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## **Staff Training Programmes in Nigerian Public Libraries: The Case of Enugu State Public Library**

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### **Abstract**

This paper studied the staff training programmes in public libraries in Nigeria with particular reference to Enugu state library. The training needs of the staff of the library, the extent to which they are exposed to training programmes, how they benefit from training, the factors that hinder training and ways through which staff training could be improved were looked into. Structured questionnaire together with interview questions were used to gather data from the 82 workers of the library who formed the respondents. 80 copies of the questionnaire were returned and used for the analysis using frequencies and percentages. Findings showed that the workers have a variety of training needs; that training programmes are not adequately provided for the staff; that workers gain certain benefits like promotion, professional and personal development. Further findings showed that certain factors like lack of fund, inadequate number of workers hinder training of staff and that staff training could be improved through adequate funding, formulating training policy and recruiting adequate number of staff including training officers. The study indicates a need for the clear identification of each worker's training need, formulation of training policy statements and the consideration of all workers when planning for training.

### **Introduction**

Public libraries are libraries established by the government for the use of the populace. According to the International Federation of Library Association and Institution, IFLA (2001), the public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources (financial, human and material resources) and services. The public library users are usually made of people of different age range and educational qualifications – men, women, young adults and children.

Staffing in public library system is made up of the director of library services, followed by the assistant chief librarian or deputy director. Their subordinates include all categories of librarians, library officers, library assistants, attendants, technicians and gardeners. These fall under the professionals, para-professionals and non-professionals all of whom should be qualified in terms of training and certification according to their levels. Training is a very important device in personnel management. Worker training and development as Adeniji (2011) said is an important programme that promotes the worker in an industrial set up.

Considering the fact that information provision to every user is the mission of the public library, the need for training in this regard cannot be over emphasized. Just as Achebe (2005) said that public libraries are local centres for information, a library worker whose work is to provide information for users in any way needs to be competent enough in any area he finds himself in the library. Tella and Popoola (2007) asserted that training is an essential strategy for motivating workers in the library as a service organization. For the librarians or information professionals as well as other workers develop themselves

to serve the public efficiently, there is dire need for them to acquire the needed skills suitable for the work at hand.

### **The Concept of Training**

In the words of Chadon (2000), training is a short term process utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which non-managerial personnel learn technical knowledge and skills for a definite process. This definition is found lacking because training should be for managerial and non-managerial staff. A personnel training scheme, (PTS) as Abba & Dawha (2009) called it is one that seeks to improve work performance. They cited Slee (1997) who saw this as a systematic approach to staff development and continuing education that is usually in form of a programme of learning opportunities aimed at ensuring that workers continue to acquire and adapt their skills and knowledge to a changing environment. They stressed that a well-trained worker knows the scope and expectations of their jobs and will be able to add building blocks to his/her expertise as he/she progresses. Everybody needs self development professionally. By attending seminars and conferences, the managerial staff can improve professionally. Training is a public or private education programmes directly applicable to work situation. When there are lapses or loopholes in work efficiency and expected productivity, it means that the workers involved need more and better skills and knowledge to be gained through training. According to the report of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries Staff Development working group (1998), libraries need a staff that is well versed in all facets of work in order to provide their users with excellent services.

### **Benefits of Staff Training**

Studies have shown that staff training is the key to enhancing the public library services being provided by the workers. As Ajidahun (2007) put it, training is an integral part of vocational or career development and it is fast becoming a global and pervasive phenomenon in any establishment, the absence of which spells doom for such an institution and the presence of which determines the success of any enterprise. The public library no doubt cannot do without adequate training of their workers to be dynamic enough to cope with the changing needs of the public who make up their user population. Yesufu (2000) further opined that training of personnel enhances productivity, serve as a useful means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. The Bart Nwafor Staff Development programme launched by IFLA Africa section (1998) for African libraries was in recognition of the importance of staff training in libraries. In line with this, Krissoff and Konrad (1998) agreed that library staff must develop confidence and computer competencies acquired through training to make decisions about what patrons need to know. Job performance and efficiency in service delivery can only be ensured through adequate training of workers. Ajidahun quoting Ojiambo (1992) agreed that training programmes should be directed towards improving efficiency and job performance. He further enumerated other benefits of training to include reduction in cost, reduced turnover, human resources reserve, fast decision, continuity of effort, improvement in employee morale, availability for future personnel needs of the organization, improvement in health and safety, reduced supervision, personal growth and organizational stability.

### **Methods/Techniques of Staff Training**

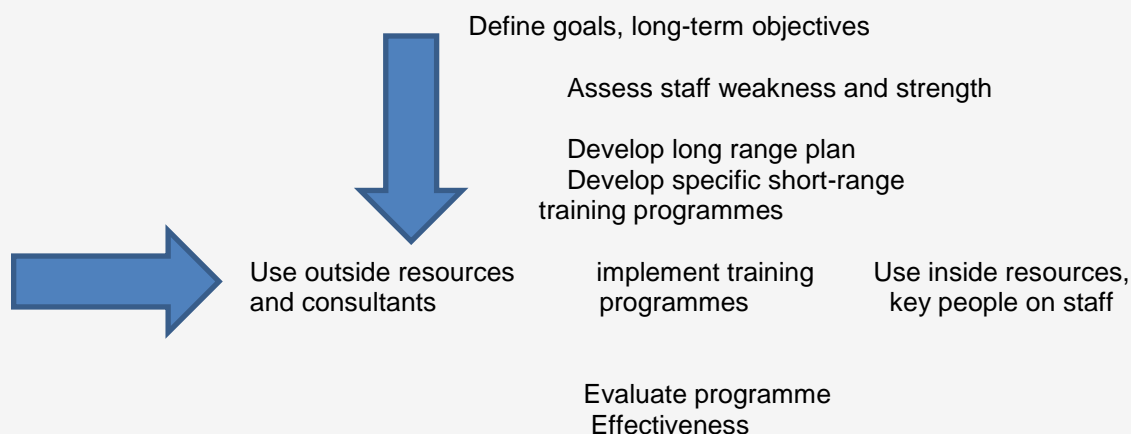
Training of the public library staff can take many forms or can be of many types. IFLA (2000) had it that training of library staff may be offered in pre-professional education, in-service training or as continuing education. More often, they said, it is given in short courses and workshops, or at professional meetings. Others like Burton (1997) as cited by Ajidahun (2007), enumerated training techniques to include on-the-job training; job rotation; coaching; modeling and apprenticeship. Akhigbe (1997) and (Ugbokwe (1998) opined that training should be carried out through continuing education, formal education programmes to obtain certificates, on-the-job learning from more experienced workers, coaching and through off-the-job conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures. The form Curry and Watson (2000) noted that staff development and training should include the acquisition of the skills in the use of information technology. Such training should focus on making the workers acquire basic computer

skills and skills in the use of electronic information sourcing amongst others. These could be done either on-the-job like job instructions or off-the-job like study leave, attending conferences etc. Ajidahun (2007) enumerated the three common training techniques about which researchers on management, personnel development and career development often talk and which are also considered very relevant for the development of library personnel as follows:

1. *Study visits*: Library personnel with theoretical knowledge of library and information science may broaden and update their knowledge by understudying computer operations in other information and automated library systems.
2. *In-service training*: Staff can be introduced to an automated library system and to the varieties of software that can be used for the development and management of an automated library. The training will help staff to update their knowledge for professional competence. Akinpelu (2002) defined in-service training as an in-house programme for staff in many government and business enterprises. It is widely used for continuing education for teachers as well as librarians, bankers and industrial workers.
3. *Industrial attachments*: Students of librarianship can spend between six weeks and three months on industrial attachments in automated libraries and information systems. The exposure will further prepare librarians to face challenges in the automated systems on which they may find themselves working.
4. *On-the-job training* : This kind of training includes cross-training, which moves the trainee from one department or unit to another. It can be an ongoing process that does not disrupt normal company operations. It minimizes the problems of transfer of learning associated with the other methods of training.
5. *Training programmes by International Organizations* – Some international organizations according to Adeniji (2010) have interest in human development programmes in Nigeria and other parts of Africa and have put in place training programmes that have been of assistance to students and staff of institutions of higher learning. Such organizations like the Macarthur Foundation, African Economic Research Consortium and Mortenson Centre for International Libraries. Lynn (2006) as quoted by Adeniji (2010) highlighted the activities of these organizations as regards the training of librarians in Nigeria.
6. *Institutional training programmes* – Institutions of higher learning are expected to play a vital role in the training and re-training of professionals and other interested individuals. In many of the academic institutions in this country especially the universities, part-time and full time courses of study and correspondence or distant learning programmes are offered (Adeniji, 2010). This was earlier on asserted by Mathis (2007) who stated that many professions require periodic postgraduate study in order to maintain certification for practice. Many universities, polytechnics and colleges offer diploma and degree courses for intending library workers and librarians. According to Adeniji, the Nigerian government has encouraged the establishment of many institutions and organizations specifically for training and development. Such institutions include
  - National Manpower Board – responsible for the periodic appraisal of requirements for manpower in all occupations and the development of measures for in-service training of, employed manpower both in the public and private sectors.
  - The Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) was established to provide diverse training facilities for senior managers of the economy.
  - The Nigerian Institute of management
  - The Centre for Management Development
  - The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was established to promote and encourage the acquisition of skills in industry and commerce with a view to generating a pool of indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the economy.
7. *Conferences, Seminars and Workshops*: Librarians as well as other professionals do acquire professional growth through conferences, seminars and workshops. Gutek (2007) defined conferences, seminars and workshops as a meeting on specialized subject area and often held in a day or more to discuss a topic of interest relevant to the organization.

## Staff Development Process

Ajidahun quoting Silver (1981) asserted that the major processes involved in the staff development programmes are presented in a chart as shown below -



According to him, the goals and objectives of the training programme must first of all be defined. This will give focus and guidance to the entire programme. Then, the strengths and weaknesses of staff must be identified. This will be useful in developing long-term plans and specific training programmes which will involve specific outlines of major annual training goals, the number of individuals who will benefit from such training and the cost implication of the plan. The next stage involves detailed training programmes which will be undertaken. The acquisition of text and training materials, the preparation of teaching or instructional aids, the selection and appointment of instructors and their remunerations are determined. This stage is followed by the implementation of the programme which will involve the use of consultants and resource persons. Meeting places are provided. The trainees are released from their regular duties for the training programmes. The last stage is the evaluation of the efforts and performance of the training programmes with a view to detecting the need for improvement in certain areas of the programme

## The Enugu State Library Board

The main purpose of focusing this research on the Enugu state public library is because this library is said to be the root and genesis of public library service in Nigeria. It is the oldest public library in the country from where others sprang up; which came to be, following the 1953 UNESCO seminar on development of libraries in Africa held at the university college, Ibadan. This seminar inspired the then government of Eastern Nigeria to establish a public library. Subsequent state creations converted many of its branch and regional libraries into state libraries – the present Abia, Anambra, Imo and Ebonyi states libraries. This study covered the central library at the headquarters in Enugu city, which is still housed in the monumental library building of 1956 and the other four (4) branch libraries at Awgu, Amufie, Ibagwa, and Nsukka divisional libraries. This research work is generally aimed at studying the staff training programmes of this public library from where many other public libraries emanated.

## Statement of Problem

Training has been observed to be a very important device in personnel management in public as well as other libraries. In spite of the fact that no organization can grow in its services without continuous training of their staff, it has been observed that most workers of this library as well as other public libraries around them may not have been adequately exposed to training programmes. This probably affects

workers' efficiency adversely and as such it is certain that the public/users' needs are not always satisfied.

The findings and outcome of this study will always help in sensitizing the management board of this and other public libraries on the training programmes that should be provided for their workers. It will also help researchers in librarianship, planners of library training programmes and the workers themselves by providing them with useful information.

## Methodology

This study was carried out in Enugu state, Nigeria. It was a case study of the Enugu central library and its four (4) branch/zonal libraries – Nsukka, Amufie, Ibagwa, and Awgu libraries. Data was collected from the 82 workers of the libraries using a structured questionnaire, oral interview questions used for clarifications and getting more information and documentary sources from the library. These were validated by a senior colleague, a senior lecturer in the department of Library and Information science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The collected data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and presented in tables.

## Data Analysis and Presentation

The results of data analysis are presented in tables according to the research questions. Eighty two (82) copies of questionnaire were distributed; eighty (80) copies were returned and used for the analysis; that is 98% return.

**Table 1: Staff rank/category and their population**

Rank/category of staff	Population	%
Librarians	12	14.6
Library officers	3	3.7
Admin officers	3	3.7
Accounting officers	8	9.7
Library assistants	18	22
Superintendents of Press	7	8.5
Typists	5	6.1
Cleaner/messengers	12	14.6
Technicians (Driver/mech. & plant operators)	3	3.7
Gardeners & security workers	11	13.4
Total	82	100

Source: Enugu State Library Board Nominal Role

	Background Information	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender		
	Male	39	47.5
	Female	43	52.5
	Total	82	100
2.	Length of service		
	0 – 5 years	12	14.6
	6 – 10 years	6	7.3
	11 – 15 years	13	15.9
	16 – 20 years	24	29.3
	21 – 35 years	27	32.9
	Total	82	100

**Table 2: Training Needs**

Item No.	Statement	Response					
		Needed		Not needed		Total	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
1.	Further education to improve in my work	68	85	12	15	80	100
2.	Acquire more skills and exposure in my work	60	75	20	25	80	100
3.	Computer training for more information skills	64	80	16	20	80	100
4.	For better communication skills	59	73.8	21	26.2	80	100
5.	For ability to make use of the library materials in my section	56	70	24	30	80	100
6.	For more capability to assist and attend to library users.	51	63.8	29	36.2	80	100

Information gotten from the responses showed that most of the respondents agreed to have training needs as enumerated in the items. These training needs range from further education, more work skills and exposure with, computer training for information skills for better communication skills to training for better capability in handling users. From further information gathered through oral interview, it was seen that most of these respondents that strongly agreed to have these needs were non-professional staff (about 73% of the staff)

**Table 2: The extent of exposure of the staff of the Enugu state library to the needed training programmes**

Item No.	Statement	Response				Total	
		Adequate		Inadequate			
		No.	%	No.	%		
7.	Orientation or induction training	30	37.5	50	62.5	80	100%
8.	Job instruction while at work	32	40	48	60	80	100%
9.	Study leave of any form	28	35	52	65	80	100%
10	Conference/workshops and seminars	26	32.5	54	67.5	80	100%
11	Short courses in one's field of work	30	37.5	50	62.5	80	100%
12	Computer training to acquire better information skills	10	12.5	70	87.5	80	100%

Table 2 above and additional information elicited from the oral interview on the extent to which the workers have been exposed to training programmes; showed that the training programmes - ranging from orientation/induction and job instruction, study leaves, conferences/workshops, short courses are not carried out as required for them. Those that have gone for study leave in the recent past sponsored themselves. It was in the early 1980s that few top officers were sponsored by the library to gain any further education. Also computer training to acquire information skills is not adequately provided. Only the typists and few professional librarians agreed to have gained such training.

**Table 4: Benefits from training**

Item No.	Statement	Response				Total	
		Agree		Disagree			
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	Good salary increment	6	8	74	92	80	100%
2	Easy conversion	70	87.5	10	12.5	80	100%
3	Promotion	72	90	8	10	80	100%
4	More efficiency in their work areas	80	100	0	0	80	100%
5	Better exposure and capability of interaction with fellow workers and users	80	100	0	0	80	100%
6	Self-development	80	100	0	0	80	100%

Table 4 and information given orally by the respondents on what benefits they derive from training showed that the workers derived benefits from training like easy conversion, promotion efficiency, exposure and capability and self development. They did not derive reasonable financial benefit in form of salary increment.

### **Factors That Militate against Staff Training in This Library**

The workers agreed to such factors as lack of fund, lack of management's interest in training, inadequate number of workers with, no written policy and budget as hindering training. Inadequate funding was stressed on to be a major hindrance and this is characteristic of most Nigerian library as was lamented by Nzotta (1994). However, they disagreed to lack of workers' interest in training and inadequate number of professionals as being factors that hinder training. The workers had great interests in training and believed that with few available professionals, training programmes could still be organized for them.

### **Ways of Improving Training Programmes as Conceived by the Workers**

The responses of the workers suggested the various ways through which training programmes could be improved. Such strategies as adequate funding; written policy on training; identification of each worker's training needs; recruiting adequate number of workers; providing required benefits as reward for training. The respondents agreed to all except workers contributing to training as a way of enhancing staff training.

### **Review of Related Studies**

Adeniji (2010) studied training and its multiplier effect on productivity at the Olabisi Onabanjo University library, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. He used the 190 workers of the library – 40 academic librarians, 30 senior non-teaching staff and 120 junior staff of various categories. His findings showed that certain training programmes were provided for the different cadres of the staff. Such programmes as – Orientation programme for the new workers, library staff seminars, sabbatical leave and an educational programme that offers Diploma in Library and Information Science (DILS).

In the case of the public libraries under study, though some programmes like induction, job instruction, in-service training and exposures to study leaves and conferences/seminars/workshops are provided for them, its is not done adequately. Many of the workers that have stayed up to 15 years in service agreed to having participated in such programmes only once or twice as new workers. Moreover, any further training in form of further studies was always self-sponsored. These inadequacies were lamented to be due to lack adequate funding from the government who has the sole responsibility of funding public libraries in Nigeria. This explains why all the public libraries in Nigeria operate at the same standard and experience the same problems.

Also Ajidahun (2007) using the entire staff population of 21 universities in Nigeria studied the training, development and education of library manpower in information technology in university libraries in Nigeria. His findings showed that few of the workers are computer literate and these are mainly professional librarians. He also discovered that these workers acquire training through on-the-job training, formal education, and attendance at workshops and seminars. Just like in the case of public libraries, where most of the workers exposed to training programmes outside the induction course/orientation, are professional librarians. The para-professionals and non-professional junior workers like library officers and assistants do not gain from programmes like the professional staff.

Furthermore, Abba & Dawha (2009) carried out an assessment of personnel training needs in the Ibrahim Babangida library in Federal University of Technology, Yola, Nigeria. The 40 employees of the library – 9 professional librarians, 5 para-professionals, and 26 support staff were the target population of the study. The results of their findings showed that although the workers needed to be exposed to most of the internal training programmes like job orientation, induction and job rotation, majority of them needs



training through conferences, workshops, seminars and computer training programmes. Their findings further showed that factors like inadequate funding, shortage of personnel, lack of written training policy and lack of qualification all militate against training in that library.

These findings are very similar to the findings of this study in question. Although the workers need to be exposed to different kinds of training programmes and opportunities, certain factors as mentioned above always hinder the adequate provision of training programmes to satisfy the training needs.

## Conclusion

It has been discovered that the workers of this as well as other public libraries have a variety of training needs ranging from acquiring further education and skills to training in handling users and library materials. While some programmes like induction, job instruction and other in-service training programmes are fairly provided for the workers in the past decades, things are no longer the same these days, as was found from the oral interview of older workers. Furthermore, mainly the professional senior staff were considered in the provision of training programmes; the needs of the junior non-professional workers are not adequately taken into consideration. However the workers agreed to get reasonable benefits from training.

While certain factors like lack of fund, written policy coupled with inadequate number of workers and management's interest in training were found to hinder training; it was found that staff training could be improved by providing fund, laid down policy and budget for training and recruiting adequate number of workers and training officers.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Training should not be focused on the professional senior staff alone; the junior ones should be given adequate consideration.
2. There should be careful identification of each worker's training needs.
3. Written policy should be formulated to specify worker's training needs, what programmes for which worker, and so on.

If these recommendations are implemented, there will be an improvement in the staff training programmes in the library to make workers more efficient.

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