

Librarians and social change: A systematic literature review



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ABSTRACT

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Throughout history, a constant component in the development of society is change, which often occurs within the social sphere and is referred to as social change. Social change involves and affects the lives of everyone subjected to it. For this reason, libraries and librarians have been more recognized in recent years for their contributions towards social causes and their potential as key players in social change. However, there still exists a gap in the understanding of their role and impact as likely fundamental contributors in social change. This study aims to address this gap through a systematic literature review which evaluates existing literature that centers on social change and libraries and librarians. The study aims to draw insights in the ways that libraries and librarians impact social change, and consequently influence library policies, practices, and discussions on the societal role of libraries. The reviewed literature revealed several trends of libraries and librarians being active contributors in social change, namely: libraries and librarians becoming recognized for their role as change agents in a continuously evolving society, and; the impact of having access to information and being knowledgeable in effectively applying it in a community could lead to improvements in different sectors. With better informed and better educated individuals, society can move forward towards an environment that provides equal opportunities and rights to all members, thus highlighting the positive and possible impact of libraries and librarians in supporting social change.

Contribution/Originality: This study addresses the literature gap on the understanding of the role and influence of libraries and libraries as fundamental contributors in social change. To the best of my knowledge, there is a paucity of literature and studies on the topic.

1. INTRODUCTION

The continued existence of society can only be attributed to the changes it has gone through to accommodate the ever-changing needs of its population. Throughout history, a constant component found in every country and time period is change, which often occurs within the social sphere and is referred to as social change. This phenomenon is generally described as the transition towards a new or modified version of social systems, structures, beliefs, values, attitudes, and other aspects that dominate a society (Matin, 2011). Moreover, it is a continuous process influenced by economic and cultural shifts, technological advancements, and political factors

that affect daily life at a personal and communal level (Sheldon & Moore, 1968). For instance, the transition of beliefs and values in decades prior to now regarding issues such as mental health, same-sex marriage, disabilities, and others-previously neglected obstacles are a reflection of the social change that occurred, illustrating how social change can profoundly impact a person's life.

In the midst of these changes are libraries and librarians that extend their efforts in advancing social causes by performing their duties as information institutions. The resources and services they provide to their communities are often the ones that are able to incite change by making well-informed members of society. This is reflected in the library programs and efforts that focus on addressing societal issues such as hunger, illness, education, empowerment, and others that affect people (Garrido & Wyber, 2017) and promoting and improving information literacy (Musoke & Namugera, 2014). Given that social change involves and affects the lives of everyone subjected to it, such events require much effort not only in enacting it but also in sustaining it. For this reason, libraries and librarians have been more recognized in recent years for their contributions towards social causes and their potential as key players in social change. However, despite such recognition, there still exists a gap in the understanding of their role and impact as likely fundamental contributors to social change. This study aims to address this gap through a systematic literature review that will evaluate existing literature that centers on social change and libraries and librarians. In doing so, the researchers aim to draw insights into the ways that libraries and librarians impact social change and consequently influence library policies, practices, and discussions on the societal role of libraries.

This literature review aims to answer the following questions:

1. What do the literature say about libraries/librarians and social change?
2. How do the librarians affect social change?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Change: An Overview

2.1.1. Definition of Social Change and its Historical Context

The concept of social change has captivated scholars due to its relevance in varying fields, such as sociology, history, politics, anthropology, and more. Due to the scale of which social change occurs, varying definitions have been created in attempts to encapsulate such social upheavals. Early discussions of the essence of social change were centered on the structural changes in society, particularly in their population, wherein Ginsberg (1958) discussed that changes in its size and composition were significant determinants of social change. For instance, their study surmised that events such as the progression or regression of social classes, transitions to different economic domains, and expansion or reduction in family size illustrate social change due to the adoption of a different structure of a majority of its population (Ginsberg, 1958). This is supported by Kuppuswamy (1975) discussion of the concept, adding that a difference in a society's structure and function defines social change. In addition to this, changes in a society's values, behavior, and beliefs also constitute social change, Kuppuswamy (1975) provided that the transition allows society to continue existing and functioning (Ginsberg, 1958). To further illustrate, the concept of Sanskritization coincides with the aforementioned definitions, in which people are able to rise to higher statuses within the caste system by adopting different values and customs, which, in the case of India during this period, were the Brahminic beliefs, rites, and way of living (Bopegamage & Kulahalli, 1971).

However, due to the magnitude of the scope of social change, scholars discussed whether it also concerns the direction in which society moves toward. Kuppuswamy (1975) emphasized that social change is not necessarily concerned with the direction it takes society; rather, it is focused on the *process* itself in the transition towards a new or modified version of societal systems and structures. Thus, these discussions that have been presented over the years have allowed for the development of a definition that may encompass the scale of social change that modern

scholars often use, that being: social change refers to the shifting of systems, values, structures, behaviors, and others in society that result in the introduction of new or a modification that suits the current social climate (Matin, 2011).

2.1.2. Components of Social Change

Having established the essence of social change, its components have also been discussed to provide a framework that allows the comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the change that occurred. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) discussed that social change has three main components: structural determinants, processes and mechanisms, and direction. The first component focuses on the social, economic, political, and cultural structures that directly impact people's lives, which are often manifested in policies, norms, laws, and institutions (Haferkamp & Smelser, 1992). Meanwhile, processes and mechanisms are concerned with conflict in political or social contexts, and direction refers to the consequences of the changes (Haferkamp & Smelser, 1992). However, critics of this framework have pointed out the oversimplification of social change, citing that one component of one change can be another change's component, thus presenting the complexity of social change. Despite the limitation, it still provides a guide for identifying societal changes. Moreover, this framework is in line with the discussed attributes of change by Strasser and Randall (1981), which list "magnitude of change, time span, direction, rate of change, amount of violence involved." Furthermore, upon closer analysis of the components of social change, conflict frequently appears as a causation of change, indicating that conflict and all its various forms are also an integral component of social change (Cosser, 1957).

2.1.3. Role of Social Change in Advancing Society

As discussed previously, social change is not a determinant of moving forward as a society; instead, they posited that social change merely involved major changes in societal structures, regardless of the direction this action may take. Given this, while not an automatic indicator, it can be a significant component in the advancement of society. For instance, historical events, such as the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the Women's Suffrage Movement during the 1920s, were major social changes that addressed issues of discrimination based on race and gender, respectively; additionally, the Industrial Revolution also constitutes a significant change in society as economic growth and improved quality of life were linked to it Pais (2023). This indicates that social change can have significant contributions to a society's advancement as it can identify and satisfy the continuously evolving needs of society by modifying or creating new institutions and systems that better cater to these. Moreover, social change is also capable of empowering marginalized groups and increasing inclusivity, which expands their access to opportunities and resources in their communities (Mehra & Srinivasan, 2007). However, enacting social change also has its challenges, one being the expected resistance from those who currently benefit from the existing customs (Akujobi & Jack, 2017). Akujobi and Jack (2017) lists several reasons as to why some people may resist social change, namely: overall costs, compatibility with existing customs, values, and beliefs, interest in maintaining status quo, verifiability of innovation, and technical challenges. Nonetheless, it still warrants effort in achieving social change, as its benefits outweigh the challenges that may be presented.

2.2. Libraries/Librarians and Social Change: An Overview

2.2.1. Social Change in Relation to Libraries and Librarians

Libraries and librarians have existed for as long as records have been created, and their role in promoting literacy and education and providing resources has significantly contributed to social change. These institutions are an integral component of societal development as they provide one of the most valuable tools that lead to personal and communal development, which is information (Garcia-Febo, 2016). According to Tremblay-McGaw (1999)

people who wish to enact social change, such as advocacy groups and frontline staff, are often hindered by their lack of information and their access to reliable sources or spaces for convening. This suggests that the efforts of libraries meeting their community's information needs significantly contribute to social changes, as people may use this information for forwarding their cause or self-development. For instance, libraries and librarians are at the forefront of promoting information literacy to develop a mindset of life-long learning and ensure that people are capable of making informed decisions in different aspects, such as finances, health, education, and others (Garcia-Febo, 2016). A community that is well-educated and information literate can detect when change is required and can analyze the potential effects of such transitions towards new or modified systems, thus showing the significance of libraries in social change. The following sections shall highlight the specific ways that libraries and librarians advance social causes and their contributions towards societal change.

2.3. Libraries/Librarians as Change Agents

2.3.1. Libraries as Community Centers for Social Change

Libraries have been known to be centers of social change in their respective communities due to their contributions to social causes. According to Rayward and Jenkins (2007), these institutions assume a central position in the storing and disseminating of information for educational or cultural purposes. As such, these place libraries in a role where social change may gain traction due to serving as hubs of information and communication regarding relevant social issues. This is reflected in Mattke, Delegard, and Leebaw (2022) work on Mapping Prejudice, an experiment focused on highlighting the structural racism surrounding urban areas in America, emphasizing the role of map libraries due to their provision of the physical space, sources, and services that allowed their community to collaborate on creating maps that accurately present the locations with heavy histories of discrimination. Doing so laid the groundwork for several things: emphasizing the importance and power of libraries collaborating with the public and the understanding of the structural racism embedded in the country, in which the accumulated knowledge can be utilized in the social movements to exact change (Mattke et al., 2022). This coincides with the discussion on social change and highlights the role of libraries as institutions that can raise awareness, provide resources and spaces that are beneficial for those lobbying for policy changes, and more.

Furthermore, the institution's role as centers for social change is further exemplified by Rayward and Jenkins (2007) recounting of the library's efforts in providing spaces of refuge--of people or ideals-- during times of war and revolution. For instance, immigrants benefited from libraries due to their centrality in the Americanization process or of their role as a place of education and information during the South African apartheid. Moreover, Musoke and Namugera (2014) recount the Makerere University Library's programs, such as the Mother's Space, wherein designated spaces were allotted for mothers of all stages and provided them with a safe and relaxing environment for information acquisition and rest. These cases imply that libraries are crucial institutions that can incite change or provide safety and information during major social upheavals that allow communities and individuals to continue existing in renewed landscapes.

2.3.2. Librarians as Change Agents in their Communities

Librarians are recognized as change agents within their communities for their contributions to social causes. Change agents are described as those who seek to change their environment through identifying and providing solutions to produce their desired outcomes (Shah, Asmuni, & Ismail, 2013). Moreover, Cushman (1996) explained that activism is part of being a change agent, which entails the public obligation of identifying their purpose in society and empowering their community. Empowering people, as Cushman (1996) discussed, includes providing resources for achieving their goals, supporting causes, and utilizing one's power or influence in advancing the

accomplishment of others. Thus, this indicates that librarians have an integral role in social change due to their academic position and influence in society.

As such, librarians being change agents are reflected in their efforts of conscious involvement with social issues and engagement with marginalized groups. For instance, Pizmony-Levy (2016) discussed the role of librarians in increasing inclusivity towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community by having collaborations and communicating directly with members of the community to ensure that their policies, services, and resources are according to their needs. Moreover, the librarian's acknowledgement of differing sexualities and identities is significant in the changing of societal perceptions towards the LGBT community as it validates their existence (Pizmony-Levy, 2016). This is further helpful for both parties, as libraries are able to serve their needs while community members are provided a safe space and access to reliable information. Through these actions, librarians exemplify their role as change agents as they contribute towards the change where a society is more accepting of the LGBT community and whose efforts empower other marginalized communities as well.

Moreover, Mehra and Srinivasan (2007) further exemplify the role of librarians as change agents through the library-community convergence framework (LCCF). This article detailed how the framework focused on promoting the participation and involvement of libraries in their respective communities, enhancing their role from bystanders to active participants, especially in enacting needed changes that lead to an improved quality of life (Mehra & Srinivasan, 2007). This is especially needed for marginalized communities, such as migrants and LGBT members, as they are often those who experience inequality and vulnerability from systemic discrimination. LCCF was developed as a customizable framework for influencing policies that can cater to the specific community needs. For example, the programs developed with an ethnographic perspective for local migrants and ethnic groups positively impacted the schools in local reservations by bringing together community members in different reservations, while participatory action research was used in collaborating with LGBT community members for policy changes that will better protect sexual minorities.

In the lens of social change, librarians acting as agents of change are seen as the catalysts that move a society from one state to another. Their role in providing support through services, resources, and space grants minorities access to opportunities previously withheld from them. Thus, librarians can significantly influence social change through their active participation in social causes and engagement with their communities that empower them.

2.4. Libraries/Librarians and Information Access

2.4.1. Role of Libraries in Providing Access to Information for Marginalized Communities

Libraries are known for their role in providing information access to people that are otherwise unavailable to the public. Their efforts are critical for marginalized communities as they often encounter barriers, such as insufficient technology, financial capacity, or education, which can significantly affect their access to relevant information. According to Garcia-Febo (2016) the library's provision of information access can lead people to an improved quality of life as it allows them to increase their education and their opportunities for growth in career, health, and others. This is supported by Garrido and Wyber (2017) discussion and adds that access to information empowers people at an individual and societal level, which can lead to social development. Applying this in the context of social change, libraries' efforts are substantial to social change efforts as they empower and educate minority communities while supporting community development.

This is exemplified by Musoke and Namugera (2014) whose study revolved around the belief that *"change is a fact of life"* and that access to information and its application can significantly contribute to the change efforts in the community. Their study highlighted the efforts of the Makerere University Library in their numerous outreach activities that focused on providing access to information to marginalized communities in Uganda. For instance, the library was vital to the public's access to the Uganda Health Information Digest, which was first discontinued due

to inefficient funding, despite it being an important source of relevant health information. The university library was able to gain funding from the Elsevier Foundation after receiving the demand for continued publication, which led to health workers' skill and knowledge improvement, as well as the education of those without medical backgrounds. In viewing this within the lens of social change, the library's efforts in providing information access led to the enhancement of the community's health information literacy that allowed medical professionals and patients to make better-informed decisions regarding their health.

Aside from this, Garrido and Wyber (2017) report subscribes to the same belief that information access can lead to societal change. The report includes discussions on the impact of information access on different aspects of society, such as sustainable development, agriculture, health, gender equality, and sustainable infrastructure. Each author discussed how providing access to information allowed the following: public libraries supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by meeting their community's needs (Garrido & Wyber, 2017) increased farmers' literacy and knowledge on modern farming techniques, and relevant laws and market information (Jowaisas & Fellows, 2017) supported the community's public health by ensuring the quality of health information and increasing their health literacy (Baker & Musker, 2017) empowered women and girls by increasing their opportunities for self-development and better health (Hafkin, 2017) and aided businesses and governmental institutions with innovations (Shearer, 2017). Such efforts have notably contributed to the improvement of one's quality of life and empowerment, which increases people's opportunities and capabilities in shaping their community to one that supports each person and reflects their values.

2.4.2. Role of Librarians in Promoting Information Literacy for Social Change

A common responsibility of librarians across different countries is the improvement and promotion of a community's information literacy. The American Library Association (1989) defines information literacy as a person's ability to determine when there is an information need and can find, assess, and apply the needed information effectively. The discussions on social change indicate that information literacy can be a useful tool as it makes people be critical of the information they receive and share, particularly those relevant to social causes. Ultimately, information literacy allows people to make better and more informed decisions, which can be helpful in forwarding social movements.

This can be seen in the efforts of the Makerere University Library in promoting health information literacy to rural medical professionals and raising their awareness on the existing health information sources and tools by conducting information literacy workshops in their areas (Musoke & Namugera, 2014). These workshops were instrumental in educating the medical professionals on utilizing information institutions with quality resources within both local and global settings and encouraged life-long learning as part of the program. The effects were evident in the health professionals' improved services, approved grants, and financial aid due to the utilization of relevant sources, and the reduction of poverty due to increased awareness on avoiding recurring illnesses (Musoke & Namugera, 2014). This example highlights the role of librarians in social change as prominent change agents due to their work in promoting information literacy to the community. With better information literacy skills, people are capable of making well-informed decisions and are less likely to become victims of misinformation, disinformation, and other forms of ill intent using information. A society that is knowledgeable is capable of determining when change is needed and how it can be achieved, thus emphasizing the advantage of being information literate and the contributions of librarians in this aspect.

2.4.3. Summary of Key Findings

To summarize the information gathered from existing literature, social change refers to the adoption of a new or modified social structure or system, or a shift in beliefs, attitudes, or values that are followed and enforced by the

majority of the population (Matin, 2011). The main components of social change include structural determinants, processes and mechanisms, and direction; the first refers to things that provide society with a structure, such as laws and norms; the second concerns conflict; while the last focuses on the effects of the change (Haferkamp & Smelser, 1992). While social change does not determine whether a society will advance, it is a significant contributor for such aims as they can influence and bring forth changes that benefit and empower marginalized groups or address neglected issues, despite the challenges that may be faced from those who might oppose and the required efforts in sustaining it (Akujobi & Jack, 2017; Mehra & Srinivasan, 2007).

In relation to social change, libraries and librarians have been recognized for their contributions in supporting social causes by providing advocates and community members with one of the most important tools for change: information. Libraries and librarians are at the forefront of ensuring that people within their communities are well-informed of the policies, opportunities, resources, and programs that could aid them in reaching their goals and increasing their quality of life. For instance, projects such as Mapping Prejudice and Mother's Space and programs that aided migrants, LGBTQ members, and refugees in times of distress showed the impact of libraries on social change by providing spaces for collaboration, learning, and rest, leading to an increased recognition towards libraries as institutions that can incite change and be a reliable resource center (Mattke et al., 2022; Musoke & Namugera, 2014; Rayward & Jenkins, 2007). Additionally, librarians were shown to have considerable influence on social change as change agents due to their active involvement in addressing social issues by creating and adjusting policies and practices that are more inclusive towards marginalized communities, which in turn empower them (Mehra & Srinivasan, 2007; Pizmony-Levy, 2016). These cases show how libraries and librarians are integral change agents that have the ability to forward advocacy work towards the betterment of the community.

Moreover, libraries and librarians have also been credited for their duties in providing information access that aid in societal development within their communities. The selected literature showed that access to information is vital to self and societal development as it allows for better decision-making and therefore access to better opportunities and resources that increase quality of life. This is seen in the efforts of the Makerere University Library that provided free access to relevant health information and improved the community's health information literacy, and the studies that showed the positive impact on agriculture, health, business, and empowerment due to having access to information (Garrido & Wyber, 2017; Musoke & Namugera, 2014). In line with this, the endeavors of librarians in promoting information literacy immensely boosted social change efforts as it encouraged an attitude of life-long learning and improved information skills in terms of identifying, locating, and applying their information needs. This is reflected in the Makerere University Library's programs of teaching health information literacy in Uganda's rural areas, which led to increased awareness of reliable health sources among medical professionals as well as poverty reduction due to improved health practices that prevent recurring illnesses (Musoke & Namugera, 2014). Such actions provide a glimpse into the impact that libraries and librarians can have on society and their potential in being one of the driving forces of social change.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Definition and Process

This study utilized a systematic literature review in answering the research questions. According to Rother (2007) systematic literature review refers to the method of selecting and thoroughly evaluating relevant literature with the aim of answering a particular set of research questions. Xiao and Watson (2019) provide a comprehensive guide to conducting a systematic literature review, wherein they detail the process as, "(1) formulating the research problem; (2) developing and validating the review protocol; (3) searching the literature; (4) screening for inclusion; (5) assessing quality; (6) extracting data; (7) analyzing and synthesizing data; and (8) reporting the findings." Given these steps, the study was conducted in a similar fashion.

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

The formulation of the research problem was mainly focused on social change and the relation and impact of libraries and librarians with it. Once this was established, an inclusion criterion was created to ensure that the sources reviewed were relevant to the study's topic. The criteria for inclusion required that the paper extensively discuss social change, whether it be the main topic or discussed in relation to libraries and librarians. For studies focused on social change itself, papers from different fields and time periods were included to ensure that the discussion would have a wide range, while those that were centered around libraries and librarians were selected based on their discussion of contributions towards social change.

3.3. Search Strategies

3.3.1. Search Engine or Databases

The first search strategy employed during this study was to determine the databases that will be utilized in collating the sources relevant to the topic. Databases, such as, Google Scholar, Journal Storage (JSTOR), Wiley, Taylor and Francis, and Springer were used in searching for articles and books that satisfy the above mentioned criteria due to their exhaustive collection of sources regarding the topic.

3.3.2. Phrase Searching

Second, phrase searching was used once the databases were chosen, which utilizes double quotation marks before and after two or more words to create a specific search term and thus narrow down the retrievable sources that contain the specified phrase (Omekwu, Eke, & Agbo, 2014). For this particular study, the search phrases used were "social change" AND "librar*," and are subsequently combined with specific phrases such as "change agents," "access to information" OR "information access" AND "marginalized community" OR "marginalized communities," and "information literacy" in succeeding paragraphs that discuss a particular topic.

3.3.3. Boolean Operators

Moving forward, the third method made use of Boolean operators, as evidenced in the examples of search phrases mentioned above. Boolean operators refer to the words such as AND, OR, and NOT, stylized in capital letters and inserted in between search words or phrases that allow search engines to return more specific sources tailored to one's information needs. The Boolean operator AND returns resources that contain *all* of the search terms; the operator OR provides results that contain at least one or all search terms; while NOT will exclude sources that contain the search word after the operator (Grewal, Kataria, & Dhawan, 2016).

3.3.4. Wildcards

Fourth, wildcards are also used in modifying the search terms. While the second and third methods ensure that relevant sources are retrieved, wildcards allow for search engines to broaden their search while still maintaining within the specified topic. Wildcards truncate multiple characters in a search word and replace it with an asterisk (*) to include other related sources (Zhou, Xu, Chen, & Pan, 2006). This study utilized the wildcard "librar*" to retrieve results that contain subjects focused on library, libraries, and librarians.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The reviewed literature revealed several trends of libraries and librarians being active contributors to social change. First, libraries and librarians are becoming recognized for their role as change agents in a continuously evolving society. Circling back on Cushman (1996) discussion, the essence of being a change agent is centered in their connection with the community, which often includes collaboration and communication with them on issues

that can be addressed by library responsibilities or policies, such as the provision of materials, services, spaces, or the conducting of programs that raise awareness on issues and opportunities. This is reflected in the library efforts recorded in the selected literature, wherein the impact of their actions directly contributed to the empowerment of marginalized communities, which follows the discussion of Cushman (1996) on the role of change agents. This has been another observable trait in the actions of libraries and librarians in the context of social change, as they tend to focus more on disadvantaged communities such as the LGBTQ and black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) members, persons with disabilities, refugees, and more, ensuring that opportunities, resources, and services are accessed by all at low or zero costs and utilized effectively in their daily lives. From these, it was observed that the social change that libraries and librarians mostly took part in was geared towards policy changes, or the shifting of attitudes, beliefs, and values on certain things, such as becoming information literate and leading to renewed attitudes toward their health, agriculture, business, and self-development.

Second, the impact of having access to information and being knowledgeable in effectively applying it in a community is profound in that it could lead to great improvements in different sectors, emphasizing the role of librarians in social change in this respect. Providing access to information and teaching information literacy are two of the primary responsibilities of librarians, which further highlights their position and influence in society and its journey towards development. This is reflected in the literature that studied the effects of information access on sectors such as agriculture, health, business, and more. For instance, Garrido and Wyber (2017) report surmised that access to information can significantly contribute to the reduction of poverty and hunger in communities due to the increased knowledge and literacy of individual members who in turn apply it in their profession, education, and daily living. Therefore, providing access to information and teaching information literacy must not be underestimated, as doing so equips individuals with essential tools in navigating the world as they seek self and community development.

Having discussed these, the impact of librarians on social change becomes evident in their ability to influence or advance change efforts by extending their duties towards the community. Librarians affect social change by championing information literacy as well as equitable access to information, resources, and opportunities. These serve as their foundation in their endeavors to advance advocacies, improve critical thinking and information literacy skills, and foster collaboration within communities. This is evidenced by the literature reviewed in this study, wherein the actions of librarians have positively impacted their target groups, especially marginalized communities. However, it is important to note that librarians can only effectively affect social change when their actions are directed or extended towards the community and not merely confined within the sociological or physical confines of the library. This indicates that for social change to be enacted through librarians, they must be in tune with the needs of the community. Thus, librarians can impact social change by being active participants in promoting literacy and equal access to information, as opposed to being passive observers of societal development.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, libraries and librarians have significant influence on social change in numerous ways. First, their role as change agents has been an integral component in forwarding social causes, as they are recognized as physical institutions where change can be conceptualized and materialized and as professionals that are capable of empowering marginalized communities by identifying and providing solutions to issues that place people in disadvantaged and vulnerable situations. Second, their work as institutions that provide equitable and cost-free access to information has paved the way for development in many areas, as reflected in the reduction of poverty and hunger; moreover, their promotion of information literacy among its community members also has profound effects on individuals as it encourages self and communal development, especially in terms of education and profession. With better informed and better educated individuals, society can move forward towards an environment that

provides equal opportunities and rights to all members, thus highlighting the positive and possible impact of libraries and librarians in supporting social change.

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