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A survey on inmates of correctional centres information desires and accessibility: Librarians and Libraries as facilitators

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ABSTRACT

The study is a survey on the inmates of correctional centres information desires and accessibility: Librarians and Libraries as facilitators. The study was guided by five objectives and research questions respectively as well as three null hypotheses. The research design adopted was a descriptive survey while the population of the study is all the correctional centres inmates in Nigeria. Due to the challenge of accessibility, the study was limited to Southeast Nigeria in which through purposive sampling techniques, 354 inmates and 20 staff were selected from the seven correctional centres that have libraries in the zone. The sampled population for the study includes 70 female inmates and 284 male inmates randomly selected. A structured questionnaire was used to get data from the centres' staff while Focus Group Discussion guide was used to elicit data from the inmates. Observation guide was used to get data on the library and information resources and services available for the inmates and documentary sources from the Nigerian correctional service were also used to get data about the inmates. To test the reliability of the questionnaire, Internal Consistency reliability using the Cronbach Alpha method was used. Frequency and mean scores were used to analyze data from the questionnaire while recorded Focus Group Discussion data was analyzed qualitatively. Data from the observation schedule was analyzed quantitatively using a standard benchmark for correctional centres' libraries and the hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square (X^2) test. Major findings showed that the correctional centres inmates highly desire information on education, spiritual growth, health; legal issues, vocational, recreational and finance as well as emotional growth. Findings from observation showed that the varieties of library and information materials that are provided are grossly inadequate considering the population of inmates. Apart of legal and spiritual information desires that are being met to some extent; all the other information desires are not met as the resources are not accessible and this is the area that libraries and librarians are highly needed as information custodians and facilitators. Poor funding, uncomfortable nature of correctional centres, policies, censorship, staffing problems, inadequate reading accommodation, lack of standard library building are all found to cause setbacks in the

provision of information resources and services to meet the inmates' information desires. It is based on the above findings that recommendations were made as to enhancing information provision and making them accessible to inmates.

1.0. Introduction

1/1. Background of the Study

In recent years, there have been paradigm shifts which brought about sanity and civility in our prisons system which prohibits torture, inhuman treatment of inmates and allows for godly correction, true reformation, rehabilitation and genuine reintegration of inmates back into society. This is in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, imprisonment is no longer meant for punishment and hard labour alone: there has been focus towards constructive use of time, education, rehabilitation and re-socialization of the prisoners to enable them to adapt back into the society to be useful to themselves and the society at large. (Shirley, 2006; IFLA, 2005; Ewavoma- Enuku, 2001). It is also as stipulated by the Nigerian Correctional Service Law, 2019 under custodial service, while prisoners serve their jail terms the emphasis should be more on correctional service tailored towards readmitting them to society upon the completion of their jail services (Agbedo and Agiobu-kemmer, 2019). This development no doubt brought a shift in the information desires of inmates as they now desire information that will bring about their total transformation, reformation and rehabilitation in preparation for their reintegration to society.

Information, according to International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, (IFLA) (2001), is very important in the development of an individual and of the society. Information is seen as a major resource in human development as access to it could improve knowledge. Iloeje (2001) stressed that information is the heart of the world's development. Likewise, information is indispensable in the development and advancement of all aspects of human endeavour. Information is an important tool used in the realization of any objective set by individuals (Igbeka and Atinmo, 2002). Thus, acquiring and using information are both important activities. Information has become

a primary strategic resource that is transforming the lives of many in the world today. The inmates of correctional centres are not left out as they too desire information for their day to day living; thus, information is one thing that no one in any society can do without (Anyakoha, 2005).

The provision and accessibility of information do not operate in a vacuum therefore the need for professional institutions and individuals who can make them workable. The emphasis is that people have the fundamental human right to information and as such need library and information services to exercise this right (Dike 2002; Lehmann, 2000).

On the other hand, information desires could be described as an individual or group's need to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. Information desire is also seen by LisWiki (2008) as recognition that one's knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal. This leads to seeking for the information from required sources so as to satisfy the desire. Generally, Hjorland (2007) saw people's information desires as needs relating to people's educational activities (educational needs), research activities, professional and vocational activities (vocational needs), cultural activities and personal development – spiritually (religious needs) and physically. Both free people in regular society and incarcerated ones have the same information needs (Shirley 2006). These desires range from basic information for survival, for educational purposes, healthy living and recreation to spiritual growth.

According to American Library Association (2015), libraries have long been champions of free and equitable access to information and education. The human and economic development is closely associated with level of information accessibility in the society. So-to-speak, libraries provide diverse information services that stimulate contribution and participation for national integration and correctional centres inmates should not be left behind. This is built on the premise that information bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance. Libraries therefore have responsibilities of creating access to information to immediate users and host communities (which includes correctional centres inmates) for retrieval and dissemination of information. This no doubt projects libraries as great facilitators of information of all times. It is against this backdrop that this study became necessary as to ascertaining the information desires of correctional centres inmates and to examine the activities of libraries as facilitators of information in the correctional centres

1.2, Statement of the Problem

Inmates in correctional centres just like any other person desire basic information for survival in prison and in preparation for successful life after release. However, it has been observed that inmates in Nigerian correctional centres often times do not obtain the desired information services they require as they are denied access to many information resources. Moreover, in spite of the efforts made by non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, public libraries and other related stakeholders towards providing for the inmates' information needs, little effort is being made by the correctional centres authority towards meeting their information desires. This has affected the rehabilitation, re-socialization, re-adaptation and overall transformation of most of the inmates into becoming better citizens of the society. The fact remains, that access to information is crucial and libraries have the mandate to facilitate access to information more so, to the paradoxical situation of scarcity of information in an era of information explosion. Since librarians and libraries are in the fore-front of facilitating access to information. There rose the need to assess their role in the facilitation of information and making it accessible to the inmates in correctional centres with a view to satisfying their identified information desires. The study is therefore set to examine the information desires of these inmates and how correctional centres librarians and libraries can meet up these desires through library and information resources and services.

1.3. Scope of the Study

This study is all about inmates in correctional centres in Nigeria under the control of Nigerian Prison Service of the Federal Ministry of Interior. Since time and resources could not allow a holistic study, the study area was limited to correctional centres with libraries located in the five states of South-East Nigeria on the ground that all centres have same organizational structure and data collected from a centre is by all standard correlated. These states are: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states.

1.4. Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to ascertain the information desires of inmates in correctional centres using the Southeast part of Nigeria as study area and how these desires could be met by centre librarians and libraries through the provision of information services. Other objectives include to:

I.   Establish the various information desires of correctional centres inmates..

II. Examine the extent to which the inmates' information desires are being met.

III. Establish the challenges librarians and libraries are to encounter as facilitators of information in correctional centres.

IV. Identify strategies that could be used to enhance the provision of information resources to meet the inmates' information desires by libraries and librarians.

V. Suggest best ways that librarians and libraries can effectively function as facilitators of information

1.5. Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

I. What type of information do inmates in correctional centres desires?

II. To what extent are the inmates' information desires met?

III. What are the challenges that librarians and libraries are to encounter as facilitators of information in correctional centres?

IV. What strategies could be used by libraries and librarians to enhance the provision of information resources to meet the inmates' information desires?

V. What are the best ways that librarians and libraries can effectively function as facilitators of information in correctional centres?

1.6. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the prison workers of the different states on the areas of information needs of the prisoners.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the prison workers of the different prisons on the extent of satisfaction of the information needs of the prisoners in the different states.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the prison workers from the different states on the problems that militate against meeting the information needs of the prisoners. The hypotheses are to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

2.0. Literature review

2.1. Concepts of Information

Part of the difficulty with information needs' revealed Belkin (1978) and Ferradane (1979) lie with the troublesome concept 'information'. According to them, numerous definitions have been evolved, seeking to distinguish, for example, among 'data', 'information' and 'knowledge', and recently there have been attempts at a single concept of information for information science. However, the problem seems to lay not so much with the lack of a *single* definition as with a failure to use a definition appropriate to the level and purpose of the investigation. The word 'information' is used, in the context of user-studies research, to denote a physical entity or phenomenon (as in the case of questions relating to the number of books read in a period of time, the number of journals subscribed to, etc.), the channel of communication through which messages are transferred (as when we speak of the incidence of oral versus written information), or the factual data, empirically determined and presented in a document or transmitted orally.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that distinctions may or may not be made among 'facts', 'advice' and 'opinion'. The distinction, of course, is that the first of these is assumed (not always correctly) to be free of value judgments, whereas value judgments almost certainly affect advice and opinion. The crux of the matter is that these multiple uses of the term 'information' cause confusion because researchers sometimes fail to distinguish between one sense and another, or simply leave the reader to discover which sense is meant by reading the paper or report. Even then it is sometimes unclear which of the senses the researcher had in mind when setting the research objectives.

As explained by Onwubiko (2016) information is that which reduces uncertainty revealed. According to them, it is that which assists in decision-making. It may exist as data in books, computers, people, files, and thousands of other sources. These sources have to be considered simply as raw data until they are used to resolve uncertainties. What we often call information is often a random collection of data which does not become information until it is used by someone to achieve a specific purpose. In the broadest sense, every stimulus offers the potential of providing information but a more manageable way to look at information is to consider it as symbolic representation of reality (words – spoken and written; graphics; pictures; numerals and combinations of all of these) they conclude.

So what is informative depends on the interpretation, needs and skills of the individual receiving the information. Almost every scientific discipline today uses the concept of information within its own context and with regard to specific phenomena (Capurro and Hjorland 2003). Can a common meaning for the term be derived? Information according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2010) is the act of informing or giving form or shape to the mind, as in education, instruction or training. This is another all-embracing definition. All of these ideas about information serve to facilitate discourse for those describing concepts in specific discipline, each used in solving a particular set of problems. This is why Igbeka and Atinmo (2002) stressed that information is an important tool used in the realization of any objective or goal set by individuals. It is a valuable resource required in any society; thus acquiring and using information are crucial and important activities.

2.2. Conceptual overview of access

Information is seen as the communication of news and knowledge and that which helps to reduce uncertainty and assist us in decision making (Onwubiko, 2016). While information has substance and purpose on its own it does not have meaning. For information to acquire meaning and representation it has to be combined with context and lived experience. It is through the injection of the human factor into information, that this body of data becomes knowledge. Complementing the concepts of information is the concept of access in the process of information provision. In fact, all information is inconsequential if there is no access. Access to information is therefore an imperative for the development and use of knowledge. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2019) defines access as the freedom or ability to obtain or make use of something IFLA and the library world are cognizant that unfettered access to information is an essential in facilitating political stability to the world, quickening the pace of recovery from the internationally experienced recession, eradicating poverty, decreasing disease and ensuring a green environment. At its core, access to information ensures a just society for all.

Information generation is essential to the process of development. Information is functional at many levels: it can alleviate poverty and deprivation; it serves as a springboard for innovation and change; and, it is a catalyst for national development and personal achievements. Without information all effort is naught. Without sound, accurate and reliable information, decisions and actions that we or others take can have disastrous consequential effects for a very long time.

Information is the key to success (Tise 2009). In the process of information provision what actually comes to mind as a professional is that librarians and libraries are information facilitators.

2.3. Information desires of correctional centres inmates

Correctional centres inmates just like other persons, desire information to reduce uncertainty and to help them take decisions on certain areas as most of them will return to the society after serving their sentences. For this reason, they desire information for various purposes both for coping with the centre situation and for when released. Satisfying their information desires will help in re-socializing them into the society as to becoming better citizens for their own good and that of society. Lehmann (2000) made it clear that correctional centres inmates generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world; they can, however, be considered disadvantaged in this regard by the fact that they do not have access to libraries in the outside community. This was recognized in IFLA (2005) which said that an incarcerated person has not relinquished the right to learn and to access information. Though restrictions are imposed on the access to certain information usually when such access is known to present a danger to centre security, the fact remains that inmates have their own information desires. Ajogwu (2005) maintained that the inmates' information desires range from legal, religious, health, educational, vocational, recreational and financial.

The inmates by the nature of their incarceration have recreational information desires. They need to be exposed to materials and activities to ease their psychological state. This is why Ajogwu (2008) enumerated this need as one of the inmates' basic necessity. To get relief from emotional and psychological instability, they need recreation through access to information. Due to the nature of prison environment and situation, the prisoners undergo stress, anxiety, fear, insecurity, boredom and lacked direction. All these lead to their having spiritual information needs. Providing for this, according to Dike (2002) helps the prisoners improve in their emotional stability and spiritual growth.

Health is another area that the inmates desire information. The World Health Organisation (1999) stressed the need for inmates to have access to health care, including prevention measures equivalent to that available in the community. This denotes the inmates' health information desires.

The condition of most centres; for instance overcrowding make the prisoners prone to a lot of health hazards. This obviously makes information about health and hygiene, prevention and cure of common diseases like air-borne and water-borne diseases vital to the prisoners and essential for their survival in the centre.

They also desire legal information to know the law and what they can do with their lives when freed. Campbell (2009) maintained that any legal information, that an inmate can apply to his/her situation can mean relief from poor conditions if not from incarceration itself. Medina (2000) from an inmate's point of view said that prisoners often lack interest, motivation, intellectual hunger, drive and desire to learn. Fear restricts most of the centre inmates from seeking, demanding or requesting for information especially with regards to legal matters. Ironically, this is one of the basic areas where the inmates desire information.

The correctional centre inmates also have desire for educational and vocational training information. This is because they desire educational and vocational information to further their education and gain employability skills. In the case of Nigeria, Womboh (1991) revealed that most of the prisoners (about 76%) were not educated beyond school certificate. Only about 24% of them acquired education higher than that. The inmates' educational level is a major factor to be considered in providing library and information services to them. The International Publishers Association (1994) in her charter for the reader did support as it stated that reading is a universal right. Shirley (2006) and Lehmann (1999) also ascertained that prisoners have similar information needs to those of persons in free society; but with a greater number of prisoners having low education skills, they experience difficulties in articulating their information needs or seeking information. These needs and interests, they said are similar to those of citizens on the outside world. Visher and Lattimore (2007) enumerated prisoners' re-entry (into the society) needs to include educational, job training, employable skills other related needs.

This development has further exposed the prisoners to having educational information needs. This is why Kaiser (1995) too asserted that the general public was supportive of rehabilitation programmes such as libraries, education, art classes, sport and qualified labour facilities. Also Mayrink da Costa (2003) advocated that the prisoner has to be rehabilitated and re-educated in modern civilized societies of today apart from the punishment and sanctions specified by the judicial system. All these expose the centre inmates to pressing need for information to achieve

these positive goals. Looking at these specifications, one would see that they are addressing the issues of information needs vis a vis legal, health, religious and even educational needs of prisoners. To attend to these prisoners and provide for their information needs, the prison library has crucial roles to play.

This is why Visher and Lattimore (2007) stressed that prisoners' re-entry needs include general financial assistance and employment related needs. Most correctional centres inmates are secondary school drop-out which means they have very low educational levels. Edelman, Holzer and Offner (2005) further discovered low education and unemployment as seriously contributing to involvement in crime, especially among the males. This is the case in most countries; both developed and underdeveloped. They further discovered from their study that in the United States, this low education and unemployment are felt more amongst the black youths which make them become victims of poverty, crime and incarceration.

2.4. Role of Libraries in providing resources for satisfying correctional centres inmates' information desires

The mission of prison libraries anywhere remains the same. Lehmann (2000) noted that in cooperation with other prison programmes, the prison library plays a critical role in the education and rehabilitation of incarcerated persons. This is fully recognized in the advanced countries of America and Europe. For instance, in the United States of America, over 1000 libraries exist in state and federal government correctional facilities.

As more emphasis is now placed on rehabilitation of inmates as the main purpose of imprisonment, the question becomes: how can the goals of reformation and rehabilitation be attained? Dike (2002) wrote extensively on what the prison library can offer to the prisoners. She asserted that libraries can play even greater role in the lives of the prisoners than others, due to their disadvantaged status; that library services are essential to the modern correctional objectives of reformation and rehabilitation of the prisoners. The role of a prison library according to Dike, as with any other library depends upon the objectives of the parent body. If the prison is seen as a place for punishment or confinement, few will see the need for a prison library. But if the correctional institution places emphasis on the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders, the provision of library services assume much greater importance. Rehabilitation and education have received

greater advocacy these days; thus the provision of library and information services and reading materials is seen as necessary support service. Stevens (1995) revealed that the prison library plays a significant role in the reform and rehabilitation process. He identified a number of areas in which the work of the prison library can be used by inmates to have important influence. He argued that much of the information held in the prison library can be used by inmates to have a direct and positive influence on their future behaviour. Helping the prisoners to have a change of life generally and improve for the better by avoiding crime should be a major part of the prisons' objectives than just punishment. Library and its resources and services will open their minds to diverse opportunities in life. Mayrink da Costa (2003) made it clear that the library plays a positive role in the lives of prisoners. This is by helping in their rehabilitation as advocated in modern civilized societies of today. In fact, Blake (2000) stressed that the prison library is a crucial component in the rehabilitation of incarcerated persons.

As modern societies gradually adopt a more humane and enlightened practice of criminal justice and incarceration in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lehmann and Locke (2005) noted that the prison library becomes an important part of the entire prison environment. This is by its support for educational, recreational and rehabilitative programmes. The prison library also provides a level of normalcy in a highly regulated environment as a place where individuals are free to make their own choices and engage in self-directed pursuits. The library, they said presents a window to the outside world and can provide much useful information for those preparing for release to the society. They further maintained that the prison library should provide offenders with the opportunity to develop literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests and life-long learning. In doing these, the prison library can be the vital information resource that makes the difference of whether or not a newly released ex-offender fails or succeeds in the outside.

While focus should be towards literacy training, educational and vocational programmes, libraries will be there to offer information and support counseling services as noted by Shirley (2003). He revealed that the Read and the Library Bill of Rights states that book and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. According to Shirley (2006) in many cases, the prison library is the first library

experience for many inmates and should provide materials for self-directed learning, formal educational pursuits and leisure reading. The library in the correctional centre setting operates as a community library modeling its services according to the public library standards; providing information, recreational reading materials for pleasure and escape; playing the role of educational support; supplying materials for structured programmes and self-directed learning (Dike 2002).

Furthermore, the inmates may not be spiritually and mentally sound while moral re-direction, emotional growth and intellectual stimulation which form the basis of their information needs, can be gained through recreational reading. Enuku (2001) posits that the roles of the correctional centres library are similar to those of a public library. But while their services are more similar than different, prison library can be more important to its users because they have no alternative. Looking at the various information needs of the prisoners, one can confidently say that the prison library is the place to seek for information to satisfy these needs. Purifoy (2000) did admit that the correctional centre library provides recreational and educational opportunities. To this end, Krusden (2000) states that as an inmate, he uses the library for many different reasons ranging from educational and recreational purposes to being kept updated on the current events of the outside world. He also admitted that the library used to expand inmates' creativity and enhance their literary knowledge by reading a large variety of the books provided. He further added that the library allows and assists the inmates in finding alternative means of venting their frustration by saying " my library has helped me find the courage and strength, not only to overcome my incarceration but also to strive for a more honest and productive future". To, Loudon (2000), another inmate, the prison library is a conduit for restoration that offers many diverse opportunities. He declared: "there is a gap in our lives and the library can be the conduit to establish a sense of continuity we need to stay current."

2.5. Librarians and libraries as information facilitators

In the new dispensation, librarians and libraries have turned gateway and guide to information. To this Akintunde (2004) explains that librarians and libraries from the foregoing have imbibed a new paradigm of service. There has been shift from being documentalist and archivist, to being a gateway to information. The librarian has also shifted from being the all knowing 'custodian' of information to a 'guide' by the side. He explains that the librarian guides clients on how to

navigate effectively through the wide world web (www), creates portals for his clients because of the mesh of data now readily available. Anyakoha (2005) also captured the same thought as she averred that since information available online are enormous and good number of library users are not conversant with the use of the internet, librarians who are computer literate and know the application of ICT are still needed to tutor and direct such users Many users are still not able to use the web efficiently. In this particular situation therefore, librarians are still recognized as search experts and information specialist thus are expected to help users to locate and access information. According to Dike (2007), information communication technology (ICT) or no ICT, it is the responsibility of librarians to help users formulate their enquiries and develop a search. This is because they have knowledge of the vast array of information sources, how they can be located and accessed, the strong and weak point of each, and the method for evaluating them. Feather (2006), Mathur and Ambani (2005) and Godlee et al. (2004) opine that libraries are critically important as information facilitators. Librarians and libraries make every effort to dismantle all barriers that exist between users and the information contained in their collections (in the broadest sense possible). The crucial role that libraries play in the empowerment of their users is that they (librarians) are the facilitating agencies to access the information they need. One of the ways in which librarians and libraries empower their users is that they, the users, are assured that they are accessing information with the knowledge that the information they receive is authentic and trustworthy. Libraries provide users with a considerable level of comfort, placing themselves in a strong position as a social service of the highest order (Gothenburg 2010). Igwe (2010) concluded that libraries provide access to an endless variety of information resources and opportunities for interactive communication. Though the fundamental mission has remained, to facilitate and give access to information and knowledge, the processes, tools and techniques have undergone remarkable changes. To Fagbola, Uzoigwe and Ajegbomogun (2011), access to information is critical for the development and growth of the society and for participation in democratic processes. The library is an integral part of the society that surrounds it. It is shaped and changed by many of the same forces that shape other types of institution.

According to Tise (2011), the exponential growth of information fuelled by the exploitation of media such as the web and social networking, demands that there be a mediator with the skills and capacity to extract trusted and authentic information. Such an intermediary also has to be able to

deliver reliable and authoritative information to the information-seeking community as well as the new knowledge and information that has been created in recent times. It is this new knowledge and information that help to stimulate the growth and development of societies and the world. Libraries as primary gateways to information are therefore important vehicles for the acquisition of knowledge. As knowledge institutions, libraries provide spaces for information-sharing and learning for all ages, genders, ethnicities and socio-economic groups regardless of their information/knowledge needs. The above assertion was corroborated by White (2012) as he opines that as the gateways to information and culture, libraries play a fundamental role in the society. The resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society. They also help ensure an authentic record of knowledge created and accumulated by past generations. In a world without libraries, it would be difficult to advance research and human knowledge or preserve the world's cumulative knowledge and heritage for future generations.

Furthermore, libraries facilitate access to information thereby providing the means through which new knowledge is developed and made available to all. Knowledge is foundational to all spheres of life.   An interrogation of this concept reveals that knowledge is critical for the growth of society and that knowledge is produced when information is absorbed, processed and internalized by individuals (McCallum, 2013).   Libraries, as critical providers of information have an important role to play in the creation of new knowledge. They are vital institutions for the creation, development and sustainability of knowledge societies. Information is a key input into the creation and maturation of knowledge, therefore, a significant criterion for a growing and healthy society is access to information. The library, as a major source for/conduit to information, serves a wide spectrum of information-seekers. Libraries are not only vital but also central to the facilitation of knowledge generation.. In the words of Ukoha (2013), Libraries remain portals of knowledge for everyone and they guarantee that whoever you are you can open the door to information, knowledge, learning and help.

To Vrane and Markovic (2015), libraries have always been educational, cultural and spiritual centres, places where people had access to relevant knowledge and information. These institutions invest greatly into the intellectual development of their users and contribute to the development of

overall democracy of knowledge. They maintain that Librarians are intermediaries between library users and the knowledge whether in printed or digital form.

According to Witek (2014), Librarians are not only knowledge creators but knowledge providers. He explains that historically, libraries and librarians are perceived as primary conduits for accessing knowledge as librarians provide knowledge to those who seek it through classification schema, bibliographic instruction, and purchase or license of scholarly materials. However, librarians frequently are also engage in traditional subject based research, innovative technological projects and development of new processes or services at their libraries that would be great contributions, in written or other forms, to the broader knowledge base. Academic librarians typically, produce scholarly content out of obligation; they work at an academic institutions that grant them tenure or promotion on the basis of their publication activities. (American Theological Library Association (ATLA), 2019)

As unhindered access to information is essential in any developmental process for individuals and nations, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), in the context of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda, believes that increasing access to information and knowledge across society supports sustainable development and improves people's lives. (IFLA, 2017). The above assertion supports Obasi (2015) declaration that access to knowledge continue to be an issue in the library and information discipline, as it is the basic and fundamental tenet upon which all libraries' policies, activities, operations and resources are built upon.

In the opinion of Solanke and Osuchukwu (2018), Libraries irrespective of type should enhance its information management system to create, organize and share usable information with the people. They further state that the notion of ascribing particular type of information to a particular library should be discouraged explaining that a librarian is for all first before belonging to a particular library as believing in this assertion will make librarians work effectively and successfully as driver of access to knowledge. While Nwajiuba (2019), in the context of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance at the 3rd Ministerial Roundtable on Information Access declared, I believe the success of every educational institution depends on its library as the availability of the right information at the right time and form is of utmost importance

to users and an improvement of our library systems and access to information/knowledge will bring about social and human capital development. IFLA (2019) in her description of 3rd Roundtable of Ministers Responsible for Public Libraries in Africa held in Accra, Ghana from 28 – 30 October, aimed at improving information access and library systems corroborated the above assertion as it posits that Africa is faced with some of the world's most acute development challenges and needs to draw on all of its innovative potential. Information and equitable access to it IFLA declared will play a key role in achieving this, and libraries across the continent are working hard to deliver on this mandate.

One can therefore deduce from the fore-going that librarians and libraries of any sort are indispensable facilitators of information which leads to individual growth and development as well as national, economical, political, social and human capital development.

3.0. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research design

The research design employed in this study is a descriptive survey. This design according to Nworgu (2015) allows the collection of data from a large number of people using a sample drawn from a larger population. That is why the design is suitable for this study; since it allows the collection of data from a large number of people through the use of a sample that will adequately represent the population.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised of all the inmates in all the correctional centres in south-east zone of Nigeria and the welfare and library staff of these centres. According to the data from the Nigerian Correctional Service the South-East zone, at present, have a total of about 7029 inmates and 42 welfare and library staff. Documents from the Nigerian Correctional Service showed the population of the inmates to be – Abia state - 1175 prisoners; Anambra state – 1308; Ebonyi State – 1058; Enugu state – 1735; Imo State – 1764. The number of inmates tends to vary as people come in and go out of the prisons. So the population of inmates as at the time of the collection of data was used.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was 354 inmates and 20 welfare and library staff. The male sample of 284 was obtained through simple random sampling technique while due to the small number of the female inmates (70), they were all included in the sample. The Samples were drawn from the inmates to make up groups for the focus discussion in this order: Abia State (Umuahia centre) – 42 inmates; Anambra State (Awka and Onitsha centres) – 78 inmates; Ebonyi State (Abakaliki centre) – 48 prisoners; Enugu State (Nsukka and Enugu centres) – 102 inmates; Imo State (Owerri centre) – 84 inmates while entire library and welfare staff of 20 (3 from each centre with exception of Abakaliki centre that has 2) were used as staff sample. The researcher identified target groups which was 23 in number by mainly gender for the Focus Group Discussion.

3.4. Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used to get data from the centres' staff while Focus Group Discussion guide was used to elicit data from the inmates. Observation guide was used to get data on the library and information resources and services available to the inmates and documentary sources from the Nigerian correctional service were also used to get data about the inmates.

3.5. Validation of Instrument and Pilot Study

The instruments were subjected to a face-validation by three senior lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science and Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. This was done to find out how effective and appropriate the instruments are in collecting the desire data for this study. They were requested to ascertain the relevance, adequacy and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire items and the Focus Group Discussion schedule. Their expert observations, comments and suggestions were integrated in the modification of the questionnaire of 31 items and the Focus Group Discussion guide of 4 main items.

Pilot study was used to ascertain whether the instrument – questionnaire will work as intended in collecting data for the study. This was carried out in Okigwe centre using five centre staff since the centre was not part of the study.

3.6. Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the questionnaire, internal consistency reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha method was conducted. Internal consistency was considered appropriate so as to ensuring the homogeneity of the items in each of the sections. Cronbach Alpha method is suitable because items are not scored dichotomously. The internal consistency reliability coefficient obtained for each of the clusters (sections) **B, C, D, and E** were 0.85, 0.65, 0.76, and 0.65 respectively. These are indications that the various sections of the instrument were related and the items reliable.

3.7 Method for Data Collection

The instruments were administered and collected by the researcher with the help of centre staff who served as field assistants as they could freely interact with the inmates. The field assistants were guided appropriately on what was to be required to enhance data collection. These assistants were adequately trained on the modalities of administering the questionnaire and conducting the Focus Group Discussion by guiding them through the sections to clarify the meanings of the items and the expected data to be elicited. Groups of not more than 12 inmates in each were selected from within the sample guided by a facilitator. Explanations were used where necessary to clarify certain issues to both the field assistants and the respondents. Enough time was given to the respondents to make sure that the questions being thrown open were understood and responded to.

4.0. Presentation and Analysis of Data

The data collected are presented and analyzed in tables according to the research questions.

Research Question 1:

What are the various information desires of correctional centres inmates?

Two sets of instruments – the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion were used to generate data to answer the above research question. The welfare/library workers, since they take care and oversee the affairs of the prisoners, were also asked to indicate the areas where the prisoners need information using the questionnaire. The data from the welfare/library workers is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Responses of staff on areas where the inmates desire Information

S/N	Item	X	Decision	Rank
1	Educational needs – to get more education while in prison	3.50	Very highly desired	4th

S/No		x	Decision	Rank
2	To help self learning and get current affairs	3.60	Very highly desired	1st
3	For health – to know simple first aid for wounds	3.55	Very highly desired	3rd
4	To know basic hygiene to prevent likely diseases associated with prison environment	3.40	Highly desired	5th
5	On getting more skills to learn or support a career	3.30	Highly desired	7th
6	For spiritual growth for better life style	3.60	Very highly desired	1st
7	To gain better understanding of life and self control (emotional growth)	3.20	Highly desired	8th
8	For recreation – like reading for relaxation and leisure	3.10	Highly desired	9th
9	Financial information needs	2.20	desired	10th
10	Legal information – to know more about law court issues	3.40	Highly desired	5th

N=20

The data in table 1 above, showed that the inmates in correctional centres highly desired information for gaining more education, self development and on current affairs with a mean rating of 3.50 and 3.60 respectively; while spiritual growth and better life style have a mean score of 3.60, with health on the area of knowing simple first aid and about common ailments having a mean score of 3.55. They also desired information on basic hygiene and how to prevent diseases associated with the centre environment and on legal matters; about law court issues, hiring lawyers, getting free legal aid with a mean rating of 3.40 each; on getting more skills to learn or support a career have a mean rating of 3.30. The workers also indicated that the inmates highly desire information for gaining better understanding of life and self control (emotional growth) with a mean of 3.20 and recreation with a mean rating of 3.10. The least of information desired is that of finance to solve problems with a mean score of 2.20.

Research Question 2:

To what extent are the inmates information desires met?

Both the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion guide were used to generate data to answer this research question. The welfare/library workers were requested to indicate in the questionnaire, the extent to which they feel that the inmates' information desires are being met through the library and information resources and services. Their responses are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Responses of staff on the extent to which the inmates' information desires are met

S/No	Items	x	Decision	Rank

S/No	Items	X	Decision	Rank
1	Their educational information desires	2.00	Moderate extent	4th
2	Their health information needs provided for through quality health information resources	1.95	Low extent	6th
3	Vocational information needs (learn about career)	2.00	Moderate extent	4th
4	Information resources to meet spiritual information needs	2.70	High extent	2nd
5	Relaxation and recreational needs	2.10	Moderate extent	3rd
6	Financial information needs – on how to source money to solve problems	1.80	Low Extent	7th
7	Provision for legal information needs as to knowing more about their right as a prisoner and court issues	3.00	High extent	1st

It could be seen from the table above that only the prisoners' legal and spiritual information desires are being met to a high extent; thus mean scores of 3.0 and 2.7 respectively. This has been seen to be because of the intervention of the concerned legal practitioners and religious groups that provide information in these areas for the prisoners. Their recreational, educational and vocational information desires are provided for and met but to a moderate extent; thus mean scores of 2.1, 2.0 and 2.0 respectively. Their desire for health and financial information are met to a low extent; hence, mean scores of 1.95 and 1.8 respectively.

Research Question 3:

What are the factors militating against the provision of library and information resources to satisfy inmates' information desires?

The questionnaire was the main instrument used to get data to answer this research question although during group discussion, the opinions of the prisoners were sought over the visualized problematic factors. The responses of the welfare/library workers are presented in table 3 below while the responses of the prisoners follow descriptively.

What are the challenges that librarians and libraries are to encounter as facilitators of information in correctional centres?

Table 3: factors militating against the provision of library and information resources to satisfy inmates' information desires by librarians and libraries

S/No	Items	X	Decision	Rank
1	The uncomfortable nature of the prison	2.20	High extent	6th
2	Prison policies and laws that restrict certain reading materials	2.55	High extent	5th

3	Staffing problems – inadequate number of qualified library staff to help the prisoners and lack of training for available workers	3.00	High extent	2nd
4	Inadequate funding of the library and the centre as a whole	3.60	Very High extent	1st
5	Little time allowed prisoners for interaction with outside Information providers	3.00	High extent	2nd
6	The building used for library and reading accommodation	3.00	High extent	2nd

Data presented in table 3 above shows the mean ratings of the staff on the problems that may militate against provision of library and information resources and services to meet the information needs of prisoners. It could be seen from the table that all the items have mean rating of 2.55-3.40. All the problems enumerated militate against satisfying the inmates' information desires to a high extent with poor funding of the library and centre rating highest (3.60) being to a very high extent. Uncomfortable nature of the centres, centre policies, staffing problems- inadequacy in number and qualification and lack of training for the available ones, little time allowed for use of information resources and services. Tight schedule of the centre and inadequate accommodation for the library and reading exercises all hinder the provision of library and information resources and services to meet the inmates' information desires.

Research question 4

What strategies could be used to enhance the provision of information resources to meet the inmates' information desires?

The main instrument used to gather data to answer this research question was the questionnaire for the welfare/library workers. Their responses are presented below. However, the inmates were also requested during the group discussion to suggest likely ways they feel the problems could be tackled so as to meeting their information desires. Their responses are qualitatively presented.

Table 4 – Strategies that could be used To enhance the provision of library and information resources and services to meet the inmates' information needs

S/No	Items	X	Decision	Rank
1	Connecting with public libraries, NGOs and others like religious bodies and legal practitioners	**3.60**	**Very high extent**	1st
2	Connecting with professional bodies like library associations and stakeholders	**3.30**	**High extent**	2nd

3	Purchasing of reading materials by the prison authorities	3.15	**High extent**	4th
4	Allowing more access to library materials	**3.10**	**High extent**	6th
5	Allotting more time for inmates to use the library and other information resources	**3.15**	**High extent**	4th
6	Developing new and using existing guidelines to prison library service	**2.95**	**High extent**	7th
7	Allowing more information flow from other sources like religious groups	**3.20**	**High extent**	3rd

Data presented in table 4 above shows the mean ratings of the responses of the staff on the strategies for enhancing the provision of resources and services as to satisfying the inmates' information desires. They indicated that liaising with public libraries, NGOS, others like religious bodies and legal practitioners will help enhance such provisions to a very high extent – thus a mean rating of 3.60. Other ways are liaising with professional bodies like library associations and stakeholders with a mean rating of 3.30, allowing more information flow from other sources with a mean rating of 3.20, purchasing of reading materials by the prison authorities and mapping out time for the inmates to use the library and other information resources with mean ratings of 3.15 each, allowing more access to library materials with a mean rating of 3.10, allowing more access library materials with a mean rating of 3.10, developing new and using existing guidelines to prison library service with a mean rating of 2.95.

Research Question 5: What ways could be used by libraries and librarians as information facilitators to meet up with information desires of correctional centres inmates?

S/No	Items	X	Decision	Rank
1	Acquisition of up-to-date & relevant information resources	3.48	SA	2nd
2	Maintaining good public relations with the library publics	3.52	SA	1st
3	Organising trainings and workshops on digital and information literacy skills for staff and inmates	3.00	A	7th
4	Carrying out readership promotion campaigns	3.48	SA	2nd
5	Ensuring conducive library environment	3.43	A	4th
6	Supporting formal and informal learning and literacy development for all ages	3.43	A	4th
7	Provision of information and services for life-long learning	3.02	A	6th
8	Provision of current awareness services (CAS) & selective dissemination of information (SDI) to users base on profile	3.00	A	7th

Key: SA=Strongly Agreed; A=Agreed   Bench mark= 2.5

The data in the table above provides answer to research question 5 which is: What ways could be used by libraries and librarians as information facilitators to meet up with information desires of correctional centres inmates? It is shown that Maintaining good public relations with the inmates (mean=3.52), acquisition of updated and relevant information resources both in print and electronic formats (mean=3.48) and Carrying out readership promotion campaigns (mean=3.48) are the most employed methods by librarians and libraries in facilitating the access of information.. Other methods that can be used by librarians and libraries as information facilitators as shown by the data are: Provision of infrastructure and technological information facilities (mean=3.38); Organising trainings and workshops on digital and information literacy skills for both staff and inmates (mean=3.0); Ensuring conducive library environment (mean=3.43), provision of current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) to users base on profile (3.00) and Provision of information and services for life-long learning (3.02)

4.1. Hypotheses Testing

Three null hypotheses were tested to ascertain if there is any significant difference in the mean ratings of the correctional centres inmates in the different states on the areas of information needs of the prisoners, extent of satisfaction of the prisoners' information needs and problems that militate against meeting the information needs of the prisoners. This was done using Chi-Square analysis. At 0.05 level of significance all the postulated hypotheses were tested.

H0 1:
There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the prison workers of the different states on the areas of information needs of the prisoners.

Table 6: Result of Chi-Square Analysis of Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of the Prison Workers of the Different States on the Areas of Information Needs of the Prisoners

Mean Respondents	No	O	E	O – E	(O – E)²	Σ(O–E)²	Calculated value Σ(O–E)²	Table value	Result
Abia	3	3.15	3.19	-0.04	0.007				
Anambra	6	3.20	3.19	0.01	0.000				
Ebonyi	2	2.85	3.19	-0.34	0.116	0.20	0.063	9.49	Accepted
Enugu	6	3.33	3.19	0.14	0.020				
Imo	3	3.43	3.19	0.24	0.058				

Results in Table 6 show that calculated value (0.063) is below the table value (9.49). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of the correctional centres staff of the five states on the areas of information desires of inmates is accepted. The deduction is that the information desires of all the inmates did not vary irrespective of location.

H0 2:
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the staff of the different correctional centres on the   extent to which the information desires of inmates are met in the different states**.**

Table 8: Result of the Chi-Square X² analysis of significant difference on the mean responses of correctional centres staff of the different states on the extent of satisfaction of inmates' information desires

Mean Respondents				$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\Sigma(O–E)^2$	Calculated value $\underline{\Sigma(O–E)^2}$	Table value	Result
	No	O	E						
Abia	3	2.27	2.23	0.04	0.017				
Anambra	6	2.30	2.23	0.07	0.001				
Ebonyi	2	2.20	2.23	-0.03	0.017	0.025	0.011	9.49	Accepted
Enugu	6	2.12	2.23	-0.11	0.017				
Imo	3	2.24	2.23	0.01	0.022				

Results in table 7 above show that the calculated value (0.11) is below the table value K (9.49). Therefore the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the correctional centres staff of the different centres on the extent to which the information desires of the inmates are met in the different states is accepted. It was based on this result that it was deduced that the level of satisfaction of the information needs of the inmates did not vary amongst the different state correctional centres.

H0 3:
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the correctional centres staff from the different states on the problems that militate against meeting the information desires of the inmates.
Table 8: Result of the Chi-Square X² analysis of significant difference in the mean responses of correctional centres staff of the different states on the factors militating against meeting up the Information desires of the inmates

Mean Respondents				$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\Sigma(O–E)^2$	Calculated value $\underline{\Sigma(O–E)^2}$	Table value	Result
	No	O	E						
Abia	3	3.26	3.13	0.13	0.017				
Anambra	6	3.10	3.13	-0.03	0.001				
Ebonyi	2	3.00	3.13	-0.13	0.017	0.074	0.024	9.49	Accepted

Enugu	6	3.00	3.13	-0.13	0.017
Imo	3	3.28	3.13	0.15	0.022

Results from Table 8 above show that the calculated value (0.024) is less than the table value (9.49). Therefore the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the staff from the different states on the problems that militate against meeting the information needs of the inmates is accepted. The conclusion therefore was that similar problems militate against meeting the inmates' information desires in the different correctional centres.

5.0 Discussion of finding

The data collected and analyzed as shown in table 1 in response to research question 1, did prove that correctional centres inmates desire information in the area of education, health, legal issues, spiritual growth, recreation among others (see table 1). The data generated from the inmates through Focus Group Discussion on their desired information, revealed that the inmates desired information on all the areas that were mentioned. Some asserted that without information, one is nowhere and asked if there is anyone who does not need information. The inmates agreed that they highly desired information on health purposes and for spiritual and emotional growth. They explained that they desired health information to be able to keep up with hygienic measures like maintaining neatness, body cleanliness, care in using sharp objects and other tools to prevent wounds. These they noted would help them avoid contracting diseases common with the centre environment considering the fact that health facilities in the centres are inadequate. Likewise, the inmates' spiritual information desire is to help them transform for the better both spiritually and emotionally thus the desire for spiritual materials like the holy books and other religious pamphlets and tracks.. All the groups expressed having a very high desire for legal information. Further enquiries showed that such information would enable them know their fundamental human rights, even inmates of correctional centres. On the other hand, legal information could enhance due process in the trial of those awaiting trial and hasten processes of their trial or release, as the case may be.

Most of the groups also gave a very high indication of having educational information desires. With exception of those who have acquired higher education before imprisonment, the rest indicated that they desire information on how to further their education for different purposes. As for recreational information and reading, a good number of them, especially the more matured ones, indicated having high desire for leisure reading materials and opportunities. In Nsukka correctional centre, many of the

inmates indicated having high desire for recreational reading like novels about adventure and fantasies which can help them overcome their boredom in the centre. The inmates explained that having adequate and varieties of recreational reading materials will definitely help them to learn on their own, improve their communication ability and cope with loneliness and boredom. The case was not different in other centres.

Furthermore, available data from the group indicated that the inmates have high desire for financial information to enable them source for money to be used both in the centre and after their tenure. They desire such information as how and where to raise money, what they could engage in while in the centre that can fetch them money. Most of them also indicated high desire for vocational information as to helping them find a career after their jail term. This they believe could be provided through reading materials that teach different types of handiwork as well as providing learning opportunities practically. Such information they noted will prepare them for life after prison.

The outcome of this study is inconformity with the assertion of Lehmann (2000) who made it clear that correctional centres inmates generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world and that of IFLA (2005) which said that an incarcerated person has not relinquished the right to learn and to access information. Though restrictions are imposed on the access to certain information usually when such access is known to present a danger to centre security, the fact remains that inmates have their own information desires. This is also in line with view of Ajogwu (2005) who maintained that the inmates' information desires range from legal, religious, health, educational, vocational, recreational and financial.

The analyzed data in table 2 indicate that only the prisoners' legal and spiritual information desires are being met to a high extent; thus mean scores of 3.0 and 2.7 respectively. This may be attributed to the intervention of the concerned legal practitioners and religious groups that provide information in these areas for the inmates. This finding was also corroborated by the focus group during an interaction; the inmates indicated that their spiritual information desires were being met to a high extent. This they said is due to information services, programmes and reading materials provided by religious bodies and groups that come visiting the inmates. Inmates also agreed that their educational, legal, and recreational information needs were all being satisfied to a low extent, while the vocational, health and financial information desires were satisfied to a very low extent, due to lack of adequate

library and information resources. However, from the records of the group discussion responses, notable groups in Awka indicated that their educational desires were being met to a fairly high extent because of the school programmes, library classes and notable donations of books and related materials from outside bodies and individuals. The inmates' responses and those of the staff were in agreement in the area of the extent of satisfaction of their spiritual information desires which was to a high extent, the health and financial needs; which were indicated by both the inmates and the staff to be satisfied to a low extent.

The situation no doubt negates the stand of International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, (IFLA) (2001), which posits that access to information is very important in the development of an individual and of the society. Information is seen as a major resource in human development as access to it could improve knowledge. Also, Iloeje (2001) stressed that information is the heart of the world's development. Likewise, information is indispensable in the development and advancement of all aspects of human endeavour.

On the challenges that are bound to militate against librarians and libraries in providing information resources and services that will satisfy the information desires of inmates, the data collected as revealed in table 3 showed that inadequate financial support by establishing authorities for both the centres and libraries; inadequate workforce; poor motivation of staff; poor working environment, centre policies; inadequate skilled manpower and lack of state-of the art infrastructure, insufficient time allotted for the use of information resources and services, tight schedule of the centre and inadequate accommodation for the library and reading are impediment to librarians and libraries functioning as information facilitators to correctional centres inmates. The above data therefore provide the answer to research question 3. The inmates during the discussion also affirm to the above mentioned challenges as they revealed that poor funding of the centres, and centre policies hinder many materials from entering the centres. Also, censorship, tight schedule in the centre and uncomfortable nature of the centre were cited as common factors that hinder the meeting of their information needs. They also lamented that security restrictions in the centres do not give them any breathing space to explore and utilize the available library and information resources and services.

The staff believed that liaising with public libraries, NGOS, others like religious bodies and legal practitioners will help enhance provision of information to the inmates to a very high extent. Other ways are liaising with professional bodies like library associations and stakeholders, allowing more information flow from others, purchasing of reading materials by the centre authorities and mapping out time for the inmates to use the library and other information resources, allowing more access to library materials, developing new and using existing guidelines for prison library service. (See table 4)

On the part of the inmates, their own responses agreed with those of the staff. They went further to emphasize the need for the government to be sensitized on the information needs of the inmates so as providing them the desired information. Almost all the groups in the different centres remarked that the government should direct more attention to making the centres conditions better than their present pitiable states. Renovating the centres to reduce overcrowding and improving on the status of the pre-colonial cells will help in making the prison environment a little more conducive for accessing and utilizing information resources when provided. Also they suggested the need for the authorities to work towards the centres' reformation by avoiding censorship, possibly allowing the inmates to access internet and make use of newspapers, magazines and the like.

All things being equal with the federal government and Nigerian Correctional Service authority playing their expected role by taken steps to do the needful, available data as presented in table 5 revealed that there are various ways that could be employed by librarians and libraries as information facilitators to enhance provision of information resources to meet the information desires of inmates with the accepted benchmark of over 2.5 mean scores as shown in the options given. Acquisition of up-to-date & relevant information resources; Maintaining good public relations with the library publics; Organising trainings and workshops on digital and information literacy skills for staff and inmates; Carrying out readership promotion campaigns; Ensuring conducive library environment; Supporting formal and informal learning and literacy development for all ages, Provision of information and services for life-long learning and Provision of current awareness services (CAS) & selective dissemination of information (SDI) to users base on profile. Come to think of it, the hypotheses tested (see tables 6-8) further showed that the correctional centres inmates' information desires did not vary in the different centres; that the level of satisfaction of the information they desire did not vary amongst the different centres and the same factors militate against satisfying the information desires of inmates in different centres.

On a general note therefore, the involvement of librarians and libraries as facilitators of access to information has to come through the creation of awareness of the importance of information to all sphere of life; provision of access to information at no fee; training and re-training of staff on information provision, Advocating for policies and practices that strengthens public rights to access information and through involvement in extension services. The underline factor of all these is that facilitating access to information will be enhanced using well trained and better equipped staff which will definitely translate to effective service and better information cum knowledge delivery to the centres' staff. This finding no doubt conforms to the views of Smith and Chilocote, (2018) that librarians and libraries have the capacity (both in infra...and creating awareness and advocacy) in creating space for participation in people in national issues including access to knowledge. It therefore behooves librarians and libraries to partner government agencies, host communities, institutions and organisations in order to incorporate new services in an era of information explosion (Obasi, 2015) as to helping correctional centres inmates in satisfying their information desires.

The fact is that librarians and libraries in correctional centres should advocate for policies and practices that maintain or strengthen the inmates right to access information and the librarians/libraries roles in facilitating access to information; developing and making available educational programmes and information resources to assist the correctional centres staff and inmates to effectively access information; monitor and respond to technological and policy challenges to access to information; support educational programmes, information resources and consulting services that support librarians in providing effective services that will enhance access to information by inmates.

The study did shows that librarians and libraries are indeed facilitators of access to information a role that is a significant factor in reformation and development of both the centres and the inmates as well as in the rehabilitation of inmates for proper reintegration to society. The implication is that librarians and libraries must live to the desired expectations of the inmates in service to humanity and the society. The librarians and libraries on the other hand, must begin to link and liaise with government and other agencies and bodies who have information needed to be disseminated to every inmate as to enhancing their knowledge. The above factor is very paramount as failure will alienate librarians and libraries from the populace they are suppose to come close to thus denying them the good services they are meant to render.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

Inmates of correctional centres as has been discovered have just like any other individual a very wide range of information desires ranging from educational, recreational, spiritual, vocational, health, financial to legal information but the pathetic thing is that correctional centres libraries who are by all standard suppose to facilitate the provision and access to this information are grossly underfunded thereby lacking all the necessary information resources and services that could be used in satisfying the information desires of the inmates. The truth is that the inmates make use of the library resources when allowed but most leave disappointed as their information desires are not met thereby depending on other sources like lawyers, NGOs and religious organizations

No matter how one looks at it, the library and librarian continue to be the power house, an indispensable asset to knowledge and above all, facilitators of access to information of all time. So to speak, access to information is the key to lifelong learning and successful livelihood which everyone desires including inmates in correctional centres and denying them access to information is no doubt an infringement on their fundamental right. To this end, government and all stakeholders in the management of correctional centres and welfare of inmates should give all necessary support to centre librarians and libraries to carry out this all important function for the well-being of the inmates and society at large. It is on this note that the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ One basic reason why library users still seek the assistance of librarians is that they understand users' needs and the difficulties they can encounter in searching for information. Skilled librarians should always be handy in helping correctional centres' inmates in accessing information they desire
- ❖ As a follow-up to the above, librarians ought to be polite, friendly and always able to behave in a courteous, patient and tactful manner to centre inmates they need to give them their complete attention giving them that sense of belonging which will make them realize that they are still needed in the society.
- ❖ As a learning organization, libraries should provide a strong leadership in knowledge management. Libraries should improve their knowledge management in all of the key areas of library services. To cope with the exponential growth in human knowledge, libraries

need to develop their resources, access and sharing strategies from printed to electronic and digital resources in line with the information needs of both staff and inmates of the correctional centres.

❖ Furthermore, latest information technology should be used in the libraries. Libraries should be developed / modified based on the perfect environment for new media applications. The application of ICT enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, raises knowledge acquisition, speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. It is impossible to accomplish such important tasks by using man's brain only in the modern society in which the knowledge changes with each passing day.

❖ The most important resource in the knowledge economy system is the talents who grasp knowledge. The talent competition has become the focus of market competition in the knowledge economy era. In the knowledge economy era, the libraries will attach importance to vocational training and lifelong education of library staff to raise their scientific knowledge level and ability of acquiring and innovative knowledge so as to be well disposed in contributing in the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates for onward reintegration to the society after their jail terms.

❖ It is believed that this new responsibilities on the part of the librarians (knowing full well that the effectiveness and functionality of the library depend on the acquired skills of the librarians) call for acquisition of new skills. To this end, there is need for continuing professional development.

➢ One of the most important ways of achieving this human right, access to knowledge, is for libraries and librarians to become fully engaged in their communities and societies. The activities and actions of libraries and librarians are foundational to the existence of sustainable communities, economic growth and healthy societies. The result of our deeds, actions and services are vital to personal opportunities and well-being. The work of librarians adds value to both individuals and society at large which the inmates of correctional centres are part.

➢ Government and authorities of Nigerian Correctional Service should provide the enabling environment for efficient and effective service delivery by librarians and libraries. The government should provide the needed fund, state of the art infrastructure and enabling policies that will encourage librarians and libraries in carrying out this function.

➢ Government, correctional centres, librarians and libraries should embrace all recommended ways forward as stated in tables 4 and 5

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