) as the most transmissible variant. It is equally noted that the Delta variant of the Covid-19 is as contagious as chickenpox, as one infected person carries the potential of infecting eight or nine more, just as the strain had shown its efficacy in infecting younger people as against the older strains of the virus (Sadiq, 2021). The Delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2, is said to be the dominant form of the virus, responsible for India's explosive outbreak and also more transmissible (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control [NCDC], 2021; Sadiq, 2021). Thus, with this brutal public health emergency, school libraries have greater roles to play in contending the spiral effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The threatening effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on **education**, especially to the life of school children, **teachers** and other staff, cannot be ignored. The need for **constant** dissemination of information by the school **libraries** to acquaint the school community of the **symptoms**, mode of transmission of the virus, as well as **other** consequences of the Coronavirus disease to health **and** education is highly recommended. By observation, **this** need is far from being met thus, creating giving room **for** high level of misinformation and disinformation **among** different groups of people including pupils,

students, teachers, and the school community. It is disheartening that even in the face of serious global and national emergency, there was and still no clear record of the school libraries efforts towards disseminating information to curtail the spiral effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Given the above background, this study seeks to examine the generic concept of school libraries, and the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The roles of school libraries in contending the effects of Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges militating against such roles are also discussed. Again, the study proposes practical measures that could be adopted by school libraries to contend the effects of Covid-19 pandemic even in the face of serious national and global emergency.

Conceptualizing School Libraries

School libraries are essential organs for reading development and for effective dissemination of information through which teaching and learning are accomplished. Oriogu (2015) defines school libraries as libraries established in nursery, primary and post-primary schools to support and encourage learning and teaching activities. The establishment of school libraries is aimed at meeting the information needs of pupils, students and staff of the schools. School libraries are often managed by a school librarian or media specialist. They facilitate the collection, processing, dissemination, preservation, and conservation of information resources. According to Nwachi, et al (2020), school libraries are typically established as part and parcel of the school system to

provide a range of learning opportunities and resources for students, teachers and other staff for the purpose of enhancing the intellectual content, information literacy, cultural and social development.

School libraries function as the central hub for all of the information resources available for the school community in books, films, pictures, recorded sound, periodicals, realia and digital media, which are not only for the education, enjoyment and entertainment of the students and other members of the school community, but also to enhance and expand the school's curriculum (Hassen, 2016). School libraries facilitate the integration of resources in a variety of formats such as books, periodicals, databases, audiovisual materials, websites, digital video segments, podcasts, blog and wiki content, digital images, and virtual classrooms for easy access to information on various issues including the Coronavirus pandemic (Adigun, et al, 2020). School libraries are very essential part of any school system as the information bank of the schools which facilitate the spread or transfer of information and knowledge on any subject which the school community has interest.

The conception wisely alludes to the fact that school libraries are linchpin in spreading information targeted at sensitizing the school community on the Coronavirus pandemic from various sources and through relevant media. This validates the broad spectrum of the definition of school libraries by Morris (2013), which conceives school library media/resource centers as libraries within a school (pre-primary, primary or post-primary) where

students, staff and often, parents of public or private schools have access to a variety of information carrying resources on various subject matters. They supplement and complement the teaching of the school children and cater for children who are eager to read and also for backward children who read with difficulty, and who require visual aids, and all kinds of incentives to study (Uzuegbu & Ibiyemi, 2013). The prime goal of school libraries is to develop information literate pupils, students and teachers or school communities who are responsible and ethical participants in the society. The goal is achieved through constant provision of platforms or systems in a bid to meet the information needs of school community members.

It is equally imperative to consider school libraries as catalysts for enhancing and improving teaching, learning, information dissemination and understanding. They serve as the pillars for promoting and encouraging reading habits of the students and sharpening students' ability to learn and become independent and critical learners (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions [IFLA], 2015). As a matter of fact, producing independent and critical learners through the instrumentality of the school libraries facilitate the ease of information assimilation on diverse issues of global importance such as the Coronavirus pandemic. This is typical because school libraries facilitate the passion for self-development in students and teachers. Therefore, school libraries play active role in helping pupils, students, teachers and other members of the school community to cultivate reading habit through which they

harness their cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and developmental ability while broadening their sense of inquisitiveness about emergency situations such as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Overview of Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

Coronavirus disease is a global public health challenge which has come to live with the people across nations of the world with devastating effects. According to the World Health Organization [WHO], (2020b), Coronavirus pandemic is a public health emergency of global concern. Covid-19 disease is a flu-like illness caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome, with an unknown acute respiratory disease that spreads mainly through the respiratory tract (WHO, 2020c). It is a viral infection that causes respiratory illness (Riou & Althaus, 2020; WHO, 2020c). It is further clarified that Coronaviruses are large families of respiratory viruses that can cause illness in people and animals; a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose (WHO, 2020c; International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers [IAMAT], 2020).

Coronavirus, commonly known as Covid-19 is a virus identified during the last part of December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei city of China (Annune, et al., 2020; Huang, et al., 2020; WHO, 2020a). It was declared a public health emergency of international concern on January 30, 2020, and a pandemic on March 12, 2020 by the WHO (Ameh, et al 2021). The virus, SARS Cov2 is considered as the

major causative organism of Coronavirus disease (World Vision, 2020). It is highly contagious and infectious; resulting in high rate of death that is multiple times higher than the other seasonal flu with symptoms including fever, dry cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, and extreme tiredness. Although most people can easily recover from the Covid-19 disease without specialized treatments, older people and of course, individuals with existing medical conditions such as cancer, lung disease, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart failure, cerebrovascular disease, renal disease, liver disease, severe obesity, chronic respiratory infections, immune compromising conditions, and cardiovascular diseases are more prone to experiencing severe illness and death due to Covid-19 (NCDC, 2020; WHO, 2020c).

Coronavirus pandemic is said to be an evolving virus. It mutates, that is, undergoes changes or transformation, and when this occurs, it produces new variants by spreading or replicating (WHO, 2021). It is added that a new variant may persist while others will be snuffed out of existence depending on how each is able to spread and survive on hosts. According to Sadiq (2021), Coronavirus disease is a virus that replicates itself causing a genetic change that creates variants, some mutations weaken the virus, and others allow it to fester by proliferation of the virus through aggressive infection. The WHO report has it that since the outbreak of the virus in December 2019, the virus has so far metamorphosed into five phases such as: UK variant, called Alpha, B.1.1.7; South African variant, called Beta, B.1.351; P1 variant from Brazil, called Gamma, latest Delta variant, B.1.617.2, which is more

transmissible than alpha (Sadiq, 2021; WHO, 2021). and the latest variant from South Africa called Omicron, B.1.1.529 discovered in November, 2021. According to WHO, it is not yet clear whether infection with Omicron causes more severe disease compared to infections with other variants, including Delta. The Delta variant is now the dominant form of the virus, and is described as the most transmissible variant. It is also considered as contagious and dangerous as chickenpox. It is also inferred that an infected person carries the potential of infecting eight or nine more, just as the strain had shown its efficacy in infecting younger people as against the older strains of the virus (NCDC, 2021; Sadiq, 2021).

Moreover, Coronavirus disease is commonly transmitted from person-to-person through coughing, sneezing, and close contact with an infected individual or contact with infected surfaces or subjects (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDCP], 2020). To prevent the spread of the virus, various precautions such as regular washing of hands with clean and running water with soap or alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizers); maintaining social distancing of at least 1 metre or avoidance of close contacts with other people who appear to be sick; wearing masks while in a group of other people, especially indoors or when social distancing is not possible; choosing open, well-ventilated spaces over closed ones; covering nose and mouth with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing; getting vaccinated by the authorized healthcare providers; seeking medical attention if not well, among others (CDCP, 2020; NCDC, 2020).

Coronavirus pandemic is reported by WHO (2021) as the deadliest global pandemic with estimated confirmed cases of about 33, 502, 430 million, with a total death of 1,004,421 million from 216 countries and territories as of September 30th, 2021. Although, the testing is highly reported as inadequate in Nigeria, the NCDC reports shows since the first index case was reported in February 27th, 2020, the country has so far recorded a total estimated confirmed cases of 58, 848; 50, 358 discharged cases, and a total death of 1,113 across the 36 States and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as of September 30th, 2021 (NCDC, 2021).

Roles of School Libraries in Contending the Spiral Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic

School libraries have catalytic roles in contending the spiral effects of Coronavirus pandemic as information system. They are agents for developing information literate students and teachers who are responsible and ethical participants in society. According to the American Association of School Librarians [AASL] and Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT] (1998 as cited in Latrobe, 2021), school libraries basically ensure that pupils/students and staff become effective users of ideas and information to solve lifetime problems including Covid-19 pandemic. This affirms the position that school libraries are the foundation for building information literate society with competent self-directed teachers and learners expected to create some level of awareness about the pandemic and provide dependable information to save people from rumours and misinformation. Be that as it may, school

libraries as part and parcel of the global partnership for curbing the effects of Covid-19 pandemic play both statutory and contingency/situational roles as discussed below:

- i. **Information resources provision:** School libraries are primarily established to provide information resources to pupils, students, teachers and the school communities. Thus, in contending the spiral effects of Covid-19, school libraries could ensure that tailor-made and/or updated information resources such as textbooks, journals, newsletters, government policy statements and regulations on Covid-19 are provided to members of the school communities. Providing information and learning resources that represent diversity of experiences, opinions, and socio-cultural perspectives can support responsible citizenship in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic (AASL/AECT 1998, as cited in Latrobe, 2021). School libraries can assist in gathering information on the pandemic prevention, guidance on disinfecting workplaces, and what should be done to reduce risk of contagion from trusted and accurate sources like Medline Plus which are easily understood by users when interpreted for them (EveryLibrary, 2020).
- ii. **Information services provision:** School libraries could be very useful instrument in providing information services such as current awareness services, information repackaging services, as well as remote reference/referral services to users of the school libraries. According to EveryLibrary (2020),

one of the biggest roles that school libraries can fill in the national response to Covid-19 is that of information literacy specialists. In fact, effective information service provision can empower pupils/students, teachers and other members of the school community to know the rate of infection or spread of the virus, and in that process enable them observe relevant Covid-19 protocols.

- iii. **Information literacy training:** Information literacy training helps school library users to understand basic medical terminologies being used by medical professionals. For example, terms such as: UK variant, Alpha, B.1.1.7; South African variant, Beta, B.1.351; P1 variant Gamma, and Delta variant, B.1.617.2 (Sadiq, 2021), if possible, can be explained by the school librarians in collaboration with medical professionals for better understanding to pupils/students, teachers, etc. In this aspect, school librarians can find out certain terminologies used in the Covid-19 reports in order to help school library users understand their meaning and applications. Information literacy training is very vital in fighting against the effects of Covid-19. This is why EveryLibrary (2020) specifically asserts that libraries all over the world are assisting governments in the fight against the novel coronavirus by giving out information literacy sensitization training to members of the populace.

iv. ***Deal with disinformation and misinformation within the school community:*** According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (2021), one of the major challenges militating against the fight against Covid-19 is disinformation and misinformation. Thus, to succeed in curtailing the pandemic, school libraries have a great role to play in addressing disinformation and misinformation. African Library and Information Association and Institutions [AfLIA] (2020) further states that misinformation about Covid-19 is engendering false hopes and generating fear, promoting quackery as well as undermining scientifically proven pathways that curb the spread of the virus such as social/physical distancing, testing, proper hand-washing, use of sanitizers, and even Covid-19 treatment. This role can influence the observance of preventive measures as put forwards by both the World Health Organization [WHO], the Nigeria Center for Disease Control [NCDC] and other bodies that provide Covid-19 protocols. For example, school libraries can sensitize students, teachers and other members of the school community as well as the public on the need of hand washing, avoiding touching the face, and social distancing (WHO, 2020; NCDC, 2020). The school libraries can also help the pupils/students, teachers and school communities on the need on the implications of wearing mask, voluntary testing and of course, the need to take the Covid-19 treatment.

Gather and interpret/translate Covid-19 information: Gathering Covid-19 information on

daily basis from medical professionals especially those from the Nigeria Center for Disease Control and State Covid-19 personnel can be a very vital way of fighting against the effects of the pandemic. This information can also be interpreted and circulated for better understanding by pupils/students, teachers, and other school community members. By doing this, the school libraries can become the conduits through which members of the school communities become more enlightened about the virus and in so doing can help in remedying the effects of the virus by also sharing such information with their friends, siblings, parents, caregivers or relatives at homes and churches.

vi. ***Consultation:*** In contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 pandemic, school libraries can work in consultation with teachers in designing instruction on the maintenance of hygiene and sensitization on hand-washing exercise and observance of other Covid-19 protocols. This consultation between the school libraries and teachers can bring about more knowledge through collaboration on how to sensitize pupils/students on the measures to curtail the spread of Covid-19.

vii. ***Advocacy/awareness creation:*** Coordinating the school community on localized implementation of observance of the Covid-19 protocols such as: proper hand washing is the best defense at this time and is a good idea at all times as well as encouraging social distancing. The school libraries can coordinate the school community through advocacy, awareness

creation and sensitization. According to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals [CILIP] Covid-19 Guidance for School Libraries (2020), the need for students, staff, volunteers and members of the school community to increase their use of hand-washing and hand hygiene, including the provision of washing facilities; minimizing the contact time spent in the library; actively encouraging social distancing; and offering physical protection to staff such as personal protective equipment (PPE), etc., are the central in contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

Internet and Web 2.0 technologies such as email, Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, blogs, WhatsApp, TikTok, etc. have are transforming the services of school libraries in developed and developing countries of the world during the Covid-19 pandemic era. These facilities effective and reliable platforms and routes through which school libraries can reach their users even from the comfort of their homes. School libraries can sensitize or enlighten their pupils/students, teachers and other members of the school community via their social media handles. This sensitization could be voice notes, pictures, images, short videos or documentaries on current state of COVID-19 pandemic within a state, region, nation or international level.

School libraries can contend with the spiral effects of Covid-19 by collaborating with organizations such as medical libraries, Covid-19 frontline workers,

Ministries of Health, etc. They can share information, learn how to fight against Covid-19, and how to advise their users in order not to be infected or spread the virus.

Challenges faced by School Libraries in Contending the Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic

School libraries in Nigeria are obviously bedeviled by a mirage of challenges both from government's lack of attention to the libraries and inner maladministration due to lack of professional and skilled librarians. In fact, before, during and even after the Covid-19 pandemic forced lockdown, most school libraries in Nigeria were and are still helplessly lacking in major facilities that would be useful to them in contributing effectively to curtailing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in the schools. Specifically, during the Covid-19 lockdown, school libraries were as helpless as their users. They did not only lack infrastructural facilities such as ICT tools like access to internet for the provision of resources and services to ameliorate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on pupils/students and teachers, but they also lack professional school librarians to marshal the school library system and attend to the information needs of their users. Without, any equivocation, no public-school library in Nigeria can boast of its own website, library blog or other social media networks; a starting point to providing digital information to users in an emergency situation.

Nigerian school libraries are far behind in the global system of information services provision. This state of affair is often attributed to poor funding due to long time

neglect of the school libraries by governments and school authorities, as well as ineffective school library management due to lack of professional school librarians (Bernard & Frankwell, 2014; Ternenge & Agipu, 2019). Most school libraries do not have professional librarians or teacher librarian to supervise the activities and services of the libraries in a situation where such professional skills and competencies have become indispensable in meeting the goals and mission of a school library. Some school libraries have long become a staff room and a discussion center for staff and teachers. However, for the purpose of this paper, the challenges militating against the role of school libraries in contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 pandemic are summarized as follows:

- ***Lack of clear-cut funding policy for school libraries:*** Fund is the life-wire of every successful, effective and sustainable system; the oil that lubricates the wheel of development in an organization. However, in Nigeria, school libraries are grossly starved of funds (Okoye, 2000, as cited in Ternenge & Agipu, 2019). School libraries are made to totally rely on government mercy and the mercy of the school authority for everything. They are not given special vote for the purpose of acquiring resources and other facilities necessary for their services provision and emergency response. Thus, this serious factor hampers the role of school libraries in contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Lack of school library policy: Most school libraries in Nigeria do not have library policy. A library policy

offers guideline for actions and decisions to be taken within the library from time to time (Shonhe, 2019), including emergency situations like the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, without formal school library guidelines it becomes difficult for school libraries to embark on any specific role as a mean of contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

- ***Lack of professional school librarians:*** School libraries in Nigeria are practically administered by non-professionals, untrained and oftentimes, people who are completely illiterate as long as librarianship skills and competencies are concerned. Governments often play down on the need to employ professional librarians to manage school library systems. In fact, it is quite saddening that government does not acknowledge the existence of librarianship profession in most employment adverts. They see the school libraries as dumping grounds where anybody can be posted to, with no regards to the roles and expectations of professional librarians in an emergency situation such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ***Lack of ICT facilities in school libraries:*** It is commonplace that school libraries are not equipped with relevant ICT facilities and accessories. They lack access to internet. Where there are computers in the school libraries, they are not connected to the internet services for effective provision of services on Covid-19 pandemic. In a situation where developed countries are practically leveraging on the advancement in ICT to meet the teaching, learning and other information

needs of pupils/students, teachers, and the school community members, school libraries in Nigeria are still in the age of books carrying. Equally, the much talked about digitization of the Nigerian economy is nothing but a political propaganda with no practical manifestation in any library system in the country. In fact, with the devastation the Covid-19 has caused Nigeria and inadequate ICTs in Nigerian school libraries to drive digital libraries in the school system, school libraries in Nigeria are finding it extremely difficult to provide any form of meaningful service to students and teachers and even to help in any way in providing adequate information about the coronavirus pandemic.

- ***Lack of power supply in school libraries:*** Apart from having ICT facilities, school libraries in Nigeria, especially those in public schools cannot lay claim of standard power generating set amidst the near absent of electricity power supply to provide any form of information services on Covid-19 pandemic to students and teacher. This implies that even if there should be another round of lockdown, the school libraries may still not have any capacity to be useful in curtailing the effect of Covid-19 pandemic.
- ***Lack of ICT skills among school library staff:*** In the present digital environment, digital literacy skill is one of the driving forces for sustainable services delivery in any organization or sector. This is equally applicable in the modern school library system. In fact, ICT skills is needed in information gathering,

processing, dissemination, preservation, conservation, as well as transfer. This skill is necessary in information transition via online learning media such as Web 2.0 technologies like email, Facebook, Zoom, webinar, Class Dojo, etc. It is equally very necessary in information repackaging such as cartoon animation, visual design, and researched techniques on how to gamify learning and information dissemination that captivate library users' attention. But, as practical as it is the reality, most Nigerian school library staff do not possess these all-important skills. Thus, it becomes difficult for school libraries to contend the spiral effect of COVID-19 pandemic.

- ***Poor attitude of school librarians/library staff:*** Fighting the Covid-19 pandemic through information provision requires personal determination and willingness to sacrifice time and energy. It requires constant search for information and collaboration with other professionals, especially those professional in medical sectors and other librarians from medical libraries, etc. Meanwhile, the few school librarians and library staff in the school libraries are typically indifferent and nonchalant. They care less about what they can do to add value to the role of school libraries in curbing the effects of the pandemic
- ***Lack of involvement of school librarians as part of Covid-19 frontline workers:*** In clear disdain to the librarianship profession, governments at all levels in Nigeria have not seen the need to involve librarians including school librarians as a part of the Covid-19

frontline workers. This has denied the school librarians the opportunity to learn, obtain and share first-hand information on the pandemic. However, this seems to have some multiplier effects. It does not only deny the librarians as purveyors of information the opportunity to create tailor-made information for ease dissemination on the virus but has also denied the entire chain of users of the libraries the speed at which they get to know certain issues relating to the pandemic.

- ***Inadequate information resources on Covid-19 pandemic in school libraries:*** As a novel virus, information on Covid-19 pandemic is just gradually been gathered, created, accessed, examined, interpreted, disseminated, and preserved at various stages and media. Thus, school libraries at the moment are not well-equipped with information resources on the pandemic. For example, information on the variants of the virus such as: UK variant, Alpha, B.1.1.7; South African variant, Beta, B.1.351; P1 variant Gamma, and Delta variant, B.1.617.2 (Sadiq, 2021), as well as measures of curtailing the spread of the virus including the various Covid-19 drugs for treatment of the virus are evolving. So, this lack of adequate information resources on the pandemic remains one of the factors hampers the role of school libraries in curbing the effect of the pandemic.

Other challenges confronting the role of school libraries in contending the spiral effects of Covid-19 pandemic include: lack of synergy between school

library staff and teachers, poor knowledge of collaboration of library staff, complete lack access to digital facilities by pupils/students, teachers and their parents due to the location of the schools like schools in rural communities, as well as high cost of digital facilities and data.

Measures for Enhancing School Libraries Roles in Contending the Effects of Covid-19

So far so good, it has been established that school libraries have fundamental roles to play in contending the spiral effects of the dreaded coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. However, based on the problems identified as militating against the role of school libraries in contending the spiral effect of Covid-19 pandemic, the following measures are highlighted and discussed to enhance the roles of the school libraries in this regard. The measures are:

- ***Creation of awareness on the role of the school libraries:*** This involves sensitizing government and school authorities on the needs to provide adequate support to school libraries. Such support will facilitate active and fully involvement and participation of school libraries in every aspect of government effort in curtailing the effects of the virus. In fact, creating awareness and educating people on the role of the school libraries in all areas of life can lead to improved public rating or assessment of school libraries in enhancing teaching, learning and community services.

- **Provision of funding plan and/or specific budgetary allocation to school libraries:** Specifying a special funding head and budgetary procedure for school libraries can boost the services and improve the facilities of school libraries for emergency responses. In fact, if the school libraries have special book vote from government as well as other streams of income, they can easily plan their activities, allocate resources and execute programmes and projects that facilitate the reduction of the effects of Covid-19 pandemic. Adequate funding of school libraries by the government can facilitate the acquisition of ICT facilities and other relevant technological tools for effective provision of information resources and services on real time 24/7 to users.
- **Employment of professional school librarians/adequate library staff:** School library personnel are essential in the planning, policy formulation, and successful execution of school library programmes and activities toward whittling down the severity of Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, governments at all levels in collaboration with school authorities should endeavour to employ professional librarians and adequate library staff in order to oversee, supervise and professionally marshal the school library functions towards ameliorating the effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

Training and retraining of school library staff: Training facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, aptitude, and confidence including ICT or

online literacy skills to handle emerging digital tools for information gathering and dissemination. When school library staff are adequately trained and retrained, they exhibit versatility, skillfulness and willingness to adding value to their works. Thus, government and school authorities should provide opportunities for regular training of library staff as purveyors of information in order to scuttle the curve of Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Sensitization on the Covid-19 pandemic:** School libraries should take every necessary action such as the use of leaflets, newsletters, open interactions and classroom discussion to share information on the Covid-19. This should aim at ensuring that all pupils/students, teachers and other members of the school community are fully conscious of the virus and its mood of transmission, control measures and treatment.

Other measures for enhancing the role of school libraries in contending the spiral effect of Covid-19 pandemic include involvement of school librarians as part of the frontline Covid-19 workers, collaboration with other professionals such as medical professionals, willingness to take up new responsibilities by school library staff, constant scouting for vital Covid-19 information, conscious interpretation and repackaging of Covid-19 information based on pupils, students, teachers and school community needs, etc.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed virtually every aspect of our lives. It has brought untold hardship and uncertainty which no one knows how long the crisis will last. Therefore, the information systems including school libraries need to reconsider their individual and collective roles of societal, informational, and educational dimensions during these uncertain times. Without doubt, school libraries have vital roles to play in curtailing the effects of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. They are typically responsible for gathering, analyzing and disseminating information on the pandemic to children in pre-primary, primary and post-primary schools as well as staff members. In this work, it has been clearly established that though school libraries are fundamental to learning, teaching, literacy development and information dissemination on the global public health concern called Covid-19, the role of the school libraries in curbing the twisting effects of Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic are severely hampered by long-time neglect of government and maladministration, poor funding, lack of professional school librarians, among others in most school libraries in Nigeria. This paper further suggested that the roles of school libraries in curbing the Covid-19 scourge could be consolidated if desired attention from all stakeholders is given to total overhauling of the school library system for desired services delivery.

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