

Censorship in Libraries and Information Centers: A Vital Activity for Successful Library Growth in Nigeria

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Abstract

Censorship is based on the use of state or group power to control freedom of expression or press. This is hinged on the fact that every society has customs, taboos or laws by which speech, dress, religious observance, and sexual expressions are regulated in order to protect the family, the church and the state. Intellectual freedom according to Article 19 of United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the right to freedom of thought and of expression of thought. Intellectual freedom guarantees everyone the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Thus intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas. Whereas censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that individuals, groups or government officials find objectionable or dangerous. Censors usually achieve this through state powers via public institutions such as schools, libraries, information centers among others. This work therefore discussed censorship; various methods of censorship, intellectual freedom, Freedom of Information Act of Nigeria, collection development, selection of materials, censorship challenges and solutions in relation to the Nigerian society.

Keywords: Censorship, Libraries, Information Centers, Intellectual Freedom, Information Act, Collection Development.

Introduction

Libraries and other information centers participate in a certain social mission and act in accordance to a given set of values. In other words, the process of achieving their goals has much to do with following an ethical conduct, which recognizes information professionals as moral agents responsible before themselves, others and society at large. Ethics thus provides a framework for us to monitor the essential functions of professionals, establish policies and develop service strategies. Libraries have vital roles in protecting heritage, offering individuals and societies opportunities to improve the quality of their lives, and contributing to civil society. They play an important role in the free exchange of ideas within societies and across time and space. Today, there is a special need to inculcate, develop or increase in librarians and information professionals an awareness of the ethical dimension of their work. There is also the further requirement that the principles governing professional practice be rendered coherent and ammonized.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2012) asserts that the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession "...is, in its very essence, an ethical activity embodying a value-rich approach to professional work with sign that library and

information work is indicating increasing levels of professional maturity”. Therefore, library and information science professionals, as providers of information in the 21st century, require awareness of the growing complexity in legal and ethical issues and values manifested through the relationship between professional duties and society. Information service in the interest of social, cultural and economic well-being is at the heart of librarianship and therefore librarians have social responsibility towards their clients (IFLA, 2012).

Furthermore, the belief in the human necessity of sharing information and ideas implies the recognition of information rights and respect of human dignity. Censorship is an issue which has been present throughout recorded history. From the beginning, it has been used by individuals and groups to prevent and control the creation, access and dissemination of ideas and information. It has taken many different forms and occurred for many different reasons.

Information sharing in this 21st century is made possible through the advancement in ICT. ICT encompasses every facet of lives which has resulted to wide and easy sharing of information from one user to the other. The advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has transformed society and how people manage and access information. As a result, the role of information professionals is becoming more than complex. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as cited by IFLA (2011) states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Freedom of Information may be regarded as an offshoot of freedom of expression or speech, which is a fundamental human right recognized in international law or human rights charter. Freedom of information pertains to a citizen or an individual’s right to access information that is held by the state or its agents or other organizations that relate to the public and draw its existence from the continued patronage or activities of the populace. The concept of freedom of information has a lot to do with librarianship, with the idea of open access to information.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI), 2011, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria is:

“An Act to make public records and information more freely available, provide for public to access public records and information, protect public records and information to an extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization, establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters”.

The Freedom of Information Act is an enabling law which gives access to public information. Simply interpreted, it means that every information, record or document held by public authorities is held in trust and must be provided on demand as long as such will not hurt public interest or national security. The FOI gives to individuals, societies, communities or corporate bodies “the right to ask” and “the right to know”. The scenario in Nigeria is that Libraries and the various information profession associations have remained pseudo-allies in the world of freedom of information. Libraries, library associations and librarians in Nigeria seem not to see any connect or role for them in the FOI Act, as it is mainly being viewed as more of the freedom of Press document. In spite of this, the FOI Act in Nigeria provides libraries with ample opportunities to further assert and strengthen their relevance.

Libraries and information centers are institutions set up to meet the various forms of user's information needs. A library most times is described as an information center because of its goals and objectives which is to meet the information needs of its teeming users. Libraries and information centers are mostly faced with challenges of censorship because of its wide range of users and their various conflicting information needs. Librarians do not encourage censorship, denial and restriction of information to anybody by any person or groups of persons and use the most efficient and effective methods and standards to serve their clientele.

The Library as an institution exists for the benefit of a given constituency, whether it is the citizens of a community, members of an educational institution or some larger or more specialized group. Those who enter the library profession assume an obligation to maintain ethical standards of behavior in relation to the governing authority under which they work, to the library constituency, to the library as an institution, to fellow workers, to colleagues and to society in general. IFLA (2011) posits that the core mission of library and information professionals is to facilitate access to information for all for personal development, education, cultural enrichment, economic activity and informed participation in and enhancement of democracy.

Conceptual framework

✓ What is censorship?

According to Moody (2005), censorship is defined as those actions which significantly restrict free access to information. Some forms of censorship are so unconscious that even the individuals perpetrating them have no idea that they are in fact censoring. Still other forms are systemic and can only be mitigated via deliberate librarian actions. It could also be seen as the examination of books, plays, films, television and radio programs, news reports, and other forms of communication for the purpose of altering or suppressing ideas found to be objectionable, harmful, or offensive.

Censorship will be considered to be “the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons - individuals, groups or government officials - find objectionable or dangerous” (ALA, 2007). This definition provided by the American Library Association (ALA) is particularly useful because it clearly defines censorship as a negative act which denies information.

Reitz (2004) in his Dictionary of Library and Information Science defines ‘censorship’ as the prohibition of the production, distribution, circulation, or display of a work by a governing authority on grounds that it contains objectionable or dangerous material”.

Dafiaghor (2011) is of the view that censorship is based on the fact that every society has customs, taboos or laws by which speech, dress, religious observance and sexual expressions are regulated in order to protect the family, the church and the State.

Types of Censorship

Censorship can be prior or post (Famous, 2011).

Prior censorship. This is when an information material is being banned or censored before publication. This may be done by publishers, government and its agencies, organizations, individuals, religious or other associations, etc. and may be done by force or negotiations.

Post censorship. This is when an information material is banned or censored after it has been published. Some good examples are the banning of Tell magazine publications during the military regime of General Sanni Abacha and the banning of Satanic Verses novel in 1989 written by Salman Rushdie; in which a global death sentence was placed on the author by the

late spiritual leader of Iran Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini but in 1998, the succeeding government of Iran under the leadership of Mohammad Khatami lifted the death sentence.

Dafiaghor (2011) identified the following types of censorship usually carried out in Nigeria as:

- ❖ **Moral Censorship:** This is the banning of materials because they are morally objectionable to the various/some of the cultural norms in the Nigerian society, knowing that Nigeria is a heterogeneous society, having numerous sets of norms and values.
- ❖ **Military Censorship:** this is the banning of information materials that tend to expose military tactics and national information; for security reasons. The publications of some media houses especially that of Newswatch, Tell Magazine and The News Magazine were censored on several occasions by the military regimes at that time.
- ❖ **Political Censorship:** This occurs when the Nigerian government needs to keep secrets from its civilians in order to prevent disruption. Though democracy does not support this, yet in some circumstance, it is necessary for the saving of the state, calling to mind that Nigeria has always had the tendency of splitting.
- ❖ **Religious Censorship:** In Nigeria, two major religions dominate: Christianity and Islam. Religious censorship is therefore the banning of materials because they are religiously questionable. For example the case of ‘Boko Haram’ decedents in the Northern part of Nigeria that censored anything Christianity and Western education publications.
- ❖ **Corporate Censorship:** Corporations can ban (by negotiation, unless it has monopoly) materials unfitting to them or their partners. In Nigeria, this kind of censorship is very rare as there are no many corporations with monopoly. Many of the public corporations are yet under government control.

✓ **Libraries and Information Centers**

Omekwu and Ugwuanyi (2009) define the library in two dimensions; arguing that the conventional definition views the library as a storehouse of knowledge, while the contemporary definition looks at the library as an “access point institution to global information relevant for teaching, learning and development”. Their work further state that there are seven types of libraries, determined by the varying services they provide. The various types of libraries include national, public, special, private, school and academic libraries.

According to Wikipedia (2010), a librarian is an information professional trained in library and information science. Librarians work in a public, academic, school or special library. Librarians that work in the public libraries serve a broad user community. Those in the academic circle provide teaching, learning and research assistance to higher institution of learning community. Those that work in schools are basically interacting and instructing both the primary and elementary pupils, supporting their teachers with information materials. Whereas special librarians are confined to special industry were special information that supports the business of the industry is a priority. Some librarians are independent entrepreneurs working as information specialists, cataloguers, indexers and other professional, specialized capacities.

Crosby (2008) posted that librarians roles and duties include:

- ❖ **Outreach services,** the act of providing library and information services to underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities, low income neighborhoods, homebound adults and seniors, incarcerated and ex-offenders, and homeless and rural communities. In academic libraries, outreach librarians might focus on high school students, transfer students, first-generation college students, and minorities.

- ❖ Reference or research duties, where people on research are helped to find the information they need.
- ❖ Collection development roles, where librarians monitor the selection of library materials
- Instructing, where librarians teach information literacy skills in face-to-face classes and/or through the creation of online learning objects

The Library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research (Rajendran and Rathinasabapathy, 2005). The library caters for the information needs of the community, through the provision of reading resources for the various programs of the institution (Igbiosa and Idiodi, 2002). These resources must undergo the processes of selection/censorship before acquisition to meet the needs of the users

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The concept of intellectual freedom involves protecting the rights of all individuals to pursue the types of information they want and to read anything that interests them. Attempts by a member of the community to remove materials from a library collection or to restrict access to them may be the most common challenges to intellectual freedom that any library will encounter in the course of discharge of its day-to-day activities. The American Library Association (ALA) has been interested in intellectual freedom for a long time, with the first Library Bill of Rights written in 1939.

Halsey (2008) writes that librarians, like members of other professions, have bonded together in professional associations to solve common problems and to advance the profession. These professional associations address issues such as financial support for libraries, censorship, and cooperative acquisition of library materials. They also attempt to influence legislation that affects libraries, establish policies and standards relating to libraries and librarians, and support continuing education for librarians. Almost all of these organizations publish journals or monographs relating to their particular areas of interest. The establishment of a national library for the country brought about the establishment of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) as a professional association, a forum for library professionals in Nigeria.

The objectives of NLA include the following:

- i. to unite persons interested in libraries, librarianship and information services;
- ii. to safeguard and promote the professional interest of librarians;
- iii. to promote the establishment and development of libraries and to assist in the promotion of such legislation as may be considered necessary for the establishment, regulation and management of libraries in Nigeria;
- iv. to watch legislation affecting and to assist in the promotion of such legislation as may be considered necessary for the establishment of libraries in Nigeria;
- v. to promote and encourage bibliographic study, research and library co-operation;
- vi. to do all lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives. (<http://www.nla-ng.org/aboutus.html>)

Intellectual freedom not only guarantees individuals the right to hold opinion on any subject but also the right to communicate such ideas in any media of one's choice without any restriction. Intellectual freedom can only exist where two essential conditions are met: first that all individuals have the right to hold any belief on any subject and to convey their ideas in any form they deem appropriate and second, that society makes an equal commitment to the right of unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the communication medium used, the content of the work and the viewpoints of both author and the receiver of information.

In the struggle to ensure that individuals' right to both access and use information in public institutions is guaranteed, IFLA declares as follows:

- ❖ That human beings have a fundamental right of access to expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity, and to express their views publicly.
- ❖ That the right to know and freedom of expression are two aspects of the same principle. The right to know is a requirement for freedom of thought and conscience; freedom of thought and freedom of expression are necessary conditions for freedom of access to information.
- ❖ That a commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession.

IFLA therefore calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of library user. IFLA urges its members to actively promote the acceptance and realization of these principles.

Libraries and information centers also have a responsibility to serve all of the members of their communities, regardless of age, race, nationality, religion, culture, political affiliation, physical or other disabilities, gender or sexual orientation, or any other status. They should support the right of users to seek information of their choice. Libraries and information centers should respect the privacy of their users and recognize that the resources they use should remain confidential. They have a responsibility to facilitate and promote public access to quality information and communication. Users should be assisted with the necessary skills and a suitable environment in which to use their chosen information sources and services freely and confidently.

There is widespread condemnation of censorship as a restrictive, undesirable practice in the professional literature (Long, 2006). It is criticized as an action which aims to “suppress...ideas and information...to impose (the censors) view of what is truthful and appropriate” (ALA, 2007). Equally, and perhaps unsurprisingly, there is widespread support for the principle of intellectual freedom. Dole (2000) identified intellectual freedom as a key value for librarians. The centrality of intellectual freedom to the library profession is also echoed by both Byrne (2000) who states that “the free flow of information is the business of libraries”, and McMenemy et al (2007:16-17) who claim that “free and equal access to information for all...is quite simply the fundamental reason for the existence of the profession”.

Censorship in Libraries

According to Mills (2012), all libraries have the mandate to support intellectual freedom; but librarians can often be tempted to censor by selection. Books can be rejected based on: budget, lack of demand, literary quality, limited shelf space, content, relevance to the community, fear of a challenge and poor reviews. It is difficult to know when these criteria are used as legitimate selection tools or as an “excuse for self-censorship”. Nevertheless, some libraries censored their resources due to the official challenge policy which usually affects the collections of such libraries. A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials. (ALA, 2012).

Information supplied by the librarian should be versatile, complete, objective and impartial. The librarian should reject and oppose any form of censorship of the documents gathered and organized as well as the information supplied. He must encourage the free flow of information and ideas without discrimination. Censorship in libraries has always been a topic of concern:

"the relationship between librarians and censorship is, and has been, a troubled one" (Oppenheim and Smith, 2004). Some forms of censorship are not often discussed outside the library world: self-censorship and selection as censorship. Self-censorship occurs when a librarian deliberately avoids selecting materials that might cause controversy in the community, or materials with which they personally disagree.

A collection development policy that specifically aims for a balance of views can help the librarian make selection decisions without self-censoring. In some cases of self-censorship, the librarian does not make information available to the community based on his or her own judgment of the materials. It should be noted here that librarian being an information provider, is not expected to censor any information, whether such information is against his/her belief and personal interest or not. He/she must acquire and process all the informational resources equally.

Blomsberg (2011), opines that censorship is a very slippery slope and even one small allowance can often result in widespread control of information in totally unforeseen ways. A librarian must remember that he/she is entitled to their personal opinions and preferences but the librarian and the library cannot impose those opinions and preferences on others. The library as an institution is in the business of providing information in as neutral as possible to the host environment. Blomsberg further states that books in the library should not be thrown out, rejected or censored because of the content or beliefs of the author, publisher or librarian.

Censorship is pressed by forces both external (parents, religious groups, political groups, minorities, patriotic groups, emotionally unstable individuals) and internal (administrators, government bodies, personnel, selection or circulation policies). These sources of censorship vary with the type of library or information center. Public or school libraries are especially vulnerable to the intromission of parents or religious groups who wish to protect children from materials they deem inappropriate. Of course, the suppression of such materials may be offensive to other parents and students. The following are the censorship processes that usually take place in the libraries:

- Library user discovers material in the library that they find objectionable.
- The user alerts library staff about the materials and often assumes staff are not aware of the material and will agree with them to remove it.
- Materials are seldom removed through this process because materials have already met selection policy standards. Materials are usually removed for political purposes.
- After discovering the library does not intend to remove it, patron seeks more official routes: Filling out a Challenge Form, writing a letter of challenge to the library director/administration and speaking at a Library Board Meeting.
- The complainer may go through unofficial Routes: Contacting the local media, organizing an ad hoc protesting group, staging a peaceful protest and outright theft or destruction of the material from the library circulation.
- Library will consider complaint and review material in question.
- Materials will be compared to Materials Selection Policy i.e. Guidelines by which libraries choose materials for their collection.

Censorship and Collection Development

Collection development has recently become a very popular term in library and information centers as a need for an efficient and balance collection. It includes everything that goes into acquiring materials, including selection, ordering and payment. It is a chain of events that

includes planning, administration and control. Collection development serves as a foundation, upon which other library services are built.

According to Eguavon and Ochai (2002), collection development is a planned, systematic development of a collection based on the objectives of the library. The progress in achieving development in a library's collection as long as the concept is insufficiently operationalized is very difficult to measure. Before collection development is possible, there must be an active collection policy guiding the acquisition and selection of materials in a library to ensure that the materials acquired will be able to meet the goals and objectives of the parent institution where the library is located.

Developing a collection development policy would ensure that all information materials selected and acquired are able to meet the information needs of its wide range of users and also that the materials will be effectively used by the information users. Eguavoen (2002) is of the view that the collection development policy should be renewed after some years because the library is a growing organism and information explosion can lead to birth of new and updated information. A policy document provides a sound foundation for future planning thereby assisting in determining priorities especially when financial resources are limited. This provides a basis for the fair allocation of resources and in accounting for library fund by explaining the rationale behind acquisition activities. Having a formal publication to refer to ensures continuity and avoids confusion. The stated aims also help other collection related activities such as cataloguing, preservation and storage to form a coherent strategy, for example by identifying areas in need of de-selection or more suitable for inter-library loan. In general, a collection development policy can help the library make the best use of its limited resources by indicating who will be served, for what purpose and with what type of materials.

Acquisition of materials based on the collection development policy will ensure that the library is prepared for censorship issues in case users raise up censorship concerns while accessing the library resources and consulting them to solve their various information needs. The collection development policy can be used as a guide or reference point by the libraries and information centers to challenge and address any censorship issue that may come up from its different kinds of users. When there is no collection development policy, the librarian and the library is exposed to the risk of been exposed to the hazards that come as a result of procurement of materials that may be deemed harmful and obscene to the public and its users.

Selection and Censorship in Libraries

Selection of materials and censorship of materials in libraries are two phrases with different meanings that can be very beneficial to the collection development librarian. Selection of materials is vital in libraries to ensure that libraries meet up with the acquisition of different types of materials that can be used to build its collections to ensure that it meets the goals and objectives for which they have been setup. On the other hand, censorship of materials in libraries is also important to ensure that the library is guided during acquisition of materials and acquires materials that are in line with the library's collection development policy and also materials that can be beneficial to its various formats of users.

One needs to keep in mind that the concept of censorship is one of removal or prohibition of an item, either prior to or after print, because a person (or group of people) thinks they know "what's best" for everyone who might later encounter that item. Selection, on the other hand, simply refers to the act of choosing a material to add to a library's collection based upon a

written collection development policy. “The selector expresses implicit belief in the intelligence of the library’s clientele and in its potential for growth through the experiences provided by library materials. In principle there is a clear distinction between censorship and selection. The former can be understood as the active suppression of materials considered dangerous on the basis of religious, moral, political and other reasons. The latter is the activity whereby professionals choose materials sensibly and judiciously, following criteria that are in accordance with the goals of their library or information center.

All academic libraries should have locally created collection development policies to guide their selection decisions. Such policies not only help guide tough choices when money is tight, they also help librarians defend purchases challenged because of their content. However, “a word about selection errors: if upon examination it is determined that materials that have encountered objection or complaint do not meet the criteria established by the library’s selection policy, the material should be withdrawn” (Jones, 2009).

Selection decisions are of great importance, since they determine the nature of the library or information center collection. At the most basic level, there exists an ethical duty to use the appropriate selection criteria. Given the fact that the library’s mission is defined by serving users’ needs, selection decisions must follow this same predicament. All this may seem obvious, but related problems do arise at times; for example, when those selecting follow their own interest or that of a small but powerful group of users. Libraries and information centers best defend themselves against any form of censorship pressure by establishing an acquisition policy which is well defined, detailed and explicit. Moreover, such a policy should be elaborated together with those responsible for the institution, in an integrated way. In addition, the support of national and international professional associations is important, as voiced in their official declarations.

Librarians are to treat and serve all clienteles equally knowing that different people visit the library for one piece of information or the other and must not deny them. However, at some level, the librarian must always judge materials in order to choose the highest quality and most reliable sources. Librarians routinely perform a type of censorship by selecting one information resource over another for inclusion in the collection. Ultimately, each librarian is responsible for following the collection development policies at his or her library and for monitoring his or her own actions to avoid placing intellectual freedom and the First Amendment at risk.

Censorship of Print Materials

Print materials are those materials that can be found in the library in their hard copy forms ranging from books, journals, magazines, encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, yearbooks, newspapers and other reference materials that users can consult in their paper back forms in the library. In most libraries in Nigeria, print materials make up the bulk number of the libraries collections. “Since Gutenberg’s invention of movable typewriter made the printed word increasingly accessible, the printed word has been the favored target of censors” (Semonche, 2007).

In some libraries, a particular set of materials are kept separate from the regular collection. Some of these materials are in a “special” collection because of their age and fragile condition. Some materials are set aside because they are for use in a class and are reserved for a shorter period of circulation. Some materials are protected because library statistics have shown them to be in bigger danger of being stolen or vandalized. These are all perfectly acceptable reasons

for separating out certain materials and should not be interpreted in any way as “censorship”. However, “the common practice of restricting access to certain titles or classes of library materials by locating them in locked cases, on closed shelves or behind the reference librarian’s desk, may be a form of post selection censorship if it is done in order to separate or restrict access to materials that might be considered objectionable”.(Jones, 2009). Challenges to print materials usually happen, as has been mentioned before, in most libraries where the library or information center is acting in line with the institution goals and objectives. Parents and community members are often quite vocal when it comes to the materials to which their children are exposed. However, print materials can, and do, come under attack in academic libraries, as well.

“Censorship can be official or unofficial. Official censorship results from the implementation of recognized legal or administrative procedures, whereas unofficial censorship most frequently involves pressure or persuasion brought to bear on those with the authority or power to censor or prohibit the dissemination of disapproved works, without regard for legitimate procedures (Jones, 2009). Rather than filing an official challenge, the offended patron will occasionally take it upon him or herself to alter the material in such a way as to make it less offensive, like cutting pictures out of a book or magazine, blocking out words or adding their own personal text. Or, in a more passive aggressive manner, an offending material will either be checked out and not returned – when a patron thinks it better to pay for the item and its associated replacement costs than allow it to remain on the shelves, or the item will simply be stolen from the library’s collection.

Censorship of Non-Print Materials and E-Resources

Internet can be described as the major hub for all online materials consulted by library users around the world. One of the reasons that the Internet and the World Wide Web specifically come under such attack in an information setting is because anyone with a computer and Internet access can host a website and, as such, there is very little in the way of peer review or editorial control. When talking about censorship, Internet cannot be overlooked because the bulk of online materials in libraries and information centers can be accessed by anyone who is connected to the Internet.

Academic libraries are usually not required to have internet filtering software because the software often interferes with the researcher’s ability to access any and all information that he or she might require (Jones. 2009). For the non-print resources, challenges come regarding films available for patrons to view or regarding artwork on display in public areas, and an academic librarian must always keep in mind that even though colleges and universities are known for more liberal attitudes regarding books, media, artwork, et cetera, not every patron of the library or student of the university is guaranteed to be as liberal (Jones, 2009).

Censoring of online materials can also be done by a software called the Internet filtering software. It is an uncontrolled software that can be used to censor materials that a library can have access to on the internet via their search links and portals. The internet filtering software has various methods of filtering and they are as follows:

- restrict access to Internet content, based on an internal database of the product, or;
- restrict access to Internet content through a database maintained external to the product itself, or;
- restrict access to Internet content by certain ratings assigned to those sites by a third party or;

- restrict access to Internet content by scanning text, based on a keyword or phrase or text string, or;
- restrict access to Internet content based on the source of the information or;
- restrict access to Internet content by scanning pixels, based on color or tone, or;
- restrict access to Internet content based on the source of the information. (ALA, 2006)

Censorship for Healthy Library Collection Development.

A healthy library collection should be able to meet the information, education, research, academic and recreational needs of the library users. Censorship should be considered during the acquisition of materials for the library because of the wide range of materials that the librarian can have access to in the information market.

According to (Cain's, 2006) article, he is of the view that "the bedrock of all library work is selection" and that libraries should "select in a positive way" to maintain credibility. Selection of materials in the library can be used to determine the kind of collections that can be found in the library. Selection also helps to ensure that the library budget is utilized effectively to acquire materials that can be deemed important to the library users. Selection policies for library materials aim to include items within a limited budget; in contrast, filtering prevents access to information that costs the library nothing and in fact creates a cost itself (Cooke, 2006).

A primary reason why libraries want to control the content of their libraries during collection development is to keep certain information away from students until they are deemed matured enough to deal with them. Those that are in support and against censorship in libraries compose all groups of society. The librarians' stake is implicated when they are faced with the problem of what books are more important than others for acquisition and this can be affected by stringent budgets. Thus, when a variety of activities are performed such as selecting materials, not selecting or weeding materials, classifying materials, physically locating materials in the collection; establishing administrative policies such as those requiring confidentiality, and creating policies that directly affect access to library materials in all formats, censorship may be involved. Students and patrons' can also feel that their right to knowledge is being restricted through the banning of or the restrictions on some books.

The librarian should always remember that the goals and objectives of the library is to ensure that it meets the educational, research, recreational and academic needs of its users. The librarian should also make proactive steps to ensure that acquisition of materials is done by well-trained staff because some materials can pose as a threat to the senses of library users. A healthy library collection is a collection that only tends to assist users to solve their wide range of information needs in line with the goals and objectives of the parent institution. Censorship by users can only be reduced when the librarian acts according to the library laid down collection development policy.

In Nigeria, right to freedom of expression and the press is protected in section 39 of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. In subsection (1) the Constitution states that every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference. Consequently, in section 39(2) the constitutional provision is that every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions. The librarians may also be seen as censors because of their acts of labeling, restricting access and expurgation. Labeling makes libraries vulnerable to libel suits brought by publishers, who may object to their materials being branded with a subjective designation. Expurgation is seen as a direct

violation of the library Bill of Rights, because it restricts access to the full intent of the author, and thereby constitutes censorship. Under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, each individual has the right to read, view, listen to and disseminate constitutionally protected ideas, even if a censor also finds those ideas offensive (Rubin, 2004).

In Nigeria, we have the National Film and Video Censor Board Act, 1993 and National Film and Video Censors Board Regulations (NFVCB), 2008. This Act was established to empower the National Film and Video and Censors Board to regulate the censorship and public exhibition of films and video works and matters connected therewith. The Board was empowered to among other things censor films and video works. Secondly to launch new censorship and classification guidelines to aid film makers and professionalize the operations of the Board. It is stated in section 5(1) of NFVCB Regulations, 2008 that no one shall exhibit, distribute, cause or allow to be exhibited or distributed a musical video unless a censorship certificate has been issued by the Board. In addition, section 5(2) states that each musical video track in a musical video recording shall be considered a short length film to be censored and classified independently. Thus the film and video industry though mainly in the domain of private persons is censored in Nigeria. Audio visuals are also part of library resources and censorship of this materials can help to develop successful library collections.

The librarian should be always be prepared for censorship issues because when the users are not aware of the library goals and objectives; It can lead to one problem or the other ranging from protest as a result of materials found on the shelf and unlawful removal of such materials by students. The librarian should also ensure that book vendors are properly picked and materials acquired are properly documented. This will help to ensure that only materials ordered are supplied and delivered to the library collections. The library collection will be able to serve its users' needs when acquisition of materials is done in line with the list of materials that users have ordered. Censorship for healthy library collection can also be taken where there is low budget for acquisition of materials in the library. The librarian can choose to censor the list of materials that have been submitted from the various departments or arms under the parent institution to ensure that the materials acquired are the ones that are of top priority to the needs of the library users. The librarian must ensure that he/she do not overs censor to avoid losing out on important materials that could have been helpful to the library users.

Challenges of Censorship in Libraries

Libraries are faced with one censorship challenge or the other because of the wide area of their collections based on the acquisition policy being practiced. In the unfortunate circumstance that a library is confronted with a challenge to an item in the collection, it is best to consult the collection development policy handbook to be able to address the challenge. Another challenge that librarians can face as regards censorship is in terms of trying to meet the various views of its wide range of users. Librarians can decide to censor a material that can be seen obscene to some set of users while to some other set, the material is accepted and can be seen as very important. That is why the best thing to do is to ensure that censorship in libraries and information centers is done in line with the laid down goals and objectives of the parent institution where the library is located.

Jones (2009) describes some terms that can be referred to as challenges to censorship and they include questioning, objections and complaints. Questioning is 'inquiring about the reasons for material being or not being in the library's collection', and is not in itself an attempt to censor. In contrast to this, objections and complaints include the opinion that the library's selection decisions were wrong. Jones states that these may be formal or informal, and can include

comments made to staff when returning a book or written comments left in books, in addition to formal written complaints (Jones, 2009).

However, in order to solve the problems of censorship in the library, Curry (1997) grouped the actions that can be taken as follow:

- Relocating material within the library or the library system (e.g. moving to a branch library).
- Discarding material, particularly that which is in paperback format.
- Locating sensitive material in a reserve or restricted section immediately after purchase.
- Gathering positive reviews in anticipation of a challenge.
- Encouraging staff to offer verbal cautions to patrons.

One of the most important things to remember is to be prepared, not until one is faced with a challenge that a strategy will be setup. Plan ahead, have guidelines in place and make sure everyone who works in the library understands these procedures. Libraries and information centers in Nigeria should ensure that its policies and procedures guiding the acquisition and purchase of materials is regularly updated to avoid censorship issues that may arise as a result of acquisition of a material to the library. The library should ensure that it do not contradict the freedom of information act that has been setup by the federal government through restriction of materials that can be consulted by its wide category of users.

The library should ensure that its collection development policy contains relevant guidelines that will guide as against complaints relating to censorship issues. It is a good idea to develop a standardized form that requires the patron to answer questions about the material and why they object to it.

The library's position on intellectual freedom should be communicated to the public. By explaining what intellectual freedom means (that it is a broad set of principles intended to guard against censorship), you may gain more community support. It might be a good idea to post the library's own version of the Library Bill of Rights in the library or make it available in a pamphlet to its users.

Gift items that might deserve special attention include books by local authors, local photographs of historical interest, yearbooks from local schools, local newspapers of historical importance, and local memorabilia can be treated specially and preserved. Librarians should remember that old photographs may need special (possibly expensive) treatment to prevent them from deteriorating; color photocopies on acid-free paper may be a good option. Likewise, old newspapers and scrapbooks of newspaper clippings should probably be photocopied, laminated (in multiple pieces, if necessary) and/or microfilmed before they become useless. With today technology, these materials can be scanned and preserved in the library's databases.

Conclusion

The issue of censorship in libraries and information centers is an issue that cannot be overlooked. The success of a library depends on how well its collections can be effectively built up to meet the goals, objectives and aims of its parent institution. A lot of libraries are faced with collection development issues based on acquisition of materials that will not be deemed obscene and annoying to the sense of its users. With a well-developed acquisition policy, libraries can be able to overcome the problem of censorship and also prepare for censorship issues where there are incidents of such cases in the library.

While libraries can restrict availability, especially through the selection or de-selection of materials for ideological reasons, the librarians must exclude their own moral judgments from their work. Problems always arise when information is withheld for the purpose of keeping specific economic, religious, or social classes from progressing which is antithetical to the democratic system and should be avoided by every possible means. Censorship is a difficult issue. It is not, however, a librarian's job to push censorship, instead, libraries must push for the unobstructed freedom to explore ideas. Parents, on the other hand, can make a push to censor what their children see, hear, or read, but should understand that believes are solidified by exploring opposing viewpoints. Libraries need to continue their push to uphold the NLA rules and objectives guiding the establishment and professional operation of libraries and information centers in Nigeria.

In managing the library and its services, the librarian should promote inclusion and should not discriminate against any library user regardless of sex, ethnic group, nationality, social condition, religion or political opinions. The librarian should provide the highest level of service through courteous, prompt, adequate, skillful, accurate and unbiased responses to all requests for assistance to the user. As information providers, censorship should be treated with caution. Information is power, everybody in the society needs it for their survival, once it is made available, the users will be on top of their challenges.

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