



Contributions of the African LIS intellectuals and libraries to the African Renaissance

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Outline



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Introduction

- This paper argues that Africa's progress towards renaissance is crippled by many challenges including illiteracy (De Jager, Nassimbeni & Underwood, n.d; Mnkeni-Saurombe & Zimu 2013), lack of local content in public libraries (Mutula 2008; Raju & Raju 2010) and marginalization of indigenous knowledge (IK) (Ocholla & Onyacha 2005).
- Therefore the aim is to explore how LIS intellectuals are contributing to improve the situation

Definition of key terms

- **African renaissance** (Bongmba 2004; Dalamba 2000; Nkuna 2013; Teffo 2014)
- LIS context – it means the ability of the LIS intellectuals to use local knowledge as a base in building new knowledge with an aim of improving the quality of life of the masses (Ntuli 2002). Tise (2001) associates renaissance with the launch of the National Library of S.A.; its logo; its vision~



Definition of key terms

- **Intellectuals** are those individuals who educate themselves not only for self-gratification but also to empower others (Ndletyana 2008).
- **Libraries:** the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) describes a public library as the local center that provides access to all kinds of information and knowledge and to all ages (Chisita 2011; Mnkeni-Saurombe & Zimu 2013).

Conceptual background

- For the renaissance to be effective it must begin with reconaissance – to raise awareness among all of us about self-awareness and historical awareness (Vambe 2010:256).
- The first two public libraries to open doors for the non-whites: Johannesburg Public Library & Natal Society Library (Rodrigues 2005:81)
- In 1994 libraries inherited a mixed library legacy (Mnkeni-Saurombe & Zimu 2013)
- NCLIS, policy advisory body of the Minister of DAC was proposed (Hart 2010:82; Witbooi 2005).
- NCLIS Act (2001) stipulates that NCLIS is responsible for the transformation agenda of libraries.

SA Libraries post-1994

- 2007 conditional grant introduced by DAC to support developmental projects in libraries – concern is the lack of evidence of the current status and changed status on the communities served (Stilwell 2011a)
- NCLIS Symposium (2014), DDG of Arts & Culture
 - ❑ lack of functional libraries remains a challenge.
 - ❑ intervention programmes in school libraries still limited.

LIS Intellectuals' contributions to improving social exclusion factors

This presentation will focus on only 3 dimensions of socio-economic challenges:

- ❑ Illiteracy
- ❑ Marginalization of Indigenous languages (IL)
- ❑ Marginalization of Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS)

Illiteracy

- **Challenges:** (De Jager, Nassimbeni and Underwood, n.d.)
 - ❖ estimates of literacy rates in SA (Aitchison & Harley 2004):
 - ❑ 33.9 percent (or 8.5 million) of the population is functionally illiterate
 - ❑ 22.3 percent of adult black Africans have not attended school.
 - ❑ Primary school reading literacy results conducted by SACMEQ II confirms SA lags behind other African countries
- **Opportunities:** DAC Grant; IL Projects in public libraries; scholarly work & projects in the LIS Education sector: (UNISA Academic Literacy Research Project Unit)

Indigenous languages

- **Dual role:** it is a means of communication and a carrier of cultural identity (Nkuna 2013).
- To safeguard the endangered indigenous languages the government of South Africa developed the National Language Policy Framework (2003). The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) is mandated to ensure that all provinces comply (Ngulube 2012).
- **Challenges:** the scarcity of writers; editors, proof-readers, lexicographers and publishers committed to publish in indigenous languages; scarcity of local content in public libraries (Mutula 2008; Ngulube 2012).
- **Opportunities:** SA media broadcasting news; NLSA translations of classics (2009); Telephone Interpretation Service of South Africa (TISSA); Recapitalization Programme of the City of Johannesburg (2010) (Ngulube 2012; Stilwell 2011a)

Indigenous knowledge systems

- IKS – a set of complex technologies of the populations indigenous to a geographic area and their interfaces with others (NRF 2006 in Green 2007:136).
- **Challenges:** Marginalization; limited content in public libraries; lack of collection development policies; lack of knowledge about IP laws; limited digitization projects; lack of skills to digitize; lack of skills to access digitized IK (Britz & Lor 2004:217; Mutula 2008; Ngulube 2002).
- Urgent need to digitize and repackage so that it is available globally - to learn from TKDL of India (Chisenga 2002; Raju & Raju 2009:5).
- **Opportunities:** IKS Policy (2007); IP Policy & Bill (2007); immense scholarly work published; projects in Africa (Ocholla & Onyacha 2005; World Bank 2003)

Problem Statement

- IK has been with us since time immemorial but has been marginalized and not managed like scientific knowledge (Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002). It is not documented but held in the minds of elders of whom the culture of sharing is declining (Sibanda in World Bank 2004; Sibisi in World Bank 2004). The traditional tools have not sufficiently contributed to IK management and protection and likewise the current intellectual property laws (Britz & Lipinski 2001). Yet few empirical studies have been conducted to confirm what innovative methods can be used to improve the situation (Lwoga, Ngulube & Stilwell 2010). Therefore the aim of this study was to explore scientifically whether Ndlangubo village has similar experiences.

Aim of the study

- It is a known fact that IK comprises of both tacit and non-tacit knowledge. Since IK is largely tacit, the aim of the study was to explore the existing management and preservation methods, their advantages and disadvantages. Further the study aimed to determine how they can be linked to the four modes of the SECI model in order to construct the social world. According to Nonaka and Toyama (2003) and Ngulube (2003) this model provides a holistic approach to the management and preservation of IK as it promotes the use of both in-situ and ex-situ preservation methods. The diffusion of innovation model (Dol) was adopted in order to strengthen the argument of the SECI model. It is a theory of social change and focuses on the adoption of an innovation.

Study objectives in relation to the methodology

(author's study)

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Target Population	Research methods & instruments
1. To identify various domains of IK most commonly used for daily survival in the Ndlangubo village	1. What are the various domains of IK most commonly used for daily survival in the Ndlangubo village?	Knowledge holders ; CoGTA field workers & knowledge intermediaries	Qualitative approach – naturalistic in-depth inquiry - to gain deeper understanding of knowledge creation; use; transfer to generations GT Design - researcher had a direct control on the construction of thick data (Denzin in Gabrium & Holsteim 2002:676)
2. To establish methods and tools used in managing and preserving IK	2. What methods and tools are used in managing and preserving IK?	Knowledge holders ; field workers & knowledge intermediaries	Focus groups (Semi-structured Interviews Observation (participative & non-participative)
3. To determine ownership protocols for the various IK domains and what they know about the South African intellectual property law system	3. Who are the owners of the various IK domains and what do they know about the South African intellectual property law system ?	Knowledge holders ; field workers & knowledge intermediaries	
4. To determine the use and the role of libraries, databases and ICTs in managing and preserving IK	4. What role can libraries, databases and ICTs play in the management and preservation of IK in the Ndlangubo village ?	Knowledge holders ; field workers & knowledge intermediaries	

Data analysis & interpretation

- 5 steps recommended by Ulin, Robinson and Tolley (2005) were adopted:
 1. Preparation – reading and reviewing notes
 2. Coding – Initial coding (labels and codes attached to paragraphs)
 3. Displaying – Selective & focused coding / comparing
 4. Reducing - Selective coding & Memo writing
 5. Interpretation – Developing concepts & theory by integrating set of memos and in vivo codes

Need for expertise to help in doing formal coding – data is in the community's local language isiZulu – written memos and voice recording format

Findings of the study

- **Findings in line with the objectives of the study:**
- Rich in IK
- Adherence to traditional preservation methods in managing IK
- Community do not have knowledge about IP laws
- ICTs and libraries are not used to preserve IK, some community members are not aware that there are libraries in some schools
- Cell phones are used by some CoPs' for agricultural farming to communicate invitations for urgent meetings
- Knowledge sharing through the use CoPs preferred by certain population groups; but others recommended the use of ICTs and libraries in order to keep up with the trend

Limitations

- Participatory mapping tools were not used
- Focus group sizes ranged from one to 30 participants (determined by logistical consideration and willingness to participate)
- Some participants not keen to share knowledge
- Study conducted at a critical time of post adverse effects of dry conditions and some participants wanted to drive discussions to that agenda
- **Conclusion:** Information management gaps identified and there is a need for the intervention innovative programmes that will help in managing knowledge for sustainable development purposes. For example there is a poet with a collection of poems in desperate need to publish.

THANK YOU



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