



Potential role of women librarians in actualizing the global climate change agenda for sustainable development

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Abstract

It has been projected that the effects of climate change will hit Africa more than any other continent. For the avoidance of the casualties that may come with these changes, different sectors, units, and governments have been working tirelessly to prepare for sudden occurrences. However, it is imperative to put up studies and keep records of the various changes and likely solutions in case of any untold climate difficulty. Among those who are making frank efforts in proffering solutions to climate change issues are the women librarians. This is because women suffer the most from the direct and indirect effects of climate change, they have fewer resources, education, and decision-making power than men. The women also depend more on natural resources for their day-to-day living. This work investigated the women librarians in the climate change agenda. To drive this study, the survey research method was adopted with a questionnaire designed using a four-point Likert rating scale for data collection. The population is 118 comprised of women librarians in Federal Universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Data received was analysed using descriptive statistics. The study also investigates the challenges faced. The findings among others were that Women Librarians provide information to researchers of climate change when they seek materials. Again, this study shows that fighting climate change cannot be achieved without women because women are vital to building climate resilience in our communities. The findings also show that some women librarians formed groups to visit some communities affected by climate change (flood in particular) and educate them on how to recover quickly by sharing information from developed countries that have witnessed similar cases. The overall take from this study is that empowering women means more effective climate change solutions.

Keywords: climate change Agenda, climate, women librarians, sustainable development, climate information.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Take urgent action
to combat
climate change
and its impacts**

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, climate change has been an issue of concern. According to Chewe and Banda (2021), climate change is a cross-cutting development issue that affects every aspect of sustainable development looking at the 2030 agenda. The way the climate has been showing different features ranging from the type of rain that fall with heavy storm leading to an increase in flooding recorded in our various communities, states, and countries at large and even the atmospheric weather condition generally which changes at random based on climate change. These changes have impacted human lives in a variety of ways, and threaten the essential ingredients of good health- clean air, safe drinking water, etc (WHO, n.d).

In fighting how climate change will not entangle human activities completely joining other organisations, sectors, government bodies and individuals are the women librarians. Women librarians are professionals and managers of information. The information under them is catalogued, organised, and classified for easy accessibility. It has been a concern to units, women librarians in particular about the climate change agenda. Women librarians according to Nwezeh and Oluwasanmi (2009) are information keepers, organisers, and preservation experts as regards documents of vital happenings.

Nevertheless, the 17 sustainable development goals which remain an urgent call for action by all countries are a concern to all and sundry. The world sees these goals as the right path to solving issues bordering on human better living on earth. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development has the records on these goals highlighted with its 169 targets, 3530 events so far, 1329 publications, and 6633 Actions, all of which are to show how important driving these goals home is. However, in recent times climate which is Goal 13 out of the 17 goals has taken a different toll since the changes in climatic

conditions are no more stable hence the agenda to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Therefore, the importance of the agenda is everyone's priority, the women librarians inclusive.

The backdrop of this paper is to ascertain the role the women librarians are playing to be a part to this progress as it concerns urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Statement of the Problem

Climate change today is giving everyone a serious concern moreover a situation where the experts (meteorologists and climatologists) are getting confused by the day.

Since the change is getting drastic, unstable, and incomprehensible, for them to succeed it is not a fight for them alone but rather a combined task for results to be achieved.

The role of other sectors, units, individuals, and professionals like women librarians is ideal in information storage, retrieval, and accessibility. Therefore, the birth of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate the potential role of women librarians in actualizing the global climate change agenda for sustainable development. The specific objectives include to:

1. Ascertain the roles women librarians play in actualizing the global climate change agenda.
2. Determine the tools used to ascertain their role in actualizing the global climate change agenda
3. Identify the challenges encountered in carrying out their roles in actualizing the global climate change agenda

Research Questions

1. What are the roles played by women librarians in actualizing the global climate change agenda?
2. What are the tools used by women librarians in ascertaining their roles in actualizing the global climate change agenda?
3. In carrying out their role what are the challenges recorded?

Scope of the Study

This study covers only women librarians at Federal University in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. These universities are the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) – with 15 women librarians, the University of Benin (UniBen) with 7 women librarians, University of Calabar (Unical) – 57 women librarians, University of Uyo (Unillyo) – 20 women librarians, Federal University of Petroleum, Effurum (FUPRE) – 13 and Federal University Otuoke (FUO) – 6 women librarians. The total of women librarians from the covered scope is 118 women librarians in Federal Universities in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Brief Literature

Women Librarians

In librarianship as a profession, women are active trailblazers in the information and dissemination drive.

According to Karmakar, Bose, and Majumder (2002), women librarians work tirelessly in carrying out their role in society and the development of their countries and families. The authors stated that most women librarians are highly qualified with knowledge of computers, and other careers which has given them the openness to embark on other assignments. This is not farfetched to the role they play in actualizing the global climate change agenda. Ahiauzu

and Echem (2019) stated that female librarians perform a veritable role in the delivery of advisory service, and community service, among others. To Ogunbadejo (2019) women librarians are professionally trained women in charge of managing library information resources. Their roles include the selection, processing, and organization of information materials for easy accessibility. In today's life, their activities have made them assume the position of and function as instructors, mediators, and even in most cases guidance and counselors. As mediators between the information users and the information they need can transform their lives and as well benefit society and the climate change issue inclusive. Ogunbadejo further stated that librarians are often referred to as helpers as they ensure they get involved in assisting individuals, sectors, units, and parastatals among others to get information and resources for challenges they are facing. However, funding is a prerequisite for the overall survival of their roles.

Women librarians as they work ensure that they use tools that will help manage some climate-related risks and opportunities.

Women librarians are the drive for the actualization that we seek about the climate and collaborate with other experts to get more insight on this issue. Charney, Griffith, Rubio, and Williams (2000) saw the need for collaboration among women librarians on climate actions thus. They stated:

We invite you and your library to join us as change-makers in this word

... We cannot return to business as usual

A new story is unfolding ...

The climate change emergency...

We must pivot, transform, stretch, reflect, listen, demand, and act.

We need to act as if our lives depend on it because they do.

Climate Change

It simply means a turn around on the weather condition and even the temperature of the atmosphere which could be naturally or artificially caused.

According to the United Nations, climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. This shift records different changes which affect human lives negatively or positively.

Sustainable development in society cannot be complete without having a favourable climate for what they do. This is so because people experience climate change in diverse ways. Climate change can affect our day-to-day activities, health, ability to carry out agricultural activity, etc. It affects housing and even the safety of lives. In the countries where they have emissions that course climate change which affects people irrespective of where they are from SDG 13 states its main goal is to “strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazard and natural disasters in all countries”. Stated it clear that people should take climate action seriously.

The women librarians, as natural managers and mothers that they are, are aware of the negative effect of climate change and therefore joined others in actualizing the global climate change agenda.

Most importantly, people’s actions on what leads to these changes should be curtailed, and more focus on what will minimize the change in climate while we also let nature course to it.

Sustainable Development

In the year 2015, the United Nations adopted the global goal which is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was a call for action to end poverty, ensure that the planet is protected, and ensure extreme enjoyment of peace by the year 2030.

However, out of the 17 goals with 169 targets on how to achieve these goals was goal 13 which is climate action knowing that nothing works well when the climate is not friendly. Therefore, an absolute drive to a healthy and poverty-free environment for sustainable development requires that the climate works.

Challenges encountered by the Women Librarians in Actualizing the global climate change agenda

Even as it was opined by Osman-Elasha (n.d) that climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of the twenty-first century many experts and professional bodies like women librarians still see the need to do their own bit in addressing the problem. In carrying out the role challenges they encountered were

- **Nonchalant attitude of some women librarians.** Some women librarians do not see the problem of climate change as a serious one and hence do not join in the fight for the changes experienced or noticed as a result of these changes. If the women librarians don't come out to join and provide the needed information and speak up as regards what information has been deposited in their care how would the people know? It is everyone's fight because we all are in it together.
- **Inadequate funds.** Funding is the key to greater success when driving toward achieving a goal. Harder (2019) stated clearly about climate change that "climate change is so hard to tackle" and that if it must get its required attention and speed things need to be done. Funding of the materials, equipment to be used, purchase of data, etc are to be given serious attention.
- **Insufficient working tools.** Pairing two to three persons to a computer when important activities are on does not signify progress. There is a need for more tools to expedite action properly.

- **Unstable power supply.** Power is a key player in this quest for climate change. To alert the people of the changes in climate we require electricity to make it work and make it heard even in the faraway land. Ahiauzu and Echem (2019) in their study on the role of female librarians, among the challenges stated that female librarians face a paucity of power which has affected their service delivery effectively.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research method with a questionnaire designed using a four-point Likert rating scale for data collection. Data received were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results and Discussion

Question 1: What are the roles played by women librarians in actualizing the global climate change agenda?

Table 1: Roles played by women librarians in actualizing the global climate change agenda

SN	ITEMS	\bar{x}	\pm	DECISION
1	Women librarians act as consultants and assistants to climate change agenda information materials.	3.88	2.4	Agreed
2	Information materials that deal with global climate change are preserved by women librarians.	3.76	1.7	Agreed
3	The preserved materials for the global climate are made available whenever researchers of climate seek information.	3.87	3.4	Agreed
4	Women librarians form smaller groups for the visitations of victims of climate change(flood).	3.84	0.7	Agreed
5	Women librarians as information managers assist researchers / other information seekers on climate change on how to access information.	3.83	1.3	Agreed
6	Women librarians record climate change and preserve the records which they share with researchers when the need arises.	3.78	1.5	Agreed
7	Women librarians engage in the establishment of cooperation between them and organizations for climate matters.	3.81	3.1	Agreed
8	Women librarians facilitate the acquisition of information materials moreover when it is in need by researchers of climate change.	3.86	0.2	Agreed

From Table 1 the responses on the roles women librarians play in actualizing global climate change can be derived. The respondents agreed with all the items. The first item, Women librarians act as consultants and assistants to climate change agenda information materials obtained mean score of 3.88, the second item, Information materials that deal with global climate change are preserved by women librarians obtained a mean score of 3.76, the third item, The preserved materials for the global climate are made available whenever researchers of climate seek the information obtained a mean score of 3.87, the fourth item, Women librarians form smaller groups for the visitations of victims of climate change(flood) obtained a mean score of 3.84, the fifth item, Women librarians as information managers assist researchers/other information seekers on climate change on how to access information obtained a mean score of 3.83, the sixth item, Women librarians record climate change and preserve the records which they share with researchers when the need arises obtained a mean score 3.78, the seventh item, Women librarians engage in the establishment of cooperation between them and organizations for climate matters obtained a mean score of 3.81, and eight item, Women librarians facilitates the acquisition of information materials moreover when it is in need by researchers of climate change obtained a mean score of 3.86. This realization shows women librarians have enormous roles to play in the actualization of the global climate change initiative. Accordingly, Karmakar, Bose, and Majumder (2002) concur that women librarians work tirelessly in carrying out their roles in society and the development of their countries and families. Furthermore, Ahiauzu and Echem (2019) stated that female librarians perform a veritable role in the delivery of advisory service, and community service, among others. These opinions are not farfetched to the roles women play in actualizing the global climate change agenda.

Question 2: What are the tools used by women librarians in ascertaining their roles in actualizing the global climate change agenda?

Table 2: The tools used by women librarians in ascertaining their roles in actualizing the global climate change agenda.

SN	ITEMS	\bar{x}	\pm	DECISION
1	Women librarians make use of notes for record keeping.	3.13	1.8	Agreed
2	Women librarians make use of loudspeakers when creating awareness in communities on climate conditions and what to do.	3.51	2.5	Agreed
3	Women librarians use the internet to educate people on social media platforms.	3.42	3.1	Agreed
4	Women librarians print flyers for users to read about climate change.	3.62	2.4	Agreed
5	Women librarians organize talks on climate change.	2.99	3.4	Agreed

The respondents on ‘the tools used by women librarians in ascertaining their roles in actualizing the global climate change agenda’ agreed with items 1 to 5. The respondents agreed in ascending order with item 4 (Women librarians print flyers for users to read about climate change) at 3.62, item 3 (Women librarians use the internet to educate people on social media platforms) at 3.42, item 2 (Women librarians make use of loudspeakers when creating awareness to communities on climate conditions and what to do) with 3.51, item 1 (Women librarians make use of notes for record-keeping) with 3.13, and item 5 (Women librarians organize talks on climate change) with 2.99. The findings show that women librarians have a lot of tools in their arsenal to actualize the global climate agenda. From the findings, these tools include record keeping, a public address system for awareness campaigns, the internet, flyers, and public engagements (seminars and symposiums). Although there are challenges that affect the effective service delivery of women librarians (Ahiazu & Echem, 2019), this finding negates this by establishing that there is a replete of available tools for achieving global climate change at the disposal of women librarians.

Question 3: In carrying out their role what are the challenges recorded?

Table 3: Challenges recorded by women librarians in carrying out their roles.

SN	ITEMS	\bar{x}	\pm	DECISION
1	In carrying out the roles of actualizing the global climate change agenda women librarians face inadequate funding to purchase working materials.	3.85	1.9	Agreed
2	Inadequate computers and high charges of internet service providers during the period of educating people in social media.	3.43	3.2	Agreed
3	Unstable power supply during activities that require electricity.	3.48	2.4	Agreed
4	Women librarians as information managers are not part of decision-makers at national and local levels regarding the allocation of resources for climate change initiatives.	3.61	1.5	Agreed

In assessing the challenges truncating the effort of women librarians in carrying out their global change activities, the respondents expressed that item 1, In carrying out the roles of actualizing the global climate change agenda women librarians are faced with inadequate funding to purchase working materials (3.85). This particular challenge got the highest percentage among others, This implies that fund is crucial in running the activities of any system and thus in line with, item 2, Inadequate computers and high charges of internet service providers during the period of education people in social media (3.43), item 3, Unstable power supply during activities that require electricity (3.48) and item 4, Women librarians as information managers are not part of decision-makers at national and local levels regarding allocation of resources for climate change initiatives (3.61) constitute challenges in the wheels of carrying out their roles. In support, Osman-Elasha (n.d) averred that climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of the twenty-first century. The author listed some challenges to include nonchalant attitude of some women librarians, inadequate funds, insufficient working tools, and unstable power supply.

Conclusion

Climate change can affect our day-to-day activities, health, ability to carry out agricultural activity, etc and so the need to give it a serious thought and our best in proffering solutions on how to curtail, minimize and live with its effects.

It has been itemized and explained the roles women librarians play on the global climate change agenda to achieve sustainable development even in the face of the challenges they encounter, there is still the need to strive harder just like other agencies to save our societies, and the resources therein.

Climate change is a continuous, and from time -to-time changes of the atmospheric whether condition which is not absolutely predicted by experts therefore, there is need for preparedness, preservation of information for the support of researchers and collaborations with different sectors/units for overall best results.

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