

## **Security challenges and control measure in college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined the security challenges and control measure in six (6) college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria. Survey research design was employed. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Frequency and percentages were the statistical tools used for data analysis. The population and sample consisted of 20 staff (librarians, library officers and library assistants) from the six colleges used for the study. Results from the study revealed absence of the use of information communication technology (ICT) to safeguard library collection as a results of poor power supply; that both print and electronic materials are targets of crime in libraries, with non-return of library materials, theft and mutilation constituting security challenges in these libraries. It was also discovered that various methods were adopted for stealing and mutilation of library materials such as ripping off book page(s), removing the book jackets, and hiding of books under their clothes and in pockets. It was recommended that photocopy service should be provided to enable the library users to photocopy books that are few in the library; that managements should provide multiple copies of materials to meet the information needs of their users.

**Keywords:** Security challenges, control measures, college of education libraries

### **Introduction**

As the health professional may say “prevention is better than cure,” The art of prevention is as old as human civilization. Since the invention of writings, mankind has been faced with problem of prevention. Document has been existing in one form or the other and it is natural for man to attempt to securing, managing and preventing them from deterioration. Edoke (2000) reported that the library emerged when the need arose to safeguard, exploit and utilize records of civilization. Libraries have been regarded as one of the pillars of civilization. No nation can function effectively without the use of a library. According to Ajegbomogun (2004), the overall manner in which policies, programmes, procedures, or measures are deployed to

mitigate risk and ensure access to library resource are not encouraging relatively.

Security practice simply refers to the different types of actions, measures or practice adopted to stop a crime. Libraries in Nigeria are performing most of their activities traditionally. Uzuegbu (2011) observed crime against library collections, is on the increase in a number of Nigeria university libraries. It was observed that there was no significant relationship found between the security measures adopted and the rate of crime, theft and mutilation of information resources in some Nigeria university libraries (Uzuegbu, 2011). This paper is poised as publishing the security practice employed in some colleges of education libraries.

### **Objectives of study**

The objective of the study is to find possible ways or solutions to the problems of security management for prevention of incessant books and other material thefts in the libraries of the colleges under the study. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. identify the security challenges libraries in college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria;
2. investigate the materials most targeted in the libraries ; and
3. identify the methods adopt to prevent the theft and mutilation in the libraries?

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What are the security challenges in college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria?
2. What are the library materials most targeted in the libraries?
3. What are the security measures deployed that can prevent theft and mutilation in the libraries?

### **Literature review**

Dean (2014) stated that, access card technology has been used to safeguard records, access card can be used in conjunction with video surveillance to control and monitor large collections and equipment's (Dean, 2014). Access cards can be integrated as photo ID cards for library employees and can be used as temporary keys for library clientele to have access to restricted areas. The access system can also be used for monitoring employee time and attendance, security patrols of the property, and can limit access to sensitive areas in the library. Electronic access control system enhances safety and protects valuable library assets. Access control solution range from simple authorized access systems to advanced close circuit monitoring and exception reports delivered through secure internet connections. The most popular types of cards are the

magnetic strip cards, which looks like a credit card and carries two or more tracks of information on the magnetic stripe, these can be used for access control and other services.

Antwi (1989) in a study of book theft conducted at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, Nigeria, revealed that the problems faced by libraries are three-dimensional. The study and subsequent search showed that collections may be stolen by students, library staff, and unauthorized external users. This implies that any security measure put in place by an information center should apply to everyone including its members of staff. Considering the value, uniqueness and cost of some of the collection, information institutions need to seriously (re) consider security management responsibility. According to Maidabino (2010), library security management has to do with taking necessary measures to ensure that the materials available for use in the library are kept in good condition and prevented from being stolen. Security management in libraries can be conceptualized to mean the overall manner in which security policies, programs procedures, or measures are deployed to mitigate the risk and ensure access.

Ugah (2007) observed that major security issues in libraries include theft and mutilation; vandalism; damages and disaster; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. Security is a way of life. Systematic security measures to ensure the safety of records and archival materials against human and natural agents. Constant vigilance on part of library staff may help to secure library materials. According to Adamu (2005), "security refers to device designed to guard library materials against crime, accidents, disaster, fire and attacks" Aina (2004) is of the view that, library materials must be safe; hence security devices need to be provided by libraries to ensure that materials are not stolen or mutilated." Maidabino (2010) reported a

high rate of book theft, mutilation and misplacement of books in Nigeria academic libraries. He suggested measures to reduce the problems which include tightening security at library entrance and exit, expulsion of student involved in theft and mutilation, provision of multiple copies of heavily used texts, reducing the cost of photocopying, and periodic searching of students' hostels and staff.

Aguolu (2000) observed that the best protection that a collection of books and non-book materials can have is a concrete building. From the perspective of Rajendra (2005), the 'library security should be planned when building is constructed wherever possible, through architectural considerations which include the site design and building design. Electronic security systems are technological devices that are used with the aid of electrical apparatus to secure library materials from theft and vandalism. Nancy (2016) wrote extensively on the use of electronic security to combat book theft and the experiences involved in their installation in the United States. Nancy (2016) stressed that, adoption of video surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism, video surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems serve as a way to monitor vandal in the library. The system can also be used to monitor and record evidence on clientele and employee misconduct. There are two basic elements of electronic surveillance. Primarily, the device or 'trigger' that is fitted into each book- hardback, paperback or journals; cassettes, records, discs. This trigger is very discreet and when concealed within books are virtually undetectable. Secondly, the free standing sensing installed at the exit such as the metal detective door of the library also serves as means for curbing theft and mutilation. Books left on the shelf or on the reading tables are sensitized and remain so until a book to be borrowed by a patron is desensitized at the issue desk by the library

staff and the patron then exits from the library. Except the book is checked out, the trigger always rings an alarm that alert the security personnel at the gate.

Khurshid (2015) observed that, the used of radio frequency identification systems (RFID), as surveillance system for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism. Security measures in the libraries can be broadly considered as physical security and electronic security. Physical security measures consist of site and architectural design, regular stock checking, deployment of library security officer (LSO), security staff, written security policy, bag checking, extended library opening hours, keys control, window and door protection, display case protection and use of dummy security devices (Khurshid, 2015). However, electronic security systems for libraries cover access control, radio frequency identification systems (RFID), and electronic alarm systems, smoke detectors, flame detectors, security sensors, burglary protection, video surveillance, CCTV, biometric identification and database management programs can be used to control Vandalism in the library.

The used of electromagnetic security (EM) surveillance system for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism, electromagnetic security (EM) is another most-used library security measure worldwide in the protection of books and other media from vandal activities (Adam and Abdullahi, 2018). A libraries book collect is valuable. Using a surveillance system along with 3M/RFID security gates could help to prevent theft and criminal activities within the library. Surveillance cameras installed throughout the library helps to protect library from theft and vandal.

Nwamefor (1974) cited by Nwalo (2003) asserted that the following measures could help to reduce the rate of book thefts in the library:

- i. Constant supervision;
- ii. Searching users at the library exit;

- iii. Unannounced searching of students hostels;
- iv. Posting security personnel of integrity to the library;
- v. Condemnation of theft through mass media;
- vi. Being vigilant against mutilation by library staff; and
- vii. Gauzing of library windows should be gauzed to make it very difficult for books to be throw out.

McComb (2004) stated that video surveillance and close-circuit television (CCTV) systems serve as a way to monitor and record security, deter crime, and ensure safety. The author suggests that libraries can use CCTV to identify visitors and employees, monitor work areas, deter theft, and ensure the security of the premises and other facilities. The system can also be used to monitor and record evidence on clientele and employee misconduct. In the same vein Ramana (2010) contributed that the use of closed circuit television (CCTV) in the libraries can enhance the ability to control the book theft and tearing off the pages from the books and magazines. Library services can only be achieved through the availability of library collections. Nkiki and Yusuf (2008) observed that, information is an essential part of a nation's wealth and access to it is a basic human right. A College library houses a wide variety of information resources. Information is not only a national resource, but also a medium for social communication. Anunobi and Okoye (2008) also agree with the safety of the information resources.

Consequently, different libraries have adopted varying security measures for their collections' safety. McComb (2004) writes that physical (non-electronic) security, electronic security and security policies/procedures are substantial methods for securing information resources of all kinds of libraries. Physical security includes architectural considerations, the use of personnel, and security hardware to prevent crimes against library collections.

Electronic security system refers to the use of equipment which typically provides alarm notification to the appropriate authority on entry control and site surveillance. Major elements of the electronic security system include burglary protection, collection security (hidden on materials) access control (system that directly 'read' unique personal characteristics such as voice quality, hand geometry, and identify Card.) and video surveillance, particularly the CCTV system. Sensors (detectors) to detect an intrusion and alarms (to notify appropriate authorities) are the facilities that make this type of security electronic on the other hand, security policies and procedures include all created and implemented security policies, procedures, and plans for the library.

Oder (2004) strongly maintained that security measures such as supervision, patrolling, and surveillance are lacking in libraries while keys to various collections halls are kept unsecured, if not in plain sight of the users. As defined by Maidabino (2010), mutilation is the act of destroying or removal of an essential part of library materials as to render it useless. This could be as a result of bending of corner of paper inserting pencil or biro into pages, further, of opening books back to back, tearing of relevant pages. Aliyu (2004) defined theft "as the total removal of library materials from the library without the normal procedures, either by the library users, library staff or both of them" Utah (2004) specifies mutilation and theft of library materials as "deliberate removal or attempted removal of library materials from the library without their being checked out" Also, successful unauthorized removal of library materials from the library, failure to return the materials to the library is also considered to be theft of library materials.

Ifidon (2000) stated that "mutilation and theft in libraries is a menace that has persisted, and it is indeed a global problem, the worsening state of libraries in Nigeria appears

to have aggravated its intensity and the consequent negative impact.” Aina, (2013) opined that, the use of electronic resource management system to safeguard resources, is the advent of information and communication technology (ICT) now has made libraries to preserve their information resources through electronic method. Information on printed format can now be recorded in computer using compact disk (CD), diskette, flash drives and through digitization of library information resources (Aina, 2013). Internet services enable libraries not only acquire but also preserve in the storage media and are accessed through browsing, and downloading to protect the information resource from disaster. Aina (2013) accordingly defined digitization as the conversion of traditional library information resources (books and papers) to electronic form using computers, scanners, and digital cameras to safeguard information resource from theft and vandal.

Ogunode, Okwelogu, Elechukwu and Yahaya (2021) noted that the objective of tertiary education in Nigeria can only be realized when the tertiary institutions environment such as library are peaceful, secured and conducive for teaching, learning and implementation of research programme. This is contrary to what many higher institutions are facing in Nigeria. The higher institutions located in the North-East, Nigeria are facing insecurity challenges. Enang (2019) noted that libraries in Colleges of Education in recent times have been infested with all manner of criminalities which, quite sadly, paint an opaque and rather disheartening picture. Akor, Musa & Ogunode (2021) observes that many schools, including tertiary institutions in the north, have been closed as they are constantly attacked; students and staff killed or abducted and facilities burnt. Ogunode, et al (2021) posits that the attacks on tertiary institutions, especially Libraries, academic staff, non-academic staff and students cannot guarantee sustainable

development of tertiary education in Nigeria. It is against this background that the paper discusses the security challenges and control measure in college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria.

### **Methods**

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The study covered all the colleges of education libraries in the North-East, Nigeria. However, a multi stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample size of 6 colleges that made up 3 Federal and 3 States which is in line with Krejcie and Morgan (1971) procedure for determining sample size. The six (6) colleges of education were Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe, Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Federal College of Education, Yola, College of Education, Zing, College of Education, Azare and College of Education, Waka-Biu. These libraries were chosen, because they possess a similar character in terms of their users. Therefore, the population of the study covered all library staff of the selected libraries. Similarly, in selecting staff for the survey as respondents, simple random sampling (SRS) method was used to select 20 library staff from each of the 6 selected colleges totaling 120 staff.

The instrument used for data collection for the study was a structured questionnaire supplemented by observation method. The questionnaire was administered to librarians, library officers as well as the library assistances in the libraries and retrieved after completion. The data were analyzed with frequency and percentage in order to answer the research questions.

### **Results**

The results are presented according to the research questions.

**Research questions one:** What are the security challenges in college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Security challenges in academic libraries**

S/No.	Security challenges	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Non return of library materials	71	59.1%
2.	Theft	60	50.0%
3.	Cutting out illustration	43	35.8%
4.	Tearing/ripping off pages of books	40	33.3%
5.	Marking/writing on text	39	32.5%
6.	Borrowing books for family friend	35	29.1%
7.	Removal of date due slip library labels	27	22.5%

**Figure 1: Chart of Security challenges in academic libraries**

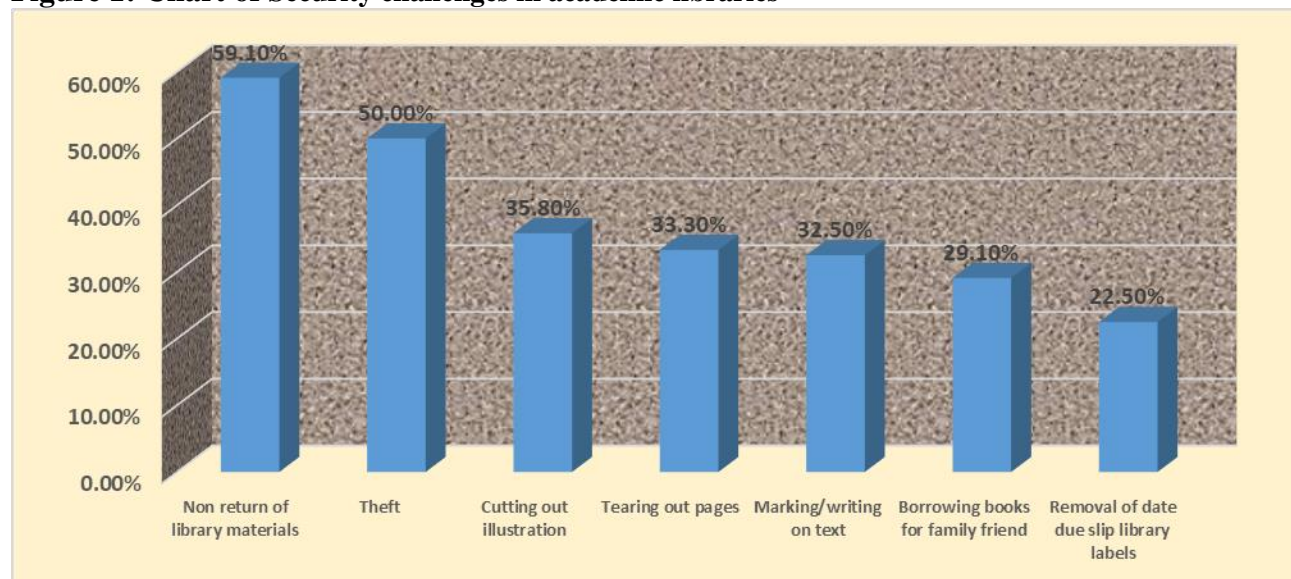


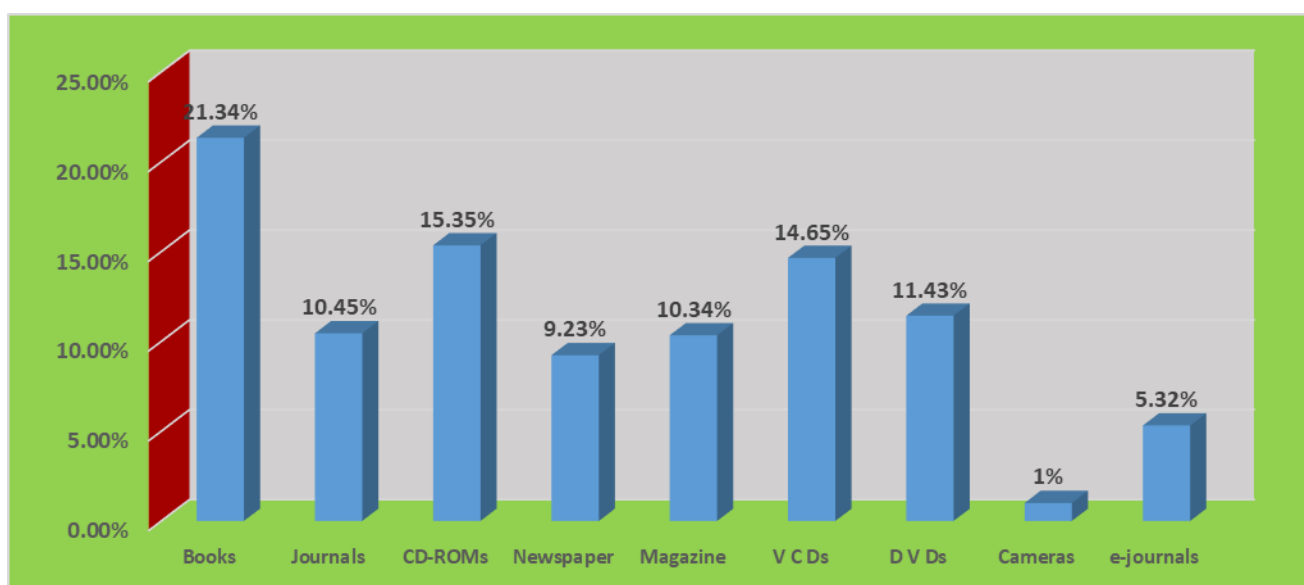
Table 1 and Figure 1 present the analysis of the responses on the security challenges in the libraries. The result revealed that 59.1 % of the respondent indicated that non return of library materials was the major problem faced by the libraries, followed by book theft with 50.0%. Thus, non- return of the library materials constitutes serious problem in the libraries surveyed. Users do not like to return library materials, even when overdue. The

table further reveals that cutting out illustration, tearing/ripping off pages of books , marking/writing on text, borrowing books for family and friend and removal of date due slip attracted 35.8%, 33.3%, 32.5%, 29.1% and 22.5% respondents respectively.

**Research questions two:** What are the library materials most targeted in the libraries?

**Table 2: Library Materials Most Targeted**

S/No.	Library Materials Most Targeted	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Books	68	21.34%
2.	Journals	35	10.45%
3.	CD-ROMs	50	15.35%
4.	Newspaper	30	9.23%
5.	Magazines	33	10.34%
6.	V C Ds	45	14.65%
7.	D V Ds	36	11.43%
8.	Cameras	6	1%
9.	e-journals	16	5.32%



**Figure 2: Chart of Library materials most targeted**

Table 2 shows that books ranked highest (21.34%) among items mutilated and stolen from libraries closely followed by CD-ROMs (15.36). The table also shows other library materials in varying percentages such as VCDs (14.65%) Newspaper (9.23%) magazines (10, 34%) journals (10.45%) e-journals (5.32%) and cameras (1%). This confirms the conclusion of Omioniyi (2001) that computer hardware and electronic equipment are increasingly becoming objects of theft in academic libraries.

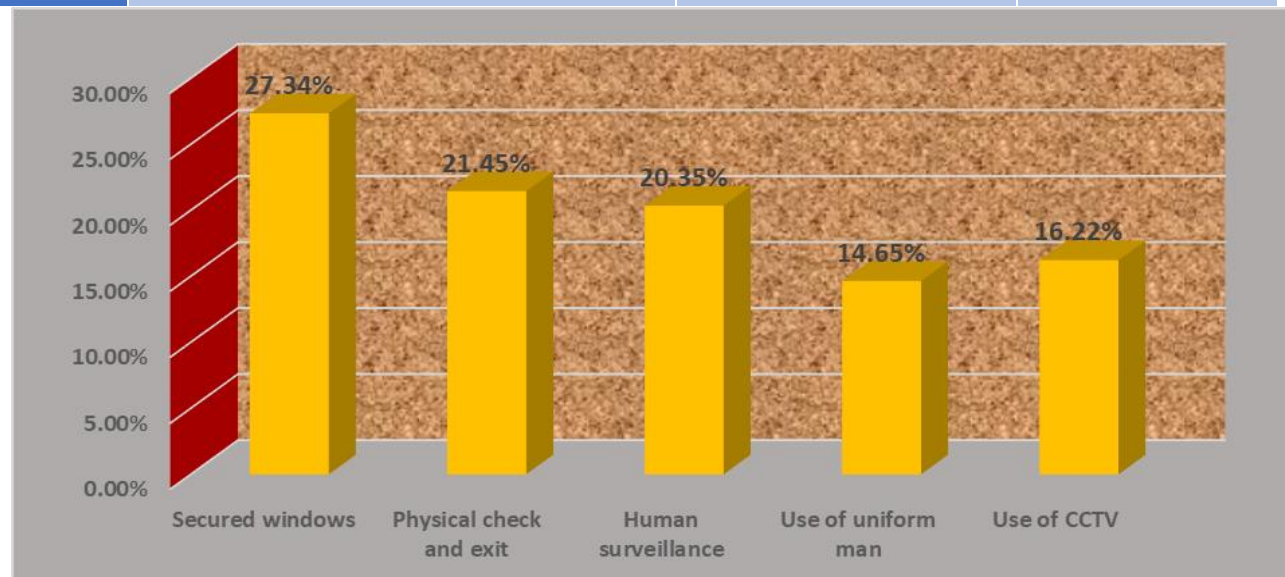
**Research questions three:** What are the security measures deployed that can prevent theft and mutilation in the libraries?

Respondents were asked to indicate the security control measures available in their libraries. The analysis of their responses are depicted in in Table 3 and Figure 3. The data reveal absence of the use of information communication technology (ICT) to safeguard library collection as a result of poor power supply. The traditional pattern of securing library windows with nets, physical checks of users during exit and periodic human surveillance, is very much prevalent in libraries surveyed.



**Table 3: Security Control measure**

S/No.	Security control measure	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Secured windows	50	27.34%
2.	Physical check and exit	46	21.45%
3.	Human surveillance	38	20.35%
4.	Electronic surveillance	-	-
5.	Use of alarm system	-	-
6.	Use of uniform man	27	14.65%
7.	Use of CCTV	30	16.22



**Figure 3: Chart of security control measures**

### Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondent opined that non-return of library materials was the major problem faced by the libraries, followed by book theft. The findings also show that books and CD-Roms were ranked highest among items mutilated and stolen from college of education libraries. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the use of information communication technology (ICT) to safeguard library collection, are not adequately utilized as a results of poor power supply.

The finding of the study was supported by Ogunode and Agor (2021) who observed that institutions infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, tables, examination halls, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board

rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, etc., are necessary infrastructural facilities in the realization of educational goals. Ogunode, Godwin and Unoaku (2021) noted that many school facilities like classrooms, libraries, administrative block, ICT facilities, tables, chairs and desks have been destroyed by insurgencies and Boko Haram members in the Northern part of the country while Human Right Watch (2016); Ogunode, Godwin and Unoaku (2021) submitted that Boko Haram has destroyed nearly 1,000 schools and displaced 19,000 teachers.

It was discovered security challenges contributing factors included a limited number of copies of library materials, high



cost of books and non- book materials and absence of photocopy machines in libraries. In this, Gojeh (1999) corroborated this finding when he said that “loss of library materials reduces the efficiency of libraries”. Aguolu (2002) also stated that “high incidence of book-theft and mutilation gradually depletes information resources and reduces the librarian effectiveness”. Therefore, there is need to preserve and maintain library information and materials in all cost.

### Conclusion

The importance of information resources cannot be over-emphasized. Man depends on library resources for knowledge and new ideas are projected through the use of library resources. The data collected in the research revealed the various security lapses and ways library loses its materials through theft and mutilation. It was discovered that security system applied in libraries have not been really effective.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Photocopying services should be provide multiple copies of materials to meet the information needs of their users.
2. The colleges libraries should provide multiple copies of materials to meet the information needs of their users.
3. The library should provide stable and uninterrupted power supply in order to facilitate the use of electronic security devices to monitor and secure library resources...
4. The library security personnel should be placed in strategic position to monitor library users with the view to ensuring security of library materials.
5. Male and female security personnel should be employed to ensure that scrupulous search takes place for both

male and female students at the exits of the library.

6. Adequate closed circuit television (CCTV) systems should be provided in the libraries so as to minimize the incidents of book theft and mutilation.

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