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2013

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Olaniyi, Olanike Oladunni, "THE USE OF ICTs IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF OYO STATE LIBRARY BOARD, IBADAN, NIGERIA" (2013). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 1720.

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THE USE OF ICT IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF OYO STATE LIBRARY BOARD, IBADAN, NIGERIA.

BY

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate the efforts of the Oyo State Library Board in the use of ICTs among its users and staff. The study appraises the library services in the state to highlight the library services development to the populace of the state. The survey research method was adopted and questionnaire was used to collect data from 110 library users and 20 library staff within the headquarter library. The instrument contained three sections with thirty-five questions. The findings of the study reveal that despite the fact that the level of ICT literacy among the users and staff is relatively low, majority of the staff are versatile in the use of ICT available in the library. The relevance of ICT to the library services were recognised and the need for the library management to intensify the free use of its ICTs facility. The findings provide platform for the public library services to be geared toward the 21st century demands of high-tech and innovative information environments.

Keywords

Historical Background

The Oyo State Library Board came into existence historically in 1955, to support the free primary education of Western State Government led by Late Sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo. It was then known as Western Regional Library, was established by the Western State Government to : (i) compliment the efforts of government toward improving the educational standard (ii) provide qualitative library services to the people of the region and to the school environment ()to encourage reading culture among the school children.

In 1976, when Oyo State was caved out of the Western state, the library nomenclature changed to Oyo State Library under the Ministry of Education while the Head of Library was renamed the Chief Librarian. The development of Library services actually took place in 1988 when the Military Administration of Col. Sasaenia Oresanya decided to enact a law for the establishment of Oyo State Library Board which is regarded as an autonomous government parastatal with the enactment of Edict No 18 of August 1988. This development thereby gave way for the composition of Board led by Prof. Adebimpe Aboyade and supported by four (4) other professional librarians including Prof. D.F. Elaturoti (then Dr. Elaturoti) and Mrs. Oderinde (then of Kenneth Dike Library,

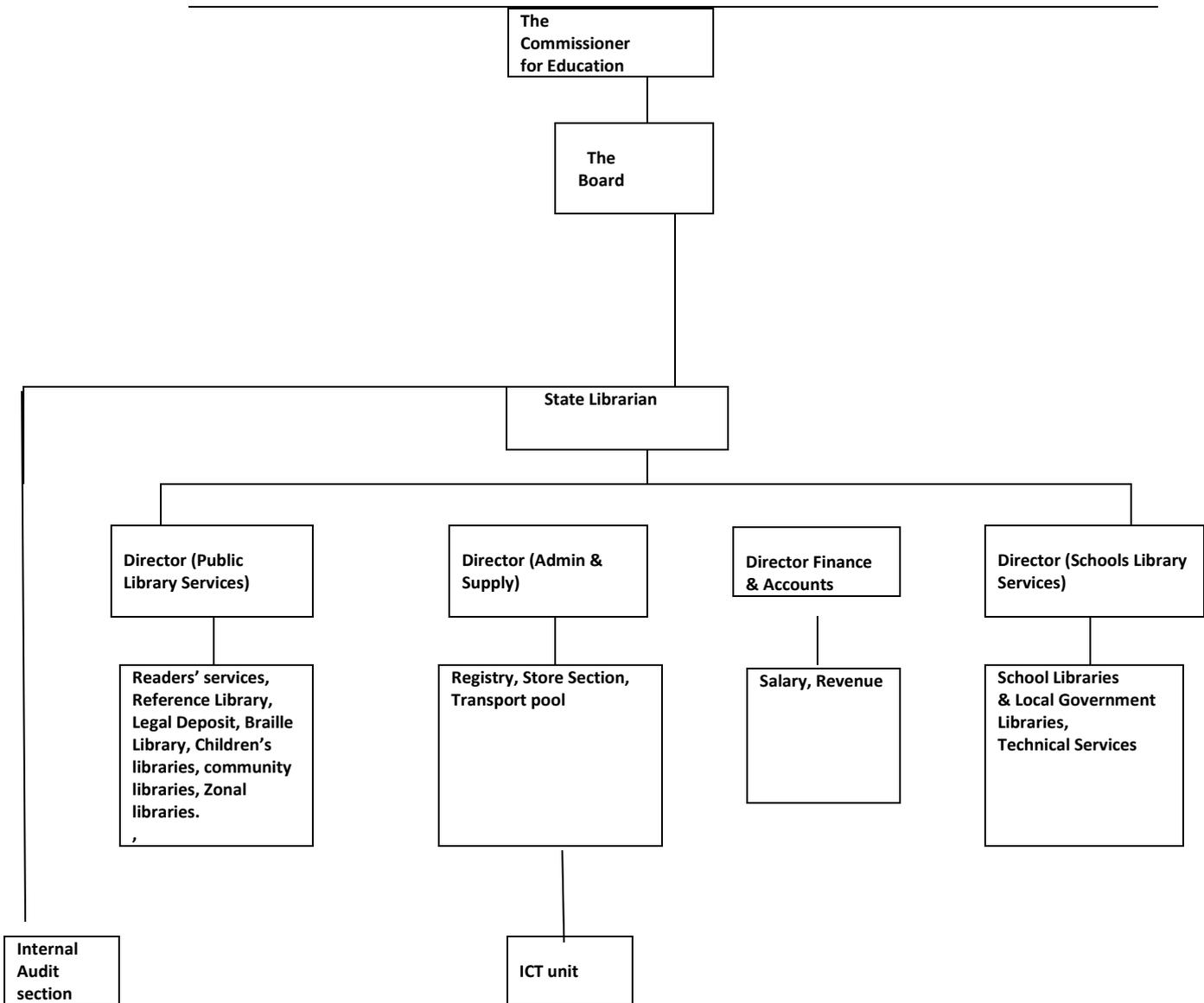
University of Ibadan). The composition of the Board brought the introduction of active library services in the state while the mandate given to the Board became more pronounced and includes provision of qualitative and quantitative library services throughout the state. These includes: (a) library services to the rural populace, (b) services to school libraries,(c) training of library personnel working in schools, local governments, ministries and other government parastatals (d) to serve as legal depository of all works published in the state.

In 1999, the State government approved the nomenclature of the Head of Library to change from the Director to the State Librarian; and now has 4 directorates namely (a) Public Library Services Department (b) Schools Library Services Department and (c) Administration and Supply (d) Finance and Accounts. The Board has two (2) functional Branch Libraries in Ibadan at Elekuro and Bodija. Three Zonal Libraries were built outside the State capital at Oyo, Ogbomoso, and Saki respectively. The first two Zonal libraries are functional, while the other one is almost complete.

Presently, the Headquarters' complex comprises of about 8 sections including an ICT unit which provides Information Technology

services free of charge to the registered library users. The organogram of the Board reflects the composition of the establishment.

ORGANOGRAM OF THE BOARD



Introduction

Library and Information centres are concerned with collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, studying and consultation. In order for a library to attain these goals, many activities are performed by the library which translates to library and information services. The increase in volume of information brought the necessity for computerisation because the old traditional methods of dissemination of information were no longer adequate.

Ajibero (1985) noted that it is vital that all Nigerian libraries exploit every available avenue of delivering information.

According to Ostrow (1998), the advent of the Internet, digitization, and the ability to access library and research materials from remote locations created dramatic changes by the end of the twentieth century. Ramzan (2004) observes that expert systems, wireless networks, virtual collections, interactive Web interfaces, virtual reference services, and personal Web portals have brought changes since the start of the new millennium. There have been fast and significant changes in librarianship, where digital and electronic libraries complement, and in some cases replace, traditional library practices.

2. Library Services to the State

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 organizations. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a wide range of resources and services, making them available equally to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment. (IFLA Publications, 1997).

Specifically, Wheeler and Goldhor (1962) shed more light on the primary purposes of the public library as follows:

- It enables informal education opportunities for the citizens in the community.
- It enriches the knowledge of individuals in various subject disciplines where they undertake formal education;
- Provides avenues to meet the information needs of people;
- Supports the educational, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations;
- Provides recreational opportunities and encourages constructive use of leisure time.

National and public libraries are regarded as the people's university being the local gateway to knowledge, providing opportunities for life long learning, independent decision making and cultural development of

individual and social groups (Oyegade, Nasarawa and Mokogwu, 2003).

The public library is a world wide phenomenon. It attempts to meet a wide variety of readers needs, providing varied information resources such as text books, journals, literary books, etc. The collections also contain information on social sciences, reference work; recreational information and extension services. In this way, the public library functions as a ready source of information on all activities in all walks of life for people to take advantage of in decision making for development activities and for educational advancement.

The Oyo State Library Board serves the state which comprises of 33 local governments with the population of 5,591,589 according to the 2006 census. Since its creation from the Western State Library, it has served well over two million people who have used its facilities in one way or the other. Services to the populace include, Braille Services (supported by Nigerwives), ICT, Video Library, Local Government library services, school loan service, library extension library activities, Mobile library services to villages, selected computer training to users and other less privileged, consultancy services, establishment of Geo-Educational zonal services and other library services peculiar to public librarianship

3. Library users and service points.

The library users comprise mostly the secondary school leavers part-time students, private and bank workers. The headquarters, being in the central area of Ibadan city, various individuals with different professions and educational backgrounds make use of the library. These include the accountancy students (e.g. ICAN), students from UCH, University of Ibadan, unemployed, retirees, businessmen and businesswomen and school children. The library board comprises of the Headquarters, Dugbe, Bodija Community Library, Bodija Estate, Elekuro Children's Library, Ogbomoso, Oyo Zonal Libraries and 7 Prototype Community/Civic Libraries in Educational Zones of the State under construction.

(a) Headquarters, Bank Road, Dugbe

This is situated at one of the busiest commercial area of Ibadan city. It was the former British Council building. It is surrounded by banks and the NIPOST. It is mostly used by Secondary school leavers, accountancy students (e.g. ICAN), unemployed/job seekers, bankers, retirees, tertiary institution students, primary school pupils (there is Children's Section on the 1st floor). It comprises of five buildings including a two storey building (housing the Readers' service section, Technical and Children's sections), Administrative Block(housing the

Reference, Schools' Loan centre, Video, Local Government Libraries and AV room), ICT building, Legal Deposit/Nigeriana building and the Hall (housing the Braille Library and Oyo State NLA secretariat).

(b) Elekuro Children's Library

The Library has since metamorphosed from being a children's library to accommodate adult users. It is situated in the indigenous urban area of the city, surrounded by primary and secondary schools in Aperin Elekuro (adjacent and very close to Iwo Road Ibadan/Lagos Expressway), Ibadan. It derives its users from these schools including technical schools and college of education satellite campuses. Apart from the above mentioned users, job seekers and teachers also use the library.

(c) Bodija Community Library

This library was handed over to the Board by the Nigerian Book Foundation (headed by Prof. Chukwuemeka Ike) in 2002 under the chairmanship of Prof. Jadesola Akande. It has since been in use by the Bodija Community. It is located at Adeyi Avenue, Old Bodija, Ibadan. Its users comprise of tertiary institution students, part-time students (especially from the nearby Educational Advancement consult), civil servants, secondary school students and primary school pupils. It

receives assistance from the community apart from funding from the State Government.

(d) Ogbomoso and Oyo Zonal Libraries

They serve as Public Libraries in Ogbomoso and Oyo zones and are situated at the heart of the two ancient cities. They derive their clientele from all around the cities including the technical schools, secondary and primary schools, colleges of education, e.t.c.

4. ICT Facilities

Oyo State Library Board started using computer in 2000 when the Board under the chairmanship of Prof. Jadesola Akande agreed to provide one full-media internet ready (Pentium 3) computer with a printer, UPS, scanner. With another set of printer acquired in 2001. The Board has since then purchased up to 55 computers for the ICT centre and laptops and iPads for her management staff. An ICT building was constructed at the sum of N2, 034,725 by DOTLAY (Nig.) Co. in 2003 under the ETF project.

(4b) Library Automation

The Board is still at the verge of training its limited staff on automation. Staffs were sent on conferences, seminars, and trainings to prepare them. E.g. Workshops on the Use of Greenstone Library

Software organised by Nigerian Library Association. At the time of this study, most librarians are on the verge of interacting with KOHA free integrated library software in readiness for automation exercise in the library.

5. Internet Access

The library was connected to the internet in the year 2005 with DOPC as ISP. Both the users and staff of the library have access to internet facility. The only criteria for library users are that they must be registered members. The Library Board educates its users on the need to avoid offensive and criminal websites and warnings are issued to those who are culprits and that the penalty is expulsion from the library. A user is allowed to use the internet for an hour per day. The centre opens 8.00am to 4.00pm on week days only.

6. Provision of ICT facilities to the community

The library provides selected computer appreciation trainings to members of the public who are registered with the library but desire to have computer knowledge. This is done through application from the individual with a guarantor among the library staff and other civil servants. Such application is to be considered by the management based

on the sincerity, background, and urgency on the part of the application amongst others.

7. Capacity-Building and ICT Skill programmes

In the year 2006, computer training was organised by the ICT staff, for all staff of the Board including the gardeners, watchmen, and cleaners. Even before this several computer trainings, workshops were being attended by staff of different cadres. The ICT unit from time to time has organised training for civil servants from parastatals within the civil service. On monthly basis, there are visits from private and public primary and secondary schools for computer appreciation and use of internet. These schools applied and are recommended through the Schools Library Department.

8. Sustainability of ICT facilities

The Oyo State government provides all the financial support in conjunction with ETF for the maintenance of both the hardware and software facilities. The DOPC (Direct On PC) provides technical support and serves as the ISP to the Library Board. The library employed 2 specialists in the area of librarianship and information science to man the ICT centre. And they are assisted by a corps member with qualification in Computer Engineering or Computer Science (the Board

specifically requested from time to time from NYSC office). A building is separately built to serve as ICT centre.

9. Replication of ICT facilities (future plans and proposals)

It was included in the 2009 Budget and Estimate of the Board the necessity to replicate the ICT facility in other educational zones of the State for all-round provision of information in 21st century. The Board serving the whole State with over 5 million population urged the State government to establish 33 information/civic centres. And the government graciously at once approved 7 out of 33 centres as a take-off in the year 2009 Budget! As at September 2009; bill of quality and approval and awarding of contracts took place as phase one of the projects. Under the present administration, as at July 2013, over 70% of the project has been completed with few installations of ICT equipment and furniture yet to be done. With assurance that work will be completed soonest.

10. Barriers to the use of ICT

Oyegade, Nassarawa and Mokogwu (2003), emphasised that there is no doubt that public library service today in Nigeria is still at its rudiments like in most African countries. According to Katunmoya (1992): “Public libraries in most countries in tropical Africa rarely

provide relevant materials and hence they are ineffective. They are stocked mainly with foreign literature that is both out of date and irrelevant to the information needs and interests of the people that are expected to read them.”

The general poor attitude of the Nigerian government towards development of libraries has also adversely affected the development of public library services in Nigeria. Enough funding is not made available to the public libraries to be stocked with the necessary information materials or provide adequate services to their clientele. Ehigiator (1997) revealed that there was the general practice by governments of releasing to the public library boards an amount far less than what was approved for a given year. The statutory annual approvals do not always reflect the actual needs of the boards. The effect being that the quality and quantity of materials acquired and the levels of services rendered are adversely affected. For instance, the poor state of funding compelled the Edo State library board to abandon their mobile library services. The general poor state of funding public libraries has forced many Directors of these libraries to reduce library services being rendered to their clienteles in areas such as staff reduction (rationalization),

redeployment, reduction in book budgets, reduction in the number of programmes and services rendered.

At the Oyo State Library Board ICT barriers to implementation are inadequate funding for maintenance & repair, inadequate ICT infrastructure, inconsistent power supply, prohibitive cost of running generators, inadequate staffing, the absence of resources in digital form, non-automation of library services as well as the non-existence of electronic libraries to facilitate resource-sharing in the country.

It should be noted that while the State government under the present administration is doing its best to improve library and information services in all ramifications. To overcome these barriers there is need to:

1. Increase staff capacity of the Board
2. Budgetary allocations for procurement of ICT facilities
3. Constant training of ICT staff in appropriate and updated educational packages e.g. CISCO
4. Employ permanent staff with computer engineering knowledge
5. The library board needs to become an ISP in near future so as to provide internet service to the newly constructed ICT centres in the educational zones of the State.

6. Find another reliable and more economical source of power
e.g. Solar energy
7. Further empowering the Board on Legal Depository Law
8. Subscribe to e-journals for the library use
9. Collaborate with other ministries, extra-ministerial, agencies, organisation e.g. Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism to facilitate improved, up-to-date and detailed information on the State and the country at large.
10. Create official website for the Board
11. Connect the sections and branches in the library board system to the internet.

11 Benefits of ICT in the Public Libraries

Alasa and Kelechukwu (1999) articulated the benefits that can be derived from electronic libraries which are hooked to the internet as follows:

- Quick and convenient information exchange.
- Access to experienced and expert individuals in thousands of fields.
- Access to regular updates on topics of interest;
- Enhancement of team work, access to geographical distances;
- Access to archives information;

- Transfer of data between machines and provide a great platform to have fun and entertainment;
- As a reference tool, the internet provides a wealth of up to date resources unavailable in bound volumes;
- The internet gives personal access to specialization and experts in hundreds of disciplines;
- It enables you to reach your fellow librarians with messages and documents independent of the constraints of mails, telegraphs or even fax.
- The internet provides access to on-line catalogues for libraries very close to or on another continent and it gives access to bibliographic records of millions of books and the details of the holdings of academic and research libraries around the world;
- Electronic journals and newsletters are made available on a regular basis;
- Libraries can make the selection of books required in their institutions and order them without going from one bookshop or publisher to another;

This wide range of benefits from information technology facilities discussed above are the hallmarks of the electronic libraries of this age. These are the types of libraries required to transform the delivery of library and information services. The use of such libraries/information centres will help to produce fulfilment of library goals and users' satisfaction among others. For example, students will have at their disposal relevant information in their immediate libraries and elsewhere to acquire in depth knowledge of their various subjects and disciplines.

This wide range of information resources will make them well grounded in their various disciplines far more than students who do not have such facilities. The facilities in the electronic libraries desired in Nigeria will therefore include a wide range of books in all the disciplines in addition to computers and their associated peripherals connected to the internet.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The sample size was made of one hundred and ninety-five library users and staff in the headquarter library based on cluster sampling technique. A questionnaire was used as instrument. Out of 195 copies distributed only 144 representing 73.8% were returned and found usable for the analysis. Data were analyzed using frequencies and statistical mean.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Purpose of Use	Frequency	Percentage
Preparation for Examination	27	18.8
Interview	27	18.8
Online / Mail	27	18.8
General Browsing	9	6.3
E-Resources	9	6.3
Consultancy/Marketing	9	6.3
Research	27	18.8
E-Learning	9	6.3

Table 1 represents the result of use of ICTs of library users and staff. A consideration of the data shows that the respondents used ICTs mostly for four purposes namely: preparing for examination, interview mailing and research.

Table 3: ICTs in the Library

ICTs	Frequency	Percentage
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Computer	81	56
Internet	36	25
Printer	45	31.3
Scanner	36	25
Photocopier	54	37.5
Telephone	36	25
Projector	18	12.5

It is observed that (56%) of the respondents were aware that there is availability of computers, (37.5%) of photocopier, only 12.5% were aware of projector in the library while (25%) were unaware of the internet provision in the library.

Table 4: Public Library Dependence on ICTs

ICT Dependence	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	45	31.3
Agree	63	43.8
Undecided	27	18.8
Disagree	9	6.3

Table 4 represents the opinion of the respondents on the essence of public library services and the use of ICTs. It shows that 43.8% agreed that with adequate dependence of public library ICTs the library services would be greatly improved.

Challenges to Use of ICTs in Public Library

Challenges to Use of ICTs	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Poor management and Maintenance	144	2.50	1.177	.353	.202
Poor funds	144	2.06	1.302	.924	.202
Lack of electricity	144	2.31	1.314	.753	.202
Literacy level	144	2.19	.810	-.357	.202
Location of facility	144	2.37	1.322	.441	.202
Cost of Use	144	1.81	1.077	1.607	.202
Poor publicity	144	2.25	1.203	.605	.202
Poor network connection	144	2.13	1.170	.949	.202
Valid N (list wise)	144				

Table 5 shows the mean responses of library users and staff with regard to the challenges hindering the use of ICTs in the public library. With the mean statistic of 0.353 for poor management and maintenance of ICTs, which is 2.50, shows that this particular hindrance is well recognized by the respondents to have prevent them from enjoying the ICTs facilities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study therefore concluded that there are efforts by the public library in recognizing the use of ICTs in powering and improving the library services. This is likewise recognized by the library users and staff. But there are some hindrance that requires spontaneous tackling so as to ensure quality service delivery to the library community as well as fulfilling its goals and objectives. It is therefore recommended that the stakeholders in public library sector address the issue of poor management and maintenance of ICT and other library equipment through the provision of funds and reduce bottle-neck procedures in obtaining funds and manpower in order to reposition and deliver quality public library service in the 21st century.

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