Availability, Adequacy and Effectiveness of Library Resources and Services in Some Selected Public Libraries in Nasarawa State

[1]Suleiman MUSA, [2]Agube A. SOLOMON, [3]Dogara KUDU

[1]Department of Library and Information Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi
[2]Department of Social Development, Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia
[3]Department of Library and Information Science, Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia

Corresponding Author: musasuleiman@nsuk.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper examined the availability, adequacy and effectiveness of library sources in some selected public libraries in Nasarawa State. Descriptive survey design was used in carrying out the study. The population of the Study was two thousand six hundred and sixty-seven (2667) users of Nasarawa State Public Libraries out of which two hundred and sixty-Seven (267) users were selected as sample. Questionnaires was used as instrument for data collection, the data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and percentage. The study discovered among other that: text books, reference materials, periodicals/journals and government publication are the information resources available in Nasarawa State public libraries; Lack of funding by the government; trained Librarians; Internet service; trained security personnel among others are the challenges faced by the public libraries in Nasarawa State in providing effective services to users. The study recommends among other that: Nasarawa State Government should provide necessary support to public libraries in order to improve on electronic information resources e.g. e-reports, e-journals, CD-ROM and audio/visual materials so as to meet the varied information needs of the users; The Nasarawa State Government should make a concerted effort to improve on the public libraries funding, trained security personnel, provide internet services, trained Librarians. This will show more commitment of state government to public libraries in Nasarawa state.

Keywords: Availability, Adequacy, Public Libraries, Resources and Services, Effectiveness

Introduction

Public libraries are worldwide phenomena. They exist in different countries, societies, in different forms, in different cultures and at different stages of development. All the Public libraries have some commonalities that they shared in characteristics and functions in the world. According to IFLA/UNESCO, Public Library Manifest (1997) public libraries are the life gateway to knowledge development and they provide a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individuals and social groups in the

society. They provide access to knowledge, information and work of the imagination through a range of resources and services to it esteem users in the society. The services of public libraries are available to all users regardless of their race, nationality, age, religion, educational attainment etc. Libraries resources and its information management develop humanities through its social services that they render in the society.

Reitz (2004) stated that, the roles and effectiveness of public libraries in nation building especially in Nigeria are very great, but found that Nigeria public libraries perform poorly below expectation in almost all aspects due to limited resources allocated to the library's agencies. In the same vein, Usherwood and Linley (1999) viewed public library's roles in information management, delivery, and changing society values on information they offer on educational and economic impact. The use of library resources and services enhance the new technological development in the society, which in turn have the potential to change the perception of the users of public libraries in Nigeria. Also public libraries help to empower its users through enrichment and development of their lives and that of their communities for better future.

Problem Statement

Public library supposed to serve all categories of people, old or young, men or women, educated or illiterate, physically challenged or not and so on. However, it has been observed that public libraries in Nasarawa state have not been providing effective services and not meeting the information needs of the public as expected, this has led to the low patronage of the libraries. This situation may be as a result of the challenges of inadequate of library resources and services as examined by Opara (2008) that the tempo of public Libraries in Nigeria immediately after independence and after the Nigerian civil war could not be sustained due to inadequate financial support by the establishing authorities to acquire adequate and current information resources, and inadequate workforce to provide effective services. It is against this background; the study was set to investigate the state of public libraries in Nasarawa State.

Objectives

This study was set out to achieve the following objectives:
i. To identify information resources available for use in public libraries in Nasarawa State
ii. To ascertain the adequacy of information resources in public libraries in Nasarawa State for social services.
iii. To determine the extent of effectiveness of library services provided by the public libraries in Nasarawa State.
iv. To identify the challenges faced by the public libraries Nasarawa State in providing effective services to users.

Literature Review

Public libraries in developed and developing countries should be regarded as an agency among other agencies that promote education and eliminate illiteracy among people. Onwubiko&Uzoigwe (2014) stated that, public libraries have been noted to improve literary through various information and educational services they render overtime through their resources such as books, journals, newspapers, Internet services to mention but a few to their users and the entire members of the community.

The public library is the avenue through which the overall information resources are made freely available to all the communities. The IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto issued in 1949, revised in 1972, 1994 and 1997 declared that.

"The public library is the local centre of information sources of all kinds and it provides information for knowledge and made information readily available to its users. The services of the public libraries are provided on the basis of equal access for all, the needed information resources to all its users, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials are provided for those users who cannot access the needed information for their professions and personal guide for their well beings. Whatever reason, the regular services and materials, provided by public libraries for example, those of linguistic minorities, people with diabetes or people in hospital or prison and so on". (P.34)

Public libraries are designed to provide information on agriculture, building, trade, health care, and other aspects of human activities which are required mostly by the rural dwellers. Ebiwolate (2010) noted that information services in Nigeria are still elitist, serving only 20% of the educated elite population while the 80% illiterate rural dwellers wallow in information deprivation. Edom (2012) collaborate Ebiwolate (2010) when he observed that in the rural communities there is lack of telecommunication infrastructures, electricity and reluctance on the part of Internet Services Providers (ISPs). The information environment of this silent majority is yet to record any marked improvement in this period of information explosion. Ogbonyomi (2007) argues that Public Library should provide for the intellectual, cultural, occupational, and religious information needed of all Nigerian society irrespective of their race, culture and occupation in their society.

Ode and Omokoro (2007) agreed that public libraries assist at developing learning skills among the children, youths and adults, as they play a part in encouraging positive use of the leisure and providing materials for change and relaxations. Badawi (2007) revealed that the fact that public libraries are agents for social development, to back this up, Onyenachi in Anyalebechi and Anyanwu (2016) opined that through public libraries, people can discover knowledge and learn new skills, get inform about personal health and well-being, find out about government and local authority services and seek information about employment and business development.

UNESCO (2010) and National Library of Malaysia (2011), outlined the following functions of Public Libraries as:

- ✓ Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels to its users.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for personal creative development for its users
- ✓ Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of scientific achievement and innovation
- ✓ Providing access to cultural expression of all performing arts
- ✓ Supporting the oral tradition
- ✓ Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
- ✓ Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, association and interest groups to its users
- ✓ Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills
- ✓ Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmed for all age groups and initiating such activities if necessary
- ✓ To provide for educational development of all people in the community.

These functions if strictly followed can justify the purpose which public libraries are established. The tremendous role of the public library can never be over emphasized. It enhances the productivity of individuals and organizations through the following functions – educational, informational, economic and cultural which bring about social development.

Adimorah (1990) and Okiy (2003) examined the challenges of public libraries in Nigeria and discovered that the tempo of public libraries development after independence and after the Nigerian Civil War could not be sustained due to inadequate supports by the establishing authorities, demoralized and inadequate workforce and inadequate accommodations. All the listed variables affect the functioning of public libraries negatively. However, the concern authorities give little attention to the development and maintenances of public library resources (Okiy2003).

Methodology

Survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study comprised of all the two thousand six hundred and sixty-seven registered users of the three (3) Public Libraries in Nasarawa State, located in Lafia, Akwanga, and Keffi consisted of the population, 267 registered users of the three Public Libraries. The sample size that represented the entire population of the study was 10 percent i.e. 267. The questionnaire was administered randomly on 267 selected registered library users, representing 10 percent of users' population. However, 265 completed

questionnaires were returned. Data was analyzed using frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Table 1: Population of the Study (Registered Users)

Public Libraries	Frequency	Percentage
Lafia	1024	38.4%
Keffi	912	34.2%
Akwanga	731	27.4%
Total	**2667**	**100%**

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of data presented here was based on information provided by the respondents of the questionnaire administered by the researchers. 267 questionnaires were distributed out, out of which 265 were received. The analysis is therefore based on the 265 questionnaires received.

Information Resources Available in Public Libraries in Nasarawa State

Table 2: Information Resources Available in Nasarawa State Public Libraries

Items	Responses on Availability	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Text Books	251	95
Reference Materials e.g. dictionary, Directory, etc.	265	100
periodicals/Journals	210	79
Audio Visuals e.g. CD, DVD etc.	65	25
Government Publications e.g. gazette, white paper, etc.	262	99
Electronic Information Resources e.g. e-reports, e-journals, CD-ROM	58	22

Sources: Field survey August, 2017.

Table 2, shows that majority of the respondents indicated that the public library has textbooks (95%), reference materials (100%), periodicals/Journal (79%), government publication (99%)Audio Visual information resources, (25%) and electronic information resources (22%). The findings revealed that information resources available for users in public libraries are text books, reference materials, periodicals/Journals and government publication as indicated by the majority of the respondents, based on data collected in the fields.This finding is in agreement with the submission of Ifidon (2006), and Oluwasenfunmi (2015) that services in a library

could be said to be excellent and appreciative if only there are books and other library resources available in the library.

Adequacy of information resources in public libraries in Nasarawa State.

Table 3: Adequacy of Information Resources

Information Resources	Responses					
	Adequate		Not adequate		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Text Books	220	83	45	17	265	100
Reference Materials	159	60	106	40	265	100
Periodicals/Journals	120	45	145	55	265	100
Audio Visuals	40	15	225	85	265	100
Government Publications	188	71	77	29	265	100
Electronic Information Resources	45	17	220	83	265	100

Source: Field Survey August, 2017.

Table 3, shows that majority of the respondents indicated adequacy of Textbooks (83%), reference materials (60%), government publications (71%), and periodicals/Journal (55%), On the other hand, large numbers of respondents indicated that Electronic Information Resources (83%), Audio/Visuals (85%) are not adequate. This implies that only four Information resources are adequate i.e. Textbooks, Reference Materials, Government Publication, periodicals/Journal, while, Audio Visuals, Electronic Information Resources are not adequate. This finding is not in line with the submission of Onwubiku (2014) that public libraries provide materials in wide range of subject to cater for all levels of demands. This implies that Nasarawa State public libraries at this era of ICTs are yet to embrace it fully. The implication of this finding is that the users are confined within the library building thus, may not be able to access e-resources for the home use any time they wish to.

Effectiveness of Library Resources and Services in Nasarawa State Public Libraries

Table 4: Effectiveness of Library Resources and Services

Library Resource Services	VE	E	LE	NE
User education	03 (1%)	41 (15%)	61 (23%)	160(61%)

Mobile library services	03 (1%)	06 (2%)	06 (2%)	250(94%)
Inter library loan services	10 (4%)	13 (5%)	40 (15%)	202 (76%)
Lending services	84 (32%)	148(55%)	21(9%)	12(4.5%)
Internet services	03 (1%)	11 (4%)	50 (19%)	201 (76%)
Reprographic services	05 (2%)	114(43%)	140(53%)	06 (2%)
References services	233(88%)	10 (4%)	13 (5%)	10 (4%)
Extension services	170(64%)	61 (23%)	22(8%)	12 (5%)

KEY: VE = Very Effective, E = Effective, LE= Less Effective, NE= Not Effective.

Source: Field Survey August, 2017.

Table 4, shows that majority of the respondents indicated that references services (88%), and extension services (64%) are very effective, while the respondents indicated one item i.e. lending services (56%) effective, reprographic services (53%). was indicated less effective, while mobile library services (96%), inter library loan services (76%), internet services (76%), and user education (61%) were not effective as indicated by the respondents. This shows that most of the library services provided by the Public Library in Nasarawa State to users are not effective. This finding is in harmony with position of Ebiwolate (2010) who noted that information services in Nigeria are still elitist, serving only 20% of the educated elite population while the 80% illiterate rural dwellers wallow in information deprivation. Edom (2012) collaborate Ebiwolate (2010) when he observed that in the rural communities there is lack of telecommunication infrastructures, electricity and reluctance on the part of Internet Services Providers (ISPs).

Challenges faced by Public Libraries in Nasarawa State in Providing Effective Services to Users

Table 5: Challenges faced in Providing Effective Services to Users

Challenges	Yes	No	Total
Lack of funding by the government	249 (94%)	16 (6%)	265 (100%)
Inadequate resources/facilities	236 (89%)	29 (11%)	265 (100%)
Lack of Trained Security personnel	225 (85%)	40 (15%)	265 (100%)
Lack of Internet Service	205 (77%)	60 (23%)	265 (100%)

Lack of trained Librarians	228 (86%)	37 (14%)	265 (100%)
Government Neglect	253 (95%)	12 (5%)	265 (100%)

Source: Field Survey August, 2017.

Table 5, reveales that almost all the respondents answered yes to the challenges of Lack of funding by the government (98%), inadequate resources/ story facilities are (89%), Lack of trained Librarians (86%), Internet service (77%), lack of trained security personnel (85%), government neglect (95%) faced by the public libraries in Nasarawa State in providing effective services to users. The findings revealed that all the variables mentioned are problems of resources management of public libraries in Nasarawa State as agreed by the majority of the respondents. This finding agrees with Nwokeocha (1998) and Sultana (2014) who opined that there is government neglect on the role of public library to the society. There is also lack of recognition of the state libraries by the state government decision makers. That is why most public libraries in Nigeria are at the mercy of God.

Summary of Findings
1. The study discovered that text books, reference materials, periodicals/journals and government publication are the information resources available in Nasarawa State public libraries.
2. That textbooks, reference materials, government publications and periodicals/Journal are discovered adequate in Nasarawa State public libraries.
3. That references services, extension services and lending services are found to be effective in Nasarawa State public libraries
4. Lack of funding by the government; inadequate resources/facilities; Lack of trained Librarians; lack of Internet service; lack of trained security personnel; and government neglect   are the challenges faced by the public libraries in Nasarawa State in providing effective services to users.

Conclusion
The case of Nasarawa State public library is one among many public libraries pathetic stories in Nigeria. Its inability to discharge its social responsibilities to the users is worrisome. Information needs of the communities are not being met by the Nasarawa State public libraries, because of lack funding by the State government, inadequate resources/facilities, lack of trained, security personnel, lack of trained Librarians. These and among other challenges make the public libraries in Nasarawa State not to have adequate and different types and format of information resources and effective services like electronic information resources and reprographic services, internet service and mobile library services There is urgent need therefore, for intervention to rescue the public libraries from its present situation.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Nasarawa State Government should provide necessary support to public libraries in order to improve on Electronic Information Resources e.g. e-reports, e-journals, CD-ROM and audio/visual materials so as meet the varied information needs of the users

2. Public Libraries with the support of Nasarawa State Government should make efforts and provide adequate information resources like audio/visual materials and other electronic information resources.

3. More efforts should be made by the Nasarawa State Public Libraries to ensure effective services like user education, mobile library, inter library loan, internet, and reprographic.

4. The Nasarawa State Government should make a concerted effort to improve on public libraries funding, trained security personnel, provide internet services, trained Librarians and government should show more commitment to public libraries in the state.

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