_____

USER SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-EAST ZONE OF NIGERIA

Dr. Chuma Opara NNADOZIE

Senior Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science,
Michael Okpara Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike
PMB 7267 Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

Dr. Ifeka E. OKEKE

Senior Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Nnamdi E. ONYEKWEODIRI.

ICT Department, University Library,
Michael Okpara Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike
PMB 7267 Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Public libraries are important components of the educo-information infrastructure in any nation. As a government funded institution, the public library must justify its existence through the provision of relevant and satisfactory information services. This study investigated users' satisfaction or displeasure with the facilities and services of major public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria. The research design adopted was the survey method while the respondents consisted of two hundred and forty (240) users of public libraries located in four (4) of the five (5) the administrative centers, namely: Awka, Enugu, Owerri and Umuahia. Data collected through a customized questionnaire administered by a combination of availability and random sampling techniques were analyzed with the aid of frequency tables and simple percentages. Result shows that some respondents were satisfied with the collection of newspapers/magazines (36.7%), easy accessibility of the libraries (31.2%), as well as the stock of materials on local history i.e. Nigeriana (22.5%). On the other hand, many others were dissatisfied with the out-dated (30%) and deteriorating (25%) nature of the available titles, as well as the unavailability of desired information sources, including ICTs (21.2%). Overall, more respondents were dissatisfied (74.1%) with available resources, facilities and services compared to the 15.4% that were satisfied. The report concluded by providing a number of recommendations that would enhance user satisfactions in public libraries in Nigeria and other developing societies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Though its history is originally traceable to ancient Greece in medieval Europe, the modern concept of the public library was developed in the United States of America in the 19th Century in response to popular demand for universal education. Variously referred to as "a centre of excellence" and "people's university", the public library offers, "free and unrestricted library services to all citizens irrespective of gender, age, race, religious persuasion, political/ideological inclination, educational standard and economic status" (Nnadozie, 2002). It, therefore, exist as a social service meant to satisfy the information, educational and recreational needs of members of the community where it is located.

Public libraries are usually established by governments. This is due, mainly, to their capital-intensive nature and expansive job-description. Various countries of the world have their peculiar arrangements on the ownership of public libraries based on the stipulations of their statute books. In Nigeria, for example, public libraries are essentially, the responsibility of the second tier of government – the States Governments. These States are now grouped under six geopolitical zones, namely: South-East, South-South, South-West, North-East, North-Central and North-West. It should be pointed out though, that these zones are as yet, mere geographical expressions without legal and administrative jurisdictions.

2. THE STUDY LOCATION

The South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria is the homeland of the Igbo ethnic nationally. It was carved out during the 1995 Constitutional Conference which midwifed the most recent political re-engineering in the country. The zone is perhaps, the most homogenous in contemporary Nigeria. The remaining chunk of the former Eastern Region made up of the minority tribes, was merged with the old Midwestern Region to form what is today called South-South Zone. Because of this historical antecedent, a sketch of the evolution of public library system in South-Eastern Nigeria would involve occasional overlap into the South-South Zone.

As presently constituted, the South-East Zone has a geographical size of 28,505 square kilometers (Federal Office of Statistics, 1997) with a combined population of well over 20 million people. Acknowledged for their liberal streak and republican slant, South-Eastern Nigerians had early exposure to, and acceptance of, Western education during the colonial era. This accounts for the preponderance of a large proportion of literate people most of whom are predominately civil servants, academics, merchants, industrialists and private sector operatives.

Several researchers – including (UNESCO (1954), Nnaji (1986), Morka (1992) and Ojo-Igbinoba (1995) - have identified some of the factors that quickened the early development of public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria. These include, the broadening of the educational curricular which led to the production of school leavers

sufficiently literate for library purpose; provision of reading rooms as part of British 2nd World War efforts; availability of qualified indigenous manpower like Kalu Okorie and Gbile Nwakina; the existence of highly educated leadership which appreciated the importance of public library and the establishment of the UNESCO pilot public library project for Africa in the region. The inauguration of the Eastern Nigeria Library Board, Enugu in 1955 shortly after the UNESCO seminar on the development of public libraries in Africa was an icing on the cake of an ambitions pioneering effort. Eastern Nigeria was, therefore, ahead of other parts of the country in the development and provision of public libraries.

As have already been referred to, restructuring exercises in Nigeria have led to the abandonment of regionalism. States, which have smaller population and geographical sizes, are now the federating units. State creation exercises of 1967, 1976 and 1996 have balkanized South-Eastern Nigeria into five (5) administrative areas, namely; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State. The early reading rooms and branch libraries of the defunct Eastern Nigeria Library Board, which fell under the jurisdiction of states in the South-Eastern Zones, are now the nucleus of the States' library systems.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed, primarily, to ascertain user satisfaction or dissatisfaction with resources and services of public libraries in South-East Zone of Nigeria. This brings into sharp focus, the information materials and facilities available in these government-owned libraries, as well as, the commitment of administrators at various tiers of government in South-Eastern Nigeria, to the achievement of the much-touted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The reason for library use, reasons for user satisfaction and causes of user dissatisfaction were examined in order to make recommendations for improvement, where lapses exist. The uniqueness of the present study lies in the fact that though there have been studies of utilization of public libraries in Nigeria, there is no published assessment of user satisfaction or dissatisfaction with specific reference to public libraries in the South-East Zone of the country.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The brief survey of available literature reveals several publications in user studies and utilization of resources of different public libraries. However, the demands of brevity and constraints of space necessitate the inclusion of only few of these research findings-cum-reports, particularly, those pertaining to Nigeria.

In an earlier study, which relevance and agelessness is underscored by its oft-citation, Poole (1971) observed that: "A public library is a library that is established by state laws, is supported by local taxation and voluntary gift, is managed by public trust and every citizen of the town and city which maintains it has equal share on its privileges of reference and circulation". This position is in tandem with later studies by Nwokocha (1993), Nuhu (1994) and Nwosu (2000). Another study revealed that "public libraries in Nigeria are usually service-oriented institutions through which government provides free educational and social services to the people (Ogbonna, 2011, p.73).

The ability or otherwise of a library to satisfy its clientele is directly related to its collection and other resources. Abolaji (2009) clarified that the collection of public libraries is geared towards providing for moral and cultural edification in contrast to

other libraries that house largely research materials. Issa (1998) observed that the resources usually found in public libraries include television, radio, video, gramophone, posters, books, handbills and other such information resources that enhance public enlightenment. Studies by both Obinyan, Obinyan and Aidenojie (n.d.) and Hossian and Islam (2012) newspapers and magazines are major components of the information offerings of public libraries.

The public library in Nigeria and elsewhere exists to discharge critical informational, educational, cultural and recreational functions. These responsibilities have been reported in works by Nanavit (1985), Ubofung (1995), Ochai (1995), Aguolu and Aguolu (1997), Nnadozie (2007), amongst others. For instance Salia (1999) stated that public libraries play an important role in the economic well-being of the society as it provides information thereby contributing to the economic development of the modern society. They are also seen as a necessary institution that provides the entire populace with facilities for lifelong learning, supports the curricular of all stages of education, offers access to government information, as well as, boosts economic and agricultural development and the sustenance of democracy (Osuigwe, Jiagbogu and Udeze, 2012, p.174). According to Anunobi, Ogbonna and Osuchukwu (2012, p. 265), "rural public libraries provide services to satisfy the need of the community, with a focus on producing a well-informed and democratic society". Ebiwolate (2010) observed that public libraries are meant to provide timely, accurate, pertinent and reliable information services for the majority that live in the rural areas. Abolaji (2009) noted that in addition to its primary clientele, the public library should extend the benefit of its resources and services to other residents of the community in which it is located. It is however regrettable that a comparatively smaller number of people, including the educated elites, read books and visit the public libraries in Africa except on rare cases (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002).

Studies have shown that the public library is meant to provide equal access to information resources and services to a wide range of people regardless of age, sex, creed, education or social status (Okeke, 2000; Stipanov, 2005 and Koneru, 2008). Surveys conducted in Nigeria over the years amply buttress this point. For example, Ogunrombi (1982), Orgazi (1984) and Ojo (1984) identified the users of public libraries and assessed their utilization of available resources and services. Their findings show that patrons of these libraries cut across different strata of the Nigerian society. Abojaji (2009) revealed that users of public libraries are primarily residents of the host community. In addition to this primary clientele, Ogunrombi and Sanni (2009) listed students, artisans, civil servants, teachers, researchers and policy-makers as the major users of public libraries, especially in Western Nigeria. Obinyan, Obinyan and Aidenojie (n.d.) identified retirees among major users of a branch of a public library system in South-South Zone of Nigeria adding that users visit to read mainly newspapers and magazines to keep abreast of development in the society. It had also been observed that public libraries in Nigeria have been mostly urban-based, elitist and targeted at the middle and upper class citizens and students (Ebiwolate, 2010). This reflects the earlier submission by Nwokocha (1993) that public library users remain largely students who concentrate on reading for examinations using personal textbooks rather than borrow from the library.

It is trite to note that the ideological foundation of the public library is anchored on the right of all citizens, regardless of their ethno-religions, political and socio-economic background, to enjoy free and equal access to the broadest possible spectrum of information (Walker & Manjarrez, 2003; Nnadozie, 2002 and Nnadozie,

2007). The growth of public libraries has been associated with increase in literacy, education and publication all over the world (Wani, 2008). These facts were captured by Islam and Islam (2010), who noted that public libraries contribute immensely to the educational attainment of rural people through various community–based information services. According to Aitchison (2006), public libraries extend government infrastructure and presence to remote locations and facilitate various literacy programmes. Ogunnombi and Sanni (2009) contend that these category of libraries exist to smoothen information flow within its immediate environment. Afolabi (2004) summarized the role that information play and concluded that public libraries are essential links in the effective dissemination of information to various segments of the society.

Although public libraries in Nigeria are expected to meet the specific information needs of a particular locality (Ogunrombi & Oladokun, 1993), they are confronted with a lot of issues that impact on their ability to provide satisfactory library and information services. Their services, where available, are along the Western societal patterns and without due consideration of the peculiarities of their immediate environments (Uhegbu, 1997). This buttresses Alemna's (1995) submission that the type of library services left behind by the colonial masters is not useful to the mass of the people of Africa. Aina (2004) stated that the quality of staff of public libraries is very low and this affects the quality of their services. Data obtained from a study on public libraries and nation-building revealed that Nigeria public libraries were performing poorly in virtually every aspect due to appalling resources (Emojorho, 2005). References have also been made of the non-infusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into their services (Tathagatha, 2010) and the inability of public libraries in Nigeria to digitize their collections and computerize their operation (Abdulkarim, 2010).

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

It is evident in the above brief review of literature that several scholars have conducted researches and reported on the resources of Nigerian public libraries, as well as, their utilization. However, the relevance of the present survey lies in the fact that there has been no published assessment of user satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the resources and services of these libraries, spectrally, in South Eastern Zone of Nigeria. This lacuna in the literature has been filled by this study. A further justification for this study rests in the fact that it would inspire other researchers to investigate other aspects of user satisfaction in different aspects of public library services in Nigeria. Besides, the result of this survey is a vital addition to the stock of published knowledge.

6. METHODOLOGY

Data for this research was obtained through a structured researcher-made questionnaire. Copies of this customized instrument captioned *Questionnaire for User Satisfaction in Public Libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria* was validated by a Professor of LIS and a Director of Public Library Services before it was administered to respondents between March and November 2014. The researchers personally visited and collected data from users of public libraries of Awka, Enugu, Owerri and Umuahia. These libraries are the best in terms of facilities and equipment being the headquarters of library systems in the five states that make up South-Eastern Nigeria. However, the research instrument sent through the postal system to Abakaliki was not

returned to the researchers. Sixty (60) copies of the questionnaire were administered to randomly selected users during visits to each of the participating libraries. This means a total of 240 respondents. Copies of the questionnaire, which contained ten close-ended queries, was distributed in such a way as to ensure the involvement of users who could make meaningful input. Self-administration of the questionnaire and close supervision of the exercise ensured 100 percent return-rate and created opportunity for personal contacts and direct observation of proceedings and situations in the libraries under study.

7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the 240 copies of the research questionnaire were analyzed using percentages and frequency tables numbered I-VIII. Note the key to tables: (AWK = Awka, Anambra State; ENU = Enugu, Enugu State; OWE = Owerri, Imo State and UMU = Umuahia, Abia State).

Table I Age Range of Respondents

Range	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Below 10	1	3	6	4	14	5.9%
11 – 19	39	35	25	29	128	53.3%
20 – 35	15	17	21	20	73	30.4%
36 – Above	5	5	8	7	25	10.4%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table II Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Students	20	28	31	24	103	43%
Unemployed	8	2	1	-	11	4.6%
Traders and Artisans	-	-	-	-	-	-
Businessmen/Merchants	4	-	1	5	10	4.1%
Civil Servants	10	15	7	13	45	18.8%
Politicians	5	-	4	5	14	5.9%
Lecturers	10	15	16	12	53	22%
Others	3	-	-	1	4	1.7%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table III Reasons for Library Usage

Reasons	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
To prepare for examinations	20	25	27	25	97	40.4%
To do assignment	22	17	20	22	81	33.8%
To conduct research	8	12	12	10	42	17.5%
To read for leisure	7	4	1	2	14	5.8%
To meet friends	3	2	-	1	6	2.5%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table I presents the age distribution of the respondents. It shows that 53.3 percent of the respondents were in the 11 – 19 ages bracket while 30.4 percent were between the ages of 20-35. On the other hand, 10.4 percent were 36 years and above. Only 5.9 percent of the respondents were below 10 years. This shows that more than half of the respondents are teenagers (11-19 years) followed by young adults (20-35 years).

Table II summarizes the occupational distribution of the respondents: Students; lecturers/researchers and Civil Servants formed the bulk users of the libraries under

study with 43 percent, 22 percent and 18.8 percent, respectively. The other respondents were politicians (5.9 percent), the unemployed (4.6 percent) and businessmen (4.1 percent). Respondents from other occupational or vocational groups, which were not distinctly indicated, were less than 2 percent.

In **Table III**, majority of respondents used public libraries located in South-East Zone of Nigeria for purely academic and utilitarian purposes like "to prepare for examinations" (40.4 percent); "to do assignments" (33.8 percent) and "to conduct researches" (17.5 percent). More than five percent (14 of the respondents) used the libraries for leisurely (recreational) reading. Only 2.5 percent of the respondents came into the libraries "to meet friends".

Table IV Library Resources and Facilities

Resources and Facilities	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Publications (i.e. textbooks, journals, newspapers and magazines).	30	39	43	34	146	60.9%
Adequate reading rooms	14	11	7	14	46	19.2%
Properly-organized catalogues and shelves.	4	2	1	2	9	3.8%
Adequate number of reading chairs and tables.	9	6	4	10	29	12%
Computers	3	2	5	-	10	4.2%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table V Library Services

Services	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Provision of reading materials	22	21	20	23	86	35.8%
Provision of chairs and tables	20	9	13	13	55	22.9%
Provision of computers	2	3	4	4	13	5.4%
Referral Services	7	8	3	3	21	8.8%
Provision of CAS/SDI	-	3	-	9	12	5%
Literature search and bibliographic services	4	10	8	6	28	11.7%
Lending services	2	3	5	2	12	5%
On-line information services	3	3	7	-	13	5.5%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table IV represents resources and facilities of the public libraries under study and reveals that 60.9 percent of these resources are publications in the forms of textbooks, journals, newspapers and magazines. Reading rooms constituted 19.2 percent whereas reading chairs and tables make up 12 percent of the resources and facilities. Properly arranged catalogues and well-organized shelves (3.8 percent) and computers (4. 2 percent) are the other resources made available to readers. **Table IV** shows that bibliographic sources constitute an overwhelming proportion of resources utilized by patrons of the public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria.

Table V indicates the major library services provided to satisfy the information needs of patrons in public libraries of South-Eastern Nigeria. These library and information services include provision of reading materials; conducting literature searches and provision of Current Awareness Services (CASs) including Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) which constitute about 52.5 percent of the services surveyed in this study. This result re-enforces the earlier finding in **Table IV**

that most patrons utilize various bibliographic sources. Other services provided are provision of chairs and tables (22.9 percent); referral services (8.8 percent); provision of computer services (5.4 percent), online information services (5.5%) and lending services (5 percent).

Table VI, which contains analysis of user's satisfaction, shows that an overwhelming majority (74.1 percent) of the respondents are dissatisfied with the library resources and services provided in their public libraries covered in this survey. This is a sharp contrast to the 15.4 percent that were satisfied and the remaining 10.4 percent who were non-committal in their response.

A highlight of the reasons for user satisfaction is presented in **Table VII**. The reasons include: availability of newspapers and magazines (36.7 percent), easy accessibility of the location of these public libraries from different parts of the metropolis where they are cited (31.2 percent); available of information materials on local history or 'Nigeriana" (22.5 percent); and provision of various non-book (audio-visual) materials, (9.6 percent).

Table VI Assessment of Satisfaction with Library Resources and Services

Responses	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Satisfied	4	8	15	10	37	15.4%
Dissatisfied	45	47	41	45	178	74.1%
Undecided	11	5	4	5	25	10.4%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table VII Reasons for User Satisfaction

Reasons	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Easy accessibility of Library	17	18	20	20	75	31.2%
Provision of non-book information materials	5	7	6	5	23	9.6%
Availability of materials on local history (Nigeriana)	18	14	10	12	54	22.5%
Availability of newspapers and magazines	20	21	24	23	88	36.7%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Table VIII Causes of User Dissatisfaction

Causes	AWK	ENU	OWE	UMU	Total	Percentage
Out-dated publications	20	21	16	16	72	30%
Insufficient reading spaces, chairs and tables	0	3	7	10	20	8.3%
Nonchalant attitude of staff	2	2	0	1	6	2%
Unavailability of desired information materials	16	11	14	10	51	21.2%
Absence of lending services	4	2	8	11	25	10.4%
Noise from human and vehicular traffic	1	3	2	1	7	3%
Mutilated/Deteriorating collections	17	18	13	12	60	25%
Total	60	60	60	60	240	100%

Respondents were asked to indicate the major reasons or causes of dissatisfaction at the libraries under study. Outdated publication (30 percent) mutilated and deteriorating collections (25 percent); and unavailability of desired materials are the major causes of dissatisfaction as shown in **Table VIII.** Other reasons identified are: absence of lending services (10.4 percent); insufficient reading

spaces, chairs and tables (8.3 percent); noise from human and vehicular traffic (3 percent) and nonchalant attitude of staff (2 percent).

8. DISCUSSION

This study shows clearly in *Table 1* that teenagers and other young adults are the major users of public libraries located in South-Eastern Nigeria. The few number of readers below 10 years is a pointer that people in that age bracket has not been brought into the mainstream of library services in that part of Nigeria. This situation has implications on their perception nd future use of these libraries bearing in mind that they have not imbibed the habit at the early stages of life. As could be inferred from *Table II,* most of these respondents are students at the various stages and levels of educational pursuit. In a society where textual materials remain the predominant sources of educational, administrative, business, cultural and other type of information, this distribution of users of public libraries cannot be described as unusual. Besides, habitual or recreational use of libraries and appreciation of their diverse informational roles are still very low amongst Nigerians. It is therefore not surprising that more than 70% of the respondents in the present study visited the libraries to prepare for various examinations and do different assignments given by teachers, instructors and lecturers. It is also instructive that this study reinforces an earlier report by Nwokocha (1993) that public library users in underdeveloped societies, nay Nigeria, remain largely students who concentrate on reading for examinations and other utilitarian purposes.

Most artisans and petty traders in Nigeria have low educational exposure and attainments. These people who are mainly active in the informal sectors of the economy, do not understand the educo-social and informational values of the library. They equally lack the skills and other competencies to retrieve documents from the collection and make meaningful use of other library resources and services. It is not unexpected, therefore, that no artisan was found in any of the public libraries in Eastern Nigeria at the time of this survey. What is surprising, however, is that politicians who control the different tiers of government in Nigeria and thus are influential in policy-formulation, analysis and implementation, do not make regular use of public and other libraries, if the analysis in *Table II* is anything to go by. Unwittingly, this finding lends credence to another report to the effect that "….. a comparatively smaller number of people, including the educated elites, ….read books in Africa except for functional purposes" (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002). This creates serious suspicion on the quality of bibliographic services obtained and utilized by this important component of Nigeria intelligentsia and might even provide part of the explanation for the insufficient funding of libraries and other document-based information services in the country. This is against the backcloth that politicians, in liaison with high-ranking civil servants, appropriate funds for public services considered vital to the policy thrust of any government.

The lack of adequate funding of Nigerian public libraries is shown clearly in *Table VII* where problems of out-dated publications; mutilated and deteriorating collections; unavailability of relevant information materials including information and communications technologies (ICTs), inadequate internet or electronic information services and insufficiency of reading spaces, chairs and were revealed. The findings of this study is, therefore, in line with earlier reports that adequate funding - which is a pre-requisite for satisfactory library and information services - has not been made available for the running of public libraries in Nigeria (Akporhonor, 2005; Okiy,

2005; Ubogu & Okiy, 2011 and Nnadozie, 2013). The inadequacies highlighted in the collections and other information offerings of these public libraries are, no doubt, responsible for the poor quality of lending services (**Table V).** It is conventional practice in libraries to restrict granting of book loans whenever their collections are quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate. If there were any doubts about the backwardness of these public libraries in the area on online information services, it was dispelled in *Table V* where only a paltry 5.5% of the respondents in all the libraries utilized internet and other online services. This is a clear proof of the inadequacies of these information services in these public libraries. It is therefore not surprising that an overwhelming majority of the respondents in this study (i.e. 74.1%) were dissatisfied with the resources and services available in the public libraries covered in this survey.

It is also noteworthy that at the time of this research, none of the public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria had quantity and quality of internet facilities and thus could not provide efficient online information services for their patrons. In some instances, it was observed that the available internet facilities within the vicinity of these libraries were actually private cyber cafes or business centres owned and operated by private investors. This is another telling evidence of disregard of public libraries and insufficient funding of same, in Nigeria. The foregoing statement is neither sweeping nor hyperbolic considering that it merely buttresses an earlier observation that 'Nigerian public libraries are grossly under-funded by their proprietors, and thus, can neither afford computers nor computerization" (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002). A library bereft of these gadgets cannot provide the kind of information services that will satisfy the needs of patrons in this 21st century. Considering the importance of libraries and information to the achievement of the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the inadequacy of library resources and dissatisfactory nature of information services provided by public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria cast serious doubts on the commitment of State Governments in Nigeria to the target set by international community for the achievement of the SDGs in 2015.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The public library exists to provide the general public unfettered access to relevant information in both traditional and contemporary formats without discrimination and at no cost to the patrons. Though many pointers exist, the analysis on *Table VI* leaves no doubts about the dissatisfactory nature of resources, facilities and services of most public libraries in South-Eastern Nigerian. Evidence of the disappointing state of these public libraries reflect in the overwhelming majority of the respondents (74.1%) that were dissatisfied with the libraries sampled in this survey. The gravity of this problem is such that the public libraries sampled are the best in their category at the time of this report. Considering the pivotal position of the public library as a bastion of research, bulwark of public enlightenment and handmaiden of mass mobilization, the following palliatives are recommended to strengthen public libraries in South-Eastern Zone and other parts of Nigeria for efficient and satisfactory discharge of their statutory responsibilities:

- *Tables IV* and *V* respectively, portray the dissatisfactory nature and abysmal rating of availability of computerized services and internet facilities in public libraries in the area of study. The manual system of library service delivery, which is still prevalent in Nigeria, is fraught with shortcomings and therefore inadequate to meet the challenges of information services required in this millennium. Computerization, which offers limitless opportunities, should be embraced by Nigerian public libraries.

Additionally, patrons of these libraries should be led to the information super-highway through the installation of internet facilities and other online databases.

- Public libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria should exhaust available option in order to ensure that current and relevant publications (especially, textbooks and periodicals) are acquired, processed and made available for the use of their disparate clientele. Additionally, routine arrangement of catalogues and shelf-reading would make for easy accessibility of materials. This is against the backdrop that information offerings in Nigerian public libraries are largely in textual formats. The provision of these materials will go a long way in satisfying the information needs of patrons of public libraries.

- The establishment of rural libraries for the extension of public library services beyond state capitals has been on the drawing board for too long. Public functionaries, policy-makers, in Nigeria and other developing countries, should demonstrate the required will power through practical implementation of this laudable proposal. They can commence the building of branch libraries in all local/municipal administrative headquarters. This will increase the library-density and extend vital information services to a greater proportion of the population, especially, those living in far-flung areas of the country.

- Political leaders, fiscal planners and financial experts, in Nigeria and other developing societies, should ensure that the needed budgetary allocations are made and released for public library services. Adequate funding would ensure that public libraries are empowered with the financial wherewithal for the purchase of basic tools and facilities and implementation of user-friendly information programmes in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) project of the United Nations Organization (UNO). There is no doubts that when libraries, generally, are properly funded, they assume their roles as "powerful tools of national development, enables to the attainment of a nation's historic destiny and inexhaustible fountains of national consciousness" as observed by Patrick F. Wilmot (1982). It is, therefore, evident that public libraries should be properly funded to enable them procure relevant information materials and provide those services that will satisfy the educational and research needs of their patrons.

- Lending services should be extended to all registered patrons of public and other types of libraries in Nigeria. This is particularly instructive since almost all the public libraries studied were observed to have insufficient reading spaces. The caveat is that strict but workable sanctions must be spelt out for damage to any borrowed materials or default to return such on date-due.

- Practical and mutually beneficial co-operative arrangements should be worked out among public libraries, in Nigeria and elsewhere, (ownership, location, size and type) on exchange of materials and other types of resource sharing since no single library can have all the resources, services and materials required by its immediate clientele.

- The children of today are the adults of tomorrow. As such, they should be introduced to public library services early enough. Such exposure to books and other information materials will ignite their curiosity and inculcate reading habit. This will not only help them make more productive use of their time, the academic performance of these children will witness a turn for the better even as those children become enlisted into the army of future advocates and champions of the cause of public libraries.

REFERENCES

[1] Abdulkarim, M. (2010). *Improving public libraries in Nigeria.* Available at: http://weekly.dailytrust.com.

[2] Abolaji, J.A. (2009). How libraries contribute to communities and society. *Ozean Journal of Social Science,* 2 (3), 15 – 23.

[3] Afolabi, A. K. (2004). The role of information in the management of local governments in Nigeria: A survey of Akure-South Local Government Area. *Owena Journal of Library and Information Science,* 1 (1), 41 – 49.

[4] Aguolu, C. C. and Aguolu, E.I. (1997). A conceptual approach to the role of the library in developing countries. *Education Libraries Journals,* 40 (3), 13 – 22.

[5] Aguolu, C.C. and Aguolu, E.I. (2002). *Libraries and information management in Nigeria: Seminar essays on themes and problems.* Maiduguri, Nigeria: Ed-Linform Services.

[6] Aina, L.O. (2004). *Library and information science textbook for Africa*. Ibadan: Third World Information Services Ltd.

[7] Aitchison, J. (2006). Experiments in the provision of rural community libraries in South Africa: The family literacy projects initiatives. *Innovation*, (32), 95 – 106.

[8] Akporhonor, A.B. (2005). Library funding in Nigeria: Past, present and future. *Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances.* 18 (2), 63 – 70.

[9] Alemna, A. (1995). Community libraries: An alternative to public libraries. *African Library Review,* 44 (7), 40 – 44.

[10] Anunobi, C.V., Ogbonna, A.U. and Osuchukwu, N.P. (2012). Information needs of rural dwellers for effective library and information service provision in a Senatorial Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. In: Aina L.O and Mabawonku I. (eds.). *Nigeria Library Association at 50: Promoting Library and Information Science Profession for National Development and Transformation.* Proceedings of 2012 AGM/Conference of NLA held in Abuja, 15th – 19th July 2012.

[11] Ebiwolate, B.P. (2010). Nigeria public library services to rural areas: *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Available at:

http://unilib.unl.edu/LPP/posigha2.htm.

[12] Emojorho, D. (2005). Public Library and Nation Building: The Nigerian Experience. *Library Management.* 26 (3), 123 – 129.

[13] Federal Office of Statistics (1997). *Nigeria statistical year book: 1996*. Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Office of Statistics.

[14] Hossain, A. and Islam, S. (2012). Information needs of rural dwellers: A study of three villages in Bangladesh. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Available at: http://www.unlib.unl.edu/Lpp/htm.

[15] Islam, A. and Islam, M.M. (2010). Community information services through public libraries in Bangladesh: Problems and proposals. *Library Philosophy and Practice.* Available at: http://www.freelibrary.com.

[16] Issa, A.O. (1998). The information needs of rural dwellers in Kwara State. In: Tijiani, A. et al. (eds). *Issues in information provision: Nigerian perspectives.* Zaria, Nigeria: NALISS Press.

[17] Koneru, I. (2008). Revamping public library system for equitable access to information: NKC Recommendations on Libraries. Available at: http://edu/documents/0009/2907/htm.

[18] Morka, P.C. (1992). *History of libraries.* Benin City: Skola Publishers Nigeria Limited.

[19] Nanavit, I. (1985). *Rural public library services for all*. Paper Presented at UNESCO/IFLA Seminar, 11th – 16th August, 1985.

[20] Nnadozie, C. O. (2002). *User satisfaction in Nigerian public libraries: A study of Imo State Public Library, Owerri.* Unpublished MLS Thesis, Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria.

[21] Nnadozie, C. O. (2007). *Foundations of Library Practice,* Owerri, Nigeria: Springfield Publishers Ltd.

[22] Nnadozie, C. O. (2013). Alternative funding models for Nigeria academic libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice.* Available at http://www.webpages.aidaho.edu/mbolin/nnadozie.htm.

[23] Nnaji, L.O. (1986). *The library in Nigeria.* Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers Limited.

[24] Nuhu, A. (1994). Public libraries in Northern Nigeria: Limitations and challenges. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science,* 4(I), 27 – 34.

[25] Nwokocha, U. (1993). Resources utilization by adults in Nigeria: The case study of two public libraries. *International Information and Library Review,* 25, 85 – 91.

[26] Nwosu, C. (2000) *A textbook in the use of library for higher education.* Owerri, Nigeria: Springfield Publishers Ltd.

[27] Obinyan, G.A., Obinyan, O.O. and Aidenojie, E. (n.d.). Use of information resource in four branches of a state public library in Nigeria. *Chinese Librarianship: An International Electronic Journal,* 31 (n.d.). Available at: http://www.icic.us.cliej/C13000a.pdf.

[28] Ochai, A. (1995). Library services to the grassroots in developing countries: A revisionist approach. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science,* 5(2), 163 – 171.

[29] Ogbonna, I.M. (2011). Public library services provided by the Enugu State Library Board from 2007 – 2010: A statistical report. *Nigerian Libraries,* 44 (I), 73 – 88.

[30] Ogunrombi, S. (1982). *An assessment of the utilization of the resources of Oyo State Public Library, Dugbe, Ibadan.* Unpublished MLS Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[31] Ogunrombi, S.A and Oladokun, S.O. (1993). Sources of information used by agricultural extension workers in Ogbomosho Area of Oyo State. *Leading Libraries and Information Centres,* I (I), 34 – 41.

[32] Ogunrombi, S.A. and Sanni, G.A. (2009). Information in effective management of Akoko-Edo L.G.A, Edo State Nigeria. *Nigerian Libraries,* 42, 20-31.

[33] Ojo, O. A. (1984). *The utilization of library resources in the Ondo State Public Library, Akure.* Unpublished MLS Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[34] Ojo-Igbinoba, M. E.(1995). *History of libraries and library education.* Lagos, Nigeria: UTO Publications Limited.

[35] Okeke, I. E. (2000). *The library as a research institute.* Oba, Onitsha: Ife-Vic Press.

[36] Okiy, R. B. (2005). Funding Nigerian libraries in the 21st Century: Will funding from alternative sources suffice? *The Bottom Line Managing Library Finances.*18 (2), 71 – 77.

[37] Orgazi, F.N. (1984). *The utilization of the resources in the Divisional Library at Orlu, Imo State.* Unpublished MLS Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[38] Osuigwe, N.E., Jiagbogu, O.C and Udeze, N.S. (2012). Trends in the development of public libraries in South-East Nigeria. In: Aina, L.O. and Mabawonku, I. (eds), *Nigeria Library Association at 50: Promoting Library and Information Science Profession for National Development and Transformation.* Proceedings of 2012 AGM/Conference of NLA held in Abuja, 15th – 19th July 2012.

[39] Poole, W. F. (1971). The history of public libraries. In: *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science,* New York: Marcel Dekker.

[40] Salia, U.A. (1999). The development and roles of public libraries in Nigeria. Available at: http://www.ijeunilorin.net/june1999.pdf .

[41] Stipanov, J. (2005). *Knowledge society and public libraries.* Paper presented at the Naples Conference, Supatar, October, 6th – 7th 2005. Available at: http://www.naple.infor/supatar/stipanoc.pdf.

[42] Tathagatha, R. (2010). Repositioning public libraries in Nigeria. Available at: http://www.m2weekly.com/.

[43] Ubofung, U. I. (1995). Raising political awareness among rural population: Role of the library. *Nigerian Libraries,* 29 (1 & 2), 61 – 70.

[44] Ubogu, J.O. and Okiy R.B. (2011). Sources of funds in academic libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice.* Available at: http://www.unlib.un/.edu/LPP/pdf.

[45] Uhegbu, A.N. (1997). The impact of rural information on community development programmes in Imo State of Nigeria. *International Information and Library Review,* 29, 85-94.

[46] UNESCO (1954). *Development of public libraries in Africa: The Ibadan seminar.* Paris: United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[47] Walker, C. and Manjarrez, C.A. (2003). *Partnership for free choice learning: Public libraries, museums and public broadcasting working together.* New York: The Urban Institute and Urban Libraries Council.

[48] Wani, Z.A. (2008). *Development of public libraries in India.* Available at: http://www.thefreelibrary.com.

[49] Wilmot, P. F. (1982). *Libraries in nation-building*. Paper Presented at the Meeting of Nigeria Library Association, Borno State Division, held at Maiduguri on 27th March, 1982.

[50] Chuma O. Nnadozie, Juliana O. Akidi and Nnamdi E. Onyekweodiri. Journal Usage in Selected University and Polytechnic Libraries in Nigeria. *International Journal of Library & Information Science*, **4**(3), 2015, pp. 26 - 39.