

The need for school libraries in primary schools in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The influence of the library can be felt at all levels of education. This means that the school library in primary school among others is very germane in the educational development of a country, and cannot be underestimated. Students' effective learning cannot be acquired through classroom activities alone, they relate to school library information resources to complement what they have been taught in class. This paper, therefore, aims at justifying the need for school libraries in primary schools, in Osun State, Nigeria. In the paper, we argue that the library will enable pupils to acquaint themselves with books and other information resources, which will enhance learning and conceptual development.

Keywords: Library Consciousness, Library Services, Primary Schools, Osun State, Books, and Information materials.

INTRODUCTION

As cited in the official diary of Osun State University (2014), Osun State is one of the states in Nigeria. It is located in the South-Western part of the country. It covers an area of approximately 14,875 square kilometers. It lies between longitude 04 00 E and 05 05 S and Latitude 05 0558 N and 08007 W. It is bounded by Ogun, Kwara, Oyo, Ondo, and the Ekiti States in the South, North, West, and East respectively. The state lies within the tropical rain forest. According to the national population and housing census exercise conducted in 2006, Osun State has a population of 3,426,535. The indigenes of the state belong to the Yoruba tribe and are composed of the Oyos, Ifes, Ijesas, Igbominas, and Osuns. However, non-indigenes from all parts of Nigeria and foreigners reside in the state and live together in harmony. Yoruba and English are the languages used in official and business transactions. The people have a rich cultural heritage which is eloquently demonstrated in all spheres of their lives, the culture, music, and other social activities.

It is marvelous being among the people savoring the beauty of their well-acclaimed cultural inheritance. Osun

Osogbo Groove has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, while the OsunOsogbo Festival has been listed as an international festival. UNESCO also established the centre for Black Culture and International Understanding in Osogbo, the state capital. (Official diary of Osun State University, 2014)

By definition, the school library is a function, not a place. It is not a book collection. It is not an e-library. It is a service, offering advice, professional development and knowledge of appropriate learning and teaching materials, digital and non-digital services. The most important resource services are human resources. The school library should be the beating heart of a school, supporting learning and teaching for the entire school community (Boelens, 2010). Similarly, Library services in the words of Nnadozie (2007); Igwe and Onah (2013) may be classified into technical and readers' services. Library services involve the totality of assistance provided by the library for its pupils/users. These services, to a large extent, determine the well-being of the library users educationally, emotionally and otherwise. The library services could be direct or indirect as well as personal or group.

The school library and information services in the education system are in three levels namely: Local government, State and Federal. These levels must work in synergy to ensure access to quality library and information services for all, most especially in Nigeria (Itsekor, Jegbefume, & Oyebode, 2019). Ugboma (2007) however, noted that school libraries are few and unevenly spread over the country. Only the Federal government and few private schools can boast of the library. Libraries should be established in all schools, the environment should determine the size and infrastructure of the library, though there should be a minimum acceptable standard.

According to Arinde (2010), the school library is designed mainly for the provision of all kinds of teaching and learning resources. Abdullahi (1998) noted that usefulness of a library depends upon its proper organization which includes the availability and accessibility of relevant information resources, their arrangement, and the general interior decoration of the library. Benard and Dulle (2014) opined that an assessment around the globe on the reading ability of the pupils is that, one of the factors that positively influence pupils' reading fulfillment is the accessibility and availability of textbooks and other information resources in the library. The utilization of library information resources is a vital factor in the delivery of quality services in different types to pupils.

The diversity of library information resources is essential to facilitate the school library to fulfill its functions among which are to comprehensively provide information resources that are needed for the school's educational programs and to aid improving and increasing the understanding skills and learning behaviors of pupils. Bhatt (2013) states that effective library services depend mainly on the satisfaction level of its users with the relevant library resources as well as library personnel supportive attitude. In 2017 and again in 2010, school libraries

were included in the IFLA/FAIFE World Reports (Bothma, 2017; Bothma, 2010). In Nigeria primary schools, internet access and enough books are considered a rare luxury. The conception of the phrase "school library" is often unknown to the pupil(s). Based on this, the pupil is not likely to visit a library until he/she can pursue higher education. For a university to be accredited, one of the conditions is to have a library on the campus. This is not the case for primary schools. In order words, it is not compulsory to have a library on their premises.

UNICEF (2010) and the World Bank (2011) both confirmed that most of the illiterate adults live in Sub-Saharan African. Meanwhile, international data suggest that school libraries play an important role in promoting reading and literacy. We may, therefore, conclude that the lack of libraries (and by extension books) throughout the African Continent, contributes to the lack of a reading culture. As observed by Olayemi and Aina (2007) that from scholarly publications and personal observations, many public and privately owned schools seem not to have libraries, and a few of those schools that have libraries/reading rooms are placed under lock and key and are non-functional. Sambo, (1998) as cited by Itseko, Jegbefume, and Oyebola (2019) observed that for quality education to take place, good teaching and effective learning requires the support system of good school libraries. He, however, noted that this is perhaps the greatest single weakness in the Nigerian primary school system. In his opinion the personnel and professional librarians are available but what is needed are the infrastructure and information resources.

Gbotosho and Adejumo (2019) observed that school libraries in a primary school in Osun State, Nigeria leave very much to be desired. This is majorly based on lack of essence of library consciousness and services which has led to some of the school libraries been stocked with works

of literature that are not only out of date, but also unrelated to the information needs and interests of the pupils. Besides, collection development has become more difficult with the high cost of books.

As a result of under-funding by the Osun State and Nigeria government, current periodicals, books, magazines, non-fiction and fictions that could support teaching and learning are not there. The school libraries in these primary schools in public schools are seen as warehouses for old books and magazines, some of which are covered with mosquitoes and dust that had gathered over time, with mismatched tables and chairs which are mixed well with the aging shelves. To corroborate the above observation, see (Adeyemi, 2009; Anyawu, Obichere & Ossai-Onah, 2013). The development of school libraries in Nigeria has been described as "accidental" even though almost all the post-primary schools had libraries but books were not also available there.

The importance of the school library services at primary level

According to Ayanlola (2014), for intellectual development, social and all-round development of the child; the school library in primary schools is quite essential in the following ways:

- (i) It helps to develop good reading skills in a child.
- (ii) It encourages long term learning habits, listening, reading and viewing a wide variety of learning resources.
- (iii) Similarly, once these learning habits are acquired from the key sources they lead to continuous success in school and to the personal enrichment of leisure time through life.
- (iv) It serves as the pupils' first exposure to the world of information.
- (v) It helps to support and enrich the formal curriculum of the school.

- (vi) It acts as a broadening influence by providing pupils with the means of studying theories and ideas put forward by others than their teachers or textbooks.
- (vii) It helps the child to build up innate facilities in him, which will enable him to put knowledge into good use.
- (viii) It helps to mold the pupil's information gathering behavior for the future.
- (ix) It plays a crucial role in getting the child prepared, through required exposure from reading for an adult role in society.

Goals of the school library

The school library is integrated into the educational process, the points below are essential to the development of literacy, teaching, learning, information literacy and culture which are the core school library services.

- (i) Supporting all pupils in learning and practicing skills for evaluating and using information regardless of form, format or medium and sensitivity to the modes of communication within the community.
- (ii) Proclaiming the concept of intellectual freedom and access to information which are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy.
- (iii) Supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the schools' mission and curriculum.
- (iv) Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity.
- (v) Promoting reading and the resources and services of the school community and beyond.
- (vi) Developing and sustaining in children/pupils the habit and

- enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives.
- (vii) Providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences, and opinions.
 - (viii) Offering opportunities for experiences in creating and using the information for knowledge, understanding, imagination, and enjoyment.
 - (ix) Working with pupils, teachers' administrators and parents to achieve the mission. (Ayanlola, 2014).

Functions of the school library

These are some crucial functions that the school library plays in the process of education at all times.

- (i) Provision of vocational information materials that enable students to choose suitable careers and increase the chance of success for further education.
- (ii) Functions like acquisition, custody preservation, cultural preservation of all essential materials and making them available for use in the library.
- (iii) Provision of essential up-to-date materials that keep pupils, teachers in particular abreast of the development in various fields of knowledge.
- (iv) Pupils with special gifts and talents could easily be discovered.
- (v) Assisting in the desired development of reading skills, encourage the habit of reading skills and encourage the habit of reading interest. Any success in school is ideal base on reading provided if encouraged with the provision of interesting, challenging and relevant materials.
- (vi) Teachers and pupils, through abundant relevant materials for a

- different level of education and library, can acquire a high-level long life habit of reading, relaxation, and acquisition of knowledge for self-development.
- (vii) Supporting curricula of the educational program as a result of the academic achievement in other subjects. (Ayanlola, 2014).

Strategies for provision of school libraries in Osun State

Education is the process of cultural transmission and renewal. While Library is provided in school to safeguard knowledge, preserve the cultural heritage and provide adequate information for education and research purposes to pupils/students and other users (Abdullahi, 1998; Ayaz, Ali, Khan, Ullah & Ullah, 2017; Botool& Webber, 2017: Godfrey, Rutledge, Mowdood, Reed, Bigler&Soehner, 2017; Kleijnen, Huysmans, Ligtvoet, & Elbers, 2017 as cited by (Suleiman, Hanafi & Thanslikan, 2018) Library is associated with all forms of education: formal, informal and non-formal. It serves as the nerves centre of all educational institutions and a crucial factor in the educational development of men at all levels, especially in educational institutions. The Library, which is the hub of any educational set-up, provides information and idea that are fundamental to functioning successfully in the increasing information and knowledge-based society. As observed by IFLA/UNESCO (2002), the library can equip pupils/students' imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens. It consists of a collection of books and other information resources maintained and managed for reading, consultation, study, and research and organized to provide access to users/pupils with a well-trained staff to as well provide services to meet the needs of its users/pupils.

From the above statements, it is therefore hoped that the Osun State

Government through the National Library of Nigeria and State Public Library Board, will place the development of school libraries on its priority list, with the inauguration of Universal Basic Education (UBE) to reduce illiteracy in Osun State and Nigeria in general. The introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programs are aimed at reforming specifically, the basic education sector and the Nigeria Education Sector. One of the objectives of the blueprint for the resuscitation of the basic education sector according to Adediran (2003) is to enhancing and energizing the curricular and its delivery. Thus UBEC libraries are established to promote reading culture in Nigerian schools, enhancing and energizing the curricular and its delivery. The replica of UBEC in the states is known as the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

The SUBEB also has responsibilities for establishing libraries in the state. SUBEB libraries are supposed to be able to adequately provide library and information resources and services that will meet the needs of pupils and teachers as well as support school curricula. SUBEB libraries are designed to serve as model school libraries and benchmark for the school libraries' development.

Provision of fundamental libraries

The Osun State Library Board should provide functional libraries through the Local Government Educational Committees in primary schools in Osun State. Also, through the State Ministry of Education, it should be made compulsory for primary schools to have teacher-librarians on their payrolls to enforce library periods and assist pupils to improve their information searching techniques. More so, the State Ministry of Education should encourage each Local Government to appropriate a proportion of its budget to library development in schools and public libraries. According to Arinde (2010), the school library is designed mainly for the

provision of all kinds of teaching and learning resources. Abdullahi (1998) noted that usefulness of a library depends upon its proper organization which includes the availability and accessibility of relevant information resources, their arrangement, and the general interior decoration of the library.

The federal government

In as much as it is not the duty of the Federal Government neither the National Library of Nigeria to establish school libraries, however, they should as a matter of interest provide adequate library materials for all primary schools to be used in teaching and learning. The government should put more priority on adequate provision of funds necessary for the provision of current and up to date information resources and also for the employment of qualified and trained teacher-librarian (Benard and Dulle (2014). Similarly, the Government at all levels should provide sufficient funds for primary schools to enable them to purchase library materials in print and electronics. A good arrangement should be made by the Ministry of Education at all levels of Government to enforce the use of library materials that are available in school libraries in all primary school subjects. Also, the Government should provide sufficient and relevant information materials for primary school libraries to promote teaching and learning for both teachers and pupils.

Parents and parents-teachers' association

The Osun State Library Board should work with Parents-Teachers' Association to establish programs to augment the stocking of relevant titles in primary school libraries through such means as special levies and surcharges. Parents should ensure that they provide essential information materials like electronic books, textbooks and other relevant information materials for their children

because the Government cannot do everything, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). Furthermore, parents could do more in the areas of counseling, mobilization, and non-books. The Library Board could as well work harmoniously with old students' Associations and charitable bodies to get support for building to serve as libraries and to assist in the development of the library stock.

The pupils

The pupils should give their maximum co-operation to Teacher-Librarians and other library supporting staff when library materials are used, American Association of School Librarians (2003). After all, the hallmarks of school library services remain the ever-prevailing condition of uninterrupted access to information in the library resources.

The community

A Community is a small or large social unit that has something in common, such as norms, religion, values, or identity. Communities often share a sense of place that is situated in a given geographical area or virtual space through communication platforms, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). It is very important to note that there is a need for greater collaboration between the Library Board and Communities and their agencies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) Philanthropists or individuals and international agencies among young people in our primary schools. The community as well is made up of a wider economic, social, cultural and physical environment in which schools and libraries exist and operate. Nigeria is a country of well-organized communities. This is an asset for educational and library development. The teacher-librarians, libraries, teachers, parents, pupils and educational authorities belong in different ways, to the resource centres and the Community. The Parent Teachers

Association (PTA) is an organization that promotes a healthy relationship of common interest. Furthermore, the learning resource centres and Community exercise strong influences upon each other. The home influences the child's access to education, the capacity to complete and benefit from schooling and related activities. Also, it is of necessity to involve religious leaders as partners in progress in institutionalizing reading culture and/or library at all levels of the educational system in Nigeria through the provision of educational support materials and facilities.

Employment of a school librarian

The employment of a school librarian must be taken very seriously. Many school proprietors employ school certificate holders to man the libraries and hence no skill is used in handling the information resources. The school library resources, including digital resources, are meant to be accessible throughout the school and after the school day and administered by a knowledgeable person (Teacher-Librarian). Just as the information needs of teachers, pupils must be taken into consideration when planning for school libraries; the teachers-librarian must be carefully selected. There is a need for library personnel who has the right qualification, knowledge, and passion for the job and users, American Association of School Librarians (2003). The school librarian must be one who is willing and interested to learn, get more educational training and develop over time. She/he must be interested in reading, ready to learn and write. She/he should be able to get trained and learn to operate modern information gadgets. This day, there are many sophisticated tools, like the computer, Ipad, and tablets which pupils learn to operate very easily without being taught and they use them to read and study.

Readership promotion campaign

It is a well-known fact that reading has an impact on library usage and consequently, on its development, the justification of reading is the business of librarians, be it primary, secondary or university level, more so, as in outside formal schooling, American Association of School Librarians (2003). More so, the various moves by librarians in promoting reading in Nigeria were concretized in 1981 when the National Library of Nigeria mounted the Readership promotion campaign. The program had the following objectives:

- (i) To identify the major obstacles this inhibits more reading in this country and find a means of eliminating them.
- (ii) To encourage more Nigerians to read.
- (iii) To increase reading materials in Nigeria, in quantity and variety.

The Library Board in Osun State, in collaboration with the National Library of Nigeria, Osun State Branch and the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) should organize the National Reading Week on an annual basis among primary schools. This will go a long way in publicizing reading and library usage.

The Role of the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and National Library of Nigeria (NLN)

To foster and sustain a library and reading culture in young people in our primary schools, the NLA should coordinate library day events at Local, State and National levels to create an awareness of all types of libraries. They are already doing this at the national level, more efforts should be intensified to reach both state and local levels, Itseko, Jegbefume & Oyebola (2019). All programs about libraries should be published in the media and the internet if we do not announce our work; nobody will know what we are doing. Story hour programs should be introduced in the school curriculum and

the school library resource centres should anchor this program. Storytelling, book clubs, read aloud programs will inspire a good habit of reading in school children or pupils.

The LRCN and NLA

The Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria {LRCN} and Nigeria Library Association {NLA} should liaise with library schools of universities to offer training courses to teacher-librarians and teachers in the field of the school library and information services, in other to award diploma and the degree to teacher-librarian for the effective and efficient services delivery. All schools must have a qualified school librarian. There is a need for policies on libraries, education and information centres to be implemented. Nigeria has been faced with problems of non-functional libraries, information centres, poor education systems, poor decision making and poor implementation of policies (Itseko, Jegbefume & Oyebola (2019). This has seriously affected effecting quality decision-taking adequate policy formulation and effective implementation of policies formulated.

Media of socialisation

The informal media of socialization in the communities is very important, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). These include radio and television, which have considerable influence on the child's world view, are widely available in urban and rural settings of most Nigerian States. The library Board should work harmoniously with rural communities to run media resource centres to be complemented with printed literacy materials to be supervised by the communities with a small building based on the prototype drawing to be supplied by the Library Board. Besides, the Rural Electricity Board will provide electricity to run the televisions. Radio and Television are an important source of information. They constitute part of the elements in the

educational environment of the community.

These non-formal methods of socialization are very germane and effective in imparting requisite knowledge to children and other learners. Festivals, folktales, burial, and naming ceremonies, drumming are modes by which most households impart knowledge to their children. Such modes and others that are not yet fully exploited should still be harnessed in the services of education and library services, most especially in Osun State, Nigeria.

Exhibitions in publicising libraries

One of the ways to publicize library services is through exhibitions, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). There are different types, both the objectives of and the importance of exhibitions as a powerful public relations strategy that cannot be overemphasized. The Osun State Public Library should mount exhibitions periodically at its Zonal libraries and in selected schools in the state to stimulate the interest of pupils in libraries.

The young writers' clubs

Pupils need to be encouraged to form Young Writers' Clubs with annual prize-giving competitions, to stimulate their interest in library usage, American Association of School Librarians (2003). Once we can catch them early in life, the foundation of lifelong education would have been laid.

Book-fairs

There is a positive correlation between book-fairs and improved library usage, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). However, it has not become a norm in Osun State, on this note, the Osun State Library Board should put this into practice on an annual basis, organize book-fairs in which schools, including primary and secondary, are invited to raise awareness of libraries as an

adjunct to educational development. The Osun State Library Board should learn from the example of the Kaduna State Library Board book-fairs.

Library out-reach

The State Library in Osun State should organize "out-reaches" to primary schools within the state regularly through a mobile library service. This service should be made available to every part of Osun State where people can always gather for one thing or the other. Furthermore, the out-reach services of the British Council Library should be introduced in Osun State, which should be well advertised in schools. These services will imbibe the role of libraries in pupils to become friends of the library from their early stage, American Association of School Librarians (2003).

Friends of the library

The Osun State Library Board should liaise with the educationist, traditional rulers, politicians, and religious leaders to form friends of the library groups in its Zonal Libraries and at the Local Government Levels to popularise library services to young people in the state. Library Clubs should be initiated to support library usage, the American Association of School Librarians (2003). This will in no small way to assist pupils in primary schools, in our junior and secondary schools, and also in the tertiary level of education by the Osun State indigenes.

The LRCN, NLA, and NLN

These bodies should try as much as possible to work in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education to lead and coordinate the regular feedback from the Federal, State and Local Education District to consult and share expertise and ideas, jointly planned for, Itseko, Jegbefume, and Oyebola (2019). Issues on school libraries should be reported to the different heads and a round table meeting should be

conducted on the information gotten from the feedbacks of school library programs and projects at Federal, State and Local level.

Commercial photocopying

The Zonal Libraries of the Osun State Public Library should run photocopying services at a subsidized rate to draw the attention of the old and young to the libraries and library services. If this could be done, people will come to make photocopies of their documents and library materials from time to time. The role of the library as the repository of knowledge and human heritage will encourage and stimulate users of its usage, American Association of School Librarians (2003).

School inspectors and libraries

The school inspectors are meant to collect and provide statistical data to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), such as the number of school libraries that are functioning in the nation, details regarding levels of usage, stock, budgets, connectivity, and computer, etc, but over the years there seem to be no record of such, Itseko, Jegbefume and Oyebola (2019).. However, without the implementation of library policies, planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating of school libraries and information services related projects in collaboration with the State Library Board, will never be effectively done.

Besides, libraries should form consortium and partner with government bodies, departments, institutions, and other relevant stakeholders, like the Association of Book Publishers and Sellers and collaborate with other NGOs to publicize and promulgate the services of the school media resource centre. Librarians can also engage with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Suppliers and coordinating bodies, such as the Publishers Association of Nigeria (PAN), African Publishers Association (APA) and the Nigeria Book-sellers Association (NBA)

and other role players in the field of library and information science to enhance and market their services.

Government and library management

The Government and Library management should ensure the development of a multimedia-based collection. This enables individual learning and makes learning interesting. The multimedia collection will also attract the pupils to the use of the library. They should also improve on the funding of the SUBEB Libraries/LRCS to enable the provision of adequate facilities and resources needed for the effective functioning of the library and staff, Itseko, Jegbefume and Oyebola (2019). Funding can similarly be sought from private organizations and individuals as the government alone cannot fund the libraries effectively. Individuals and private organizations can be encouraged to fund library projects through public, private partnership initiatives. The "adopt a school initiative" of the Oyo State Government is a good example, which Osun State Government can emulate.

Conclusion

Since libraries are the most effective tools for change and progress in the society and also serve as the nerve centre of all educational institutions and a crucial factor in the educational development of men at all levels especially in educational institutions. Libraries are means and ways of encouraging a reading culture and motivating greater use of the library among primary school pupils. The influence and importance of libraries for young people and that of promoting the essence of library consciousness and services in primary schools in Osun State, Nigeria has been extensively discussed as the library is considered as having the most positive effect on young people. It is essential and necessary for the primary schools since it constitutes a big and rare treasure.

Recommendation

To find the solution to the observed aberration and enhance the need for school libraries in primary schools in Osun State, Nigeria, the following recommendations are made

- (i) That there should be a provision of school libraries in both public and privately owned schools which should be made to function effectively by providing learning materials in them. Similarly, for those that have libraries, they should no longer be put under lock and key but activated for proper usage for the benefit of all.
- (ii) Provisions of infrastructure and information resources are very essential and necessary in all established school libraries in Osun State, Nigeria.
- (iii) There should be the essence of library consciousness and services by providing current and adequate works of literature related to the information needs and interests of the pupils.
- (iv) School library collection development should not be made difficult by reducing the high cost of books and journals.
- (v) Nigeria and Osun State government should fund the school libraries through the provision of current periodicals, books, magazines, non-fiction and fictions that could support teaching and learning.
- (vi) There should be palliating need to train and retrain teacher-librarians and other library staff for effective use of the school libraries.
- (vii) The establishment of school libraries should be increased and evenly distributed/ spread over the country, with minimum acceptable standards.
- (viii) The school libraries should be properly organized to include the availability and accessibility of

relevant information resources, their arrangement, and general interior decoration of the school libraries.

- (ix) The school management in primary schools should encourage the pupils to adequately utilize library information resources in the delivery of quality services in different types of pupils.
- (x) The school library should be a focus for improved information literacy skills for pupils/students, teachers, and the wider school community.
- (xi) There should be a large number of trained school librarians leading to networking and professional support, and professional literature with a local focus.
- (xii) School libraries in schools should use desktop publishing to create materials with the use of a computer, desktop publishing software and supporting CDROMS, a binding machine, tape recorders, and digital cameras. These materials could include bibliographies of students' friends and families, and documenting local culture and folklore. Besides, an audio recording of oral traditions and storytelling should highly be encouraged. This will eventually address to some extent the lack of materials in general, most especially those in indigenous languages.

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