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AN APPRAISAL OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN GOVERNMENT APPROVED PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This paper sought to appraise the state of school libraries in government approved private schools in Awka South Local Government Area, a total of 25 schools were studied. Results were presented, and analyzed in table 1-5. Finally, recommendations were made on the way forward.

Introduction

Most public and private primary and secondary schools have libraries designed to support the curriculum. A school library is a library attached to and managed by a school to serve the students, staff, and often parents of a public (state) or private (fee paying) school. School libraries contain books, films, recorded sound, periodicals and other media. These items are not only for the enjoyment and entertainment of the patrons, but to enhance and expand the school curriculum. In addition, students may receive explicit instruction on library and research skills. As Onwuazo (2001) observed, school library can interchangeably be referred to as media centre. The school child of today is taught first to read and write and then through the use of books and non-book materials and is encouraged to explore the world of knowledge, to discover, experiment and learn. Thus, the school library media centre has evolved in schools in place of the traditional school library to meet the requirements of the modern philosophy of education that stresses the need for individualized instruction and the use of multimedia resources in teaching the curriculum (Elaturoti, 1990). The modern

philosophy of education recognizes an educated person as one who has learned how to learn - to think and to use methods of disciplined inquiry to examine and explore ideas as opposed to one who has memorized facts. This could explain why some of these private schools have included Montessori to the name of their schools.

Consequently, the role of school librarians or library media specialists has evolved from "keeper of books" to that of leadership providers. Library media specialists play an integral part as they collaborate with teachers and students to demonstrate the ways in which research and technology skills support students' success in an exemplary school literacy program. For students to be information literate, they must be engaged in extended inquiry-based research. School libraries should provide students and teachers the opportunity to develop information literacy and digital technology literacy.

The Idea of Private School

Section 18(1) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, states that government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. It went further to state in sub-section (3) that government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end shall as and when practicable provide-

- a. Free compulsory, and universal primary education:
- b. Free secondary education
- c. Free university education and
- d. Free adult literacy programme.

By implication, Nigerian government owes this duty of care to its citizens. It must be observed that failure to fulfill this responsibility is not actionable in court because all those fundamental objectives and directive principles of the state policy as contained in chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution are non-justiceable. The educational system has over the years, witnessed series of political and economic set back. Ever since criminal neglect on the part of Federal and State governments rendered public schools not good enough for imparting knowledge, the private schools have stepped in to fill the yawning gap left by the former, but with mixed results, (All Africa, 2008). As Maribet (2008) observed, good private schools in Nigeria achieve the very best for their pupils, whether in the classroom, sports field etc. private schools place enormous emphasis on developing the full range of a child's talents, wherever these may lie; a factor which has

been trusted by generations of parents and which is illustrated by spectacular successes achieved by pupils at private schools and the consistently high demand for places.

In the course of this research, I had the opportunity of browsing through an online directory of top Nigerian primary and secondary schools. On a sad note, I discovered that in the entire Anambra State, only one private school, Holy Ghost Juniorate Nkpo was listed. Unfortunately, its geographical location is outside the focus of this research.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to:

1. Find out the number of functional school libraries in government approved private primary and secondary schools in Awka South L.G.A.
2. Appraise the state of these schools libraries based on their staffing, collection, accommodation, finance and ICT development.
3. Make recommendation based on lapses so discovered.

Methodology

The focus of this research is on school libraries in government approved private schools in Awka South LGA. Awka South LGA is in Awka Educational Zone. Available records at the Ministry of Education at the time of this research show that there are about twelve government - approved private secondary schools and twenty-nine primary schools in Awka South L.G.A. Altogether, there are 41 governments approved private schools in Awka South LGA. The sample of the population was taken from 10 secondary schools and 15 primary schools. This forms 61% of the population.

Altogether 25 schools were sampled as shown in the tables below. Method of data collection was a mixture of interview, questionnaire and personal observation. Questions in the questionnaire were arranged in clusters and presented under the following headings: Staffing, Collection, Accommodation, Finance and ICT development.

To ensure effective coverage and as a result of time and financial constraints, this research was conducted mainly in Awka South L.G.A. in Awka Educational Zone. Most of these private schools are situated in and around Awka Town.

Result

Table 1: Staffing

Names of School	Teacher Librarian (Yes/No)	Qualification in Librarianship	Carry Same Credit Hours With Others	Other Supporting staff in the Library	Number of other staff
Bishop Crowther Seminary	Yes	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
Holy Ghost Academy	Yes	Degree	No	Nil	Nil
Sec. School	Yes	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
Krosa Model Sec. School	Yes	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
National Sec. School, Awka	Yes	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
Netherlands Int. Sec. School	Yes	Degree	Yes	Yes	2
St. Paul's Univ. Sec. School, Nibo Nise	Yes	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
St. Augustine Sec. School, Awka	No	Nil	No	Nil	Nil
Ubaka Compr. Sec. School, Awka	Yes	Nil	Yes	Yes	1
Benbee Unique School, Awka	No	Nil	No	No	Nil
Holy Ghost Academy N/P	Yes	Degree	Yes	Yes	1
Infant Jesus N/P School, Awka	Yes	Nil	-	No	Nil
Krosa Model P/S, Amawbia	Yes	Nil	-	Nil	Nil
Nadora P/S Awka	No	Nil	-	-	-
Netherland Int. P/S, Awka	Yes	Degree	Yes	Yes	2
St. Paul's N/P School, Awka	Yes	Diploma	No	-	-
Tender Touch P/S Awka	Yes	Degree	-	-	-
Unizik N/P School	No	-	-	-	-

Out of 25 schools studied, 8 have no school library and so were excluded from the analysis in tables 1 -5. These schools are listed below.

17 schools have school library. 4 schools do not have teacher librarian manning their libraries. The remaining 10 who man their libraries do not have any qualification in librarianship. Only 4 school libraries have supporting staff in their libraries. The above statistics reveal that these school libraries are poorly funded and under-staffed.

Schools without School Libraries

1. Destiny Comprehensive Secondary School, Awka
2. Kabe College Amawbia
3. Faith Day P/S Awka
4. Lelia Day N/P Awka
5. St. Augustine N/P School, Awka
6. The Lily Children P/S Awka
7. Redemption Model N/S Awka
8. Rev. Father Ekwu Memorial P/S Amawbia

Table 2 - Collection

Names of school	Availability of Books in these Libraries (Yes/No)	Who Selects the Books? (P, ST, S, TL)	Currency of Materials	Organization of Materials (Cat/Class)	Non- print Materials
Bishop Crowther Seminary	Yes	All the stakeholders	Fair	Yes	No
Holy Ghost Academy Sec. School	Yes	Principal	Poor	Yes	No
Krosa Model Sec. School	Yes	Principal	Fair	Yes	No
National Sec. School, Awka	Yes	T. Librarian	Fair	Yes	Yes
Netherlands Int. Sec. School	Yes	Subj. teacher	Poor	No	No
St. Paul's Univ. Sec. School, Nibo Nise	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
St. Augustine Sec. School, Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
Ubaka Compr. Sec. School, Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
Benbee Unique School, Awka	Yes	Principal	Fair	No	No
Holy Ghost Academy N/P	Yes	Teacher Library	Poor	Yes	No
Infant Jesus Nursery School	Yes	Principal	Fair	No	No
Krosa Model P/S, Amawbia	Yes	Principal	Fair	Yes	No
Nadora P/S Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
Netherlands Int. N/P, Sch., Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
St. Paul's N/P School, Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
Tender Touch P/S Awka	Yes	Principal	Poor	No	No
Unizik N/P School	Yes	Subject Teacher	Poor	No	No

Table 2 reveals that all these schools have books in their library most of which are not current. A greater percentage do not catalogue or classify their materials. Non-print material is also absent in their collection. It also reveals that in majority of the schools, the principal of the school do the selection. Thus, the teacher library is left out.

Table 3

Names of school	Functional school library	Sitting accommodation for 10% of std. population	Library Hour in school time table	Reading tables and chairs (furniture)
Bishop Crowther Seminary	Yes	No	Yes	Inadequate
Holy Ghost Academy sec. School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Inadequate
Krosa Model sec. School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Adequate
National Sec. School, Awka	Yes	No	No	Inadequate
Netherlands Int. Sec. School	Yes	No	No	Inadequate
St. Paul's Univ. Sec. School, Nibo Nise	Yes	Yes	No	Adequate
St. Augustine Sec. School, Awka	No	No	No	Inadequate
Ubaka Compr. Sec. School, Awka	Yes	No	No	Inadequate
Benbee Unique School, Awka	No	No	Yes	Inadequate
Holy Ghost Academy N/P	Yes	Yes	No	Inadequate
Infant Jesus N/P School, Awka	Yes	No	Yes	Inadequate
Krosa Model P/S, Amawbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Adequate
Nadora P/S Awka	No	No	Yes	Inadequate
Netherlands Int. P/S, Awka	No	No	No	Inadequate
St. Paul's N/P School, Awka	No	No	Yes	Inadequate
Tender Touch P/S, Awka	Yes	No	Yes	Inadequate
Unizik N/P School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Adequate

Findings in Table 3 indicate that some of these schools do not have functional school library. 11 schools do not have accommodation to seat 10% of the students' population,

while 7 schools do not have library hour in their timetable. In majority of the schools, the library furniture is grossly inadequate. Obviously this will affect the students' use of the library and reading habit as well as their academic performance.

Table 4- Finance

Names of School	Main Source of Fund	Separate Library Budget	Charge library Levy	Alternative Source of Fund
Bishop Crowther Seminary	The School	Yes	Yes	No
Holy Ghost Academy Sec. School	The School	Yes	No	No
Krosa Model Sec. School	The School	Yes	Yes	No
National Sec. School, Awka	The School	No	No	No
Netherlands Int. Sec. School	The School	Yes	No	PTA
St. Paul's Univ. Sec. School, Nibo Nise	The School	No	Yes	No
St. Augustine Sec. School, Awka	The School	No	No	No
Ubaka Compr. Sec. School, Awka	The School	No	Yes	No
Benbee Unique School, Awka	The School	Yes	No	No
Holy Ghost Academy N/P	The School	Yes	No	No
Infant Jesus N/P School, Awka	The School	No	No	No
Krosa Model P/S, Amawbia	The School	Yes	Yes	No
Nadora P/S Awka	The School	No	No	No
Netherland Int. P/S, Awka	The School	No	No	No
St. Paul's N/P School, Awka	Friends of the school	No	No	Book publishers
Tender Touch P/S Awka	The School	No	No	No
Unizik N/P School	The university	No	Yes	No

Table 4 - Finding shows the financial condition of these libraries.

Their main source of funding is the parent institution. Majority do not have a separate library budget. 6 schools charge library levy to boost their finances. On the average, it could be deduced that these libraries are poorly funded.

Table 5 - ICT Development

Names of school	Do you have computer sets?	No of computers	Are you computer literate?	Students use of computer to learn	Computer literacy programme for students	Internet Connectivity
Bishop Crowther Seminary	Yes	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Holy Ghost Academy Sec. School	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
Krosa Model Sec. School	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Sec. School, Awka	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands Int. Sec. School	Yes	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
St. Paul's Univ. Sec. School, Nibo Nise	-	-	Yes	"	Yes	No
St. Augustine Sec. School, Awka	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ubaka Compr. Sec. School, Awka	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Benbee Unique School, Awka	Yes	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Holy Ghost Academy N/P	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Infant Jesus N/P School, Awka	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Krosa Model P/S, Amawbia	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nadora P/S Awka	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherland Int. P/S, Awka	Yes	10	-	-	-	-
St. Paul's N/P School, Awka	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tender Touch P/S Awka	Yes	2	Yes	-	Yes	-
Unizik N/P School	Yes	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	-

Table 5 - Statistics in the above table indicate that 8 schools do not have computer sets in their school library. It also reveals that they do not teach students how to use the computer practically in this age of rapid technological advancement and information

explosion. Only 3 schools are connected to the internet. National Comprehensive Secondary School should be commended in this wise. They already have a website.

Conclusion And Recommendation

The result of the findings reveals that the teaching and learning going on in these government approved private schools is grossly inadequate. The level of infrastructural development in some of these schools is quite poor. Some are squatting in residential buildings. Some of these schools are also cited in noisy environment. A visit to some of these schools would reveal that some of them are almost non-existent. There is thus an urgent need to re-assess them. The assessment should also be a periodic and regular exercise. The NLA should be represented in the accreditation team that gives approval to these schools. Till date, there is no standard ratio for the size of school libraries, as well as the library collection in the requirement for granting approval.

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