Preface

Archives and libraries have become contested spaces in so far as the African archives have mostly been developed for colonial and colonising purposes. During the apartheid era, in South and Southern Africa, the archives were developed for use by the apartheid political and security apparatuses to colonise even better. And, for internationalisation, so-called 'universal' international, knowledge was imported into our libraries, to perpetuate the imposition of colonising knowledge and to legally exclude and marginalise indigenous thought, the language/s that intellectualised and gave expression to such thought, and repress any form of agency, innovation and initiative, to the contrary. Complex systems of censure coupled with security state apparatuses were used to suppress and exclude all forms of innovative knowledge that come from the people for the people, and which is supposed to be used by the people.

The African archive and library are all the poorer for it, since the thought, writing, and knowledge/s of our people have not had the opportunity to develop alongside and together with the rest of the modern world, interactively, and on an equal basis. Especially since the impact of the global transforming events of the late 1980s and early 1990s, this scenario has changed. Since then, and in the wake of the achieving of political independence of many countries in the global South, since the late 1950s, the field has opened for information and knowledge development agency. So, currently, there are innumerable initiatives from all over Africa and the global South to not only conceptualise and make formative contributions to current knowledge development processes, both locally and internationally. The freedom and opportunity have been created to also innovate and enrich modern knowledge systems that may be utilised for the generic and particular upscaling of the conceptually-relevant as well as contextually-relevant development and uses of knowledge. And, as colonisation targeted minds – to develop educational systems that would ensure black subjugated intellectual secondary-ness – so, freedom opened the space for the constructive generation of information for intellectualisation, epistemic enriching, and the innovative development of knowledge, for innovation and the forms and ideas for the improvement of the quality of modern life of people, equally.

It is as part of the current innovative and advanced African responses to the challenges of knowledge generation, that this volume, *Information and Knowledge Management for Social, Economic, and Political Development*, edit-

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By Priti Jain, Nathan Mnjama, and Olugbade Oladokun, acquires prominence and significance. *Prominence* derives from the fact that seminal aspects of the topics of information and knowledge development are addressed from helpful perspectives and analyses from within the global South. It adds to global knowledge not only with regard to knowledge management challenges concerning the speed and continuous acceleration of information and knowledge development globally. It also adds to the epistemic and epistemological thinking about knowledge in so far as information and knowledge management itself, is a crucial disciplinary complex that needs to be mastered for efficient knowledge development and uses in local – both urban and rural – contexts.

The *significance* of the volume is that it systematically brings together inter-related thematisations and conceptualisations, seminal for information and knowledgement in respect of the integrative internationalised development challenges central to the social – economical – political triangle, in context. Positioned within the 21st century world of the emergence of 4IR- and AI-related interventions and virtual learning, knowledge and resource sharing, and archival mapping and development, the main hope is that the volume constructively contributes to 'development', and the 'boosting' of economies. It also engages the ways in which we may upscale such effective information and knowledge and management not only within accountable frameworks of governance, transparency, and human rights, but also the gaining of competitive advantages, internationally, through enabling policies and their efficient implementation, as well as public services training, and the use of open and distance learning.

Information and Knowledge Management for Social, Economic, and Political Development, is timely, since it is a capacitating volume. It involves researchers, educators and practitioners, who may all benefit from it, equally.

Moreover, it has been brought together in a space, where, all pros and cons considered, African information and knowledge management scholars are best positioned for the constructive engagement of the intellectualization of data from within our own contexts. As such, it both provides helpful ways to engage *access* to information and relevant knowledge, as well as the rudiments of aspects of innovative *action plans* for archivists and librarians on our continent. It adds enriching significant insights, useful for solution-driven approaches to information and knowledge management.

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