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Library Services: A Panacea for Community Development in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Information and library services form an essential requirement for the development of all communities, this in essence means that the use of human efforts towards attaining goals depend highly on efficient communication of information, and the most important factor that makes communication possible is information. Library services entail the dissemination of the needed information to the users for individual growth and survival. In line with this, Ukachi (2010) pointed out that the progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is required so as to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty. The author concurred that if information is this valuable, it must be put to proper use, that is, made available to people or group of people who need it, after ascertaining the groups' information needs and information seeking behavior. Information and library services are vital needs to all and in essence to people in rural communities.

A rural community goes by different names by different people, it can be referred to as a community outside the cities and towns; as regard to this, some refer to rural area as back country, country-side, back wood, rough country, hinterland, remote or underdeveloped area. Aguilar (2005) defined rural community as a society in which there is a low ratio of inhabitants of open land and the most important economic activity is the production of food stuff, fibres and raw materials. Life style in rural community is quite different from those in the urban communities because of limited public services. According to Aderounmu (2007) a visit to any rural settlement in Nigeria will reveal dirt and unmotorable roads, women and children walking bare-,footed and trekking long distance to get water and firewood, pupil studying under the trees, a dilapidated and ill equipped health centres and scores of poverty driven problems. The characteristics of the rural community population in Nigeria vary according to different geographical location; the most common among them is the high degree of illiteracy, this is why the author further said that the rural dwellers suffer on many fronts and are powerless to improve their situation because of ill-health, poor education and lack of access to many opportunities available to them. Another common characteristic according to Momodu (2012) is the

poor road network system, because these communities are inaccessible, and therefore, makes information dissemination on the state of the nation's economy, health – especially modern family planning difficult. The obvious consequences of this, is population explosion in the rural areas. Also, the absence of amenities in the rural community does not encourage or attract suitable personnel to the areas and in all there is high rate of unemployment as virtually everyone is self-employed in agriculture, fishing, and trading, black-smiting, mining or small scale industries. Obviously, the rural dwellers are very resourceful and contribute to the sustainable of the society. In addition to farming, the rural dwellers also engage in fishing black smiting, lumbering, small scale business, mining and trading, but they lack basic amenities.

According to Ifko (2003), the rural dwellers are the producers of agricultural resources of the nation. Specifically, the rural dwellers engage in agricultural production which if properly harnessed, can provide the impetus needed for achieving national development. In line with this, Momoh (2002) observed that the rural dwellers in Nigeria are not inherently poor nor are they doomed to ignorance and disease, and rather they are blessed with massive fertile land and mineral resources and also huge virile labour force which can be transformed into goods and services. She further lamented that missing link has been the absence of an effective mechanism for mobilization and stimulating them into action with a view to addressing their problems. That missing link is the lack of information in the right quantity and format which has hindered their production to be on large scale that would have been beneficiary to the nation.

Statement of the Problem

Library services predominantly services provided by public libraries are fundamental to the improvement of the general quality of life and national development. The public libraries are established to provide access to information in order to make positive transformation in the lives of people. Having access to and use of relevant information is necessary for improved condition of lives and general development of the rural communities and the dwellers.

Nevertheless, the urban areas has been the beneficiary of the establishment of public libraries in Nigeria while the very few in rural areas are being use for dumping ground and store houses.

Consequently, this has given rise to illiteracy and lack of the ability to think critically. Albeit, Nigeria has policies and plans which include the provision of information to rural dwellers, unfortunately, the condition of rural communities is deteriorating instead of improving. Majority of the Nigerian population live in these rural areas which are not easily accessible unless by boat, bicycle and donkeys, further people dwelling in these areas find it difficult to operate fully in the society. This is why this study is set to find out what information are needed by the community and library service provided for the development of Odeda Local Government communities.

The Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the information needs and provision of library services for rural community development in Odeda Local Government area of Ogun State. Specifically the study will:

1. Examine the area that the dwellers in Odeda Local Government need information for rural or community development.
2. Find out library services provided for rural dwellers.
3. Identify the resources through which rural dwellers access information in the library for community development
4. Find out how to increase access to, use of information, and enhance the provision of library service for rural community in Odeda Local Government Area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information according to Afolabi (2009) is a conveyor, a change agent, a reinforcement of ideas and opinions. Information in broad context refers to organized data recorded in various forms. It is a raw resource for knowledge. Information could also be messages that have perceivable and recognizable value to the receiver. Information is therefore, a vital tool for the empowerments of individual to enable them take an informed decision or action for self or community development (Ochieng, 2012). Similarly, Moore (2007) mentioned that Information is a key contributor to the development of individuals and communities. Here, information is a critical resource that can productively enhance individual knowledge and development for different useful purposes. More so, information is seen as a

resource that can create changes in human activities when employed rightly. In the same vein, Popoola (2006) opined that information occupied the centre of all human function and productive programmes of organizations such that life can be greatly hampered if it is not available and accessible for use. Likewise, Reitz (2005) posited that information and ideas are creative of the human intellect and imagination that have been communicated either formally or informally in any form. This stresses the fact that information is a valuable resource to the development of human mind, self and environment because it brings about knowledge of things that exist in human environment and also empowers man to creatively understand and change his immediate environment.

Like any other basic needs of the people, rural dwellers need information on various areas. Access to the right information by rural communities can help them to acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate fully in community affairs. It is in this regard that Sharma and Fatima (2004) states that access to quality information will obviously help rural dwellers to fight against superstitious beliefs and to aid them in becoming better citizens. People need information to develop their potential through education and training, to succeed in business, to enrich their cultural experience, and to take control of their daily lives. He further stated that access to information is not equal throughout society. People living in affluent urban centres can choose from abundant sources of information. In contrast, people living in poor communities are frequently denied access to information which could improve their lives. This situation is particularly severe in many rural areas of the developing countries

Likewise, Weiss, Crowther and Bernardi (2000) describe information as the cornerstone for successful social-economic development because it plays a key role in decision making. This in essence means that access to information and library services is therefore a basic necessity. In a modern society where democracy thrives, it is necessary for the citizenry to fully be involved in the decision making process. For a meaningful involvement it is not only a pre-requisite that all citizens have access to information on all matters affecting their lives and well being, but also to do so timely. Ugah (2007) observes that information access and use can only flourish in a society that appreciate the need for it and where government recognizes that information is the key to a national growth and prosperity. In relation

to this study, information means knowledge acquired through a process of interaction and other learning situation which an individual can use to perform different tasks, make informed decisions and improve on existing human conditions and material situations.

Human beings express diverse information needs in their day-to-day activities. Every person needs information for decision making; the type of information needed range from common physiological to individual psychological information needs. Nwangu (2009) stated that information need refers to the extent to which information is required to solve problems, as well as the degree of expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the information. Likewise, Lwoga, Christine and Patrice (2011), noted that information needs in development context relate closely to a person's occupation, the level of socio-economic development and local agro-ecological conditions. Information needs of the rural dwellers relate closely to their occupations and their basic survival goals.

Saw-George (2012), in his own view identified the following as the information needs of the rural communities: Information on income generation such as projects, nonfarm income, money-savings initiatives; community leadership; literacy support; basic economics such as petty business, finance/loans and how to get them and survival of small business, government policies on rural development such as health, agriculture, education cooperative etc. Rural dwellers have information needs which a public library or information centre could assist them in meeting. This could be done through the provision of information services in the format they can utilise, which is not to be restricted to the printed materials alone. Posters, and audio-visuals, mass-media, oral deliberative form, slides, mobile cinema, films and repackaging in local languages are vital means of disseminating relevant information and library services to them. Sources of information are tools that can possibly meet the information needs of different categories of users. They are the information carriers while the media is the medium through which information is passed to the user. The speculated and realistic benefit desirable from source makes that source useful and sustainable. There are different source of information but what matters are 'what' sources are available and relevant to the different categories of users and what sources of information are useful for their different seeking behaviours and choices. Ukachi (2010), opined that the rural dwellers are people that live in the villages, who are mainly illiterates and whose

main sources livelihood is farming. Since majority of them cannot read or write the most suitable source of information are visuals-audio and inter-personal communication which include, radio, television, trade association, age group association, health workers, village drums, town criers and whistling, churches, mosques, local government workers, friends and relatives, oba's palace, public libraries, postal and handbills.

There are myriads of definitions conception and contentions as to what exactly rural development is all about. It is justifiable to say that there are no universally accepted approaches to rural development. It is a choice influenced by time, space and culture. Though, the fundamental notion surrounding rural development objective most often remain similar as to what processes and strategies to be taken to alleviate the rural community people's suffering and improve their socio-economic condition, yet rural communities in Nigeria are still considered underdevelopment. In an effort to find solution to the deplorable condition of rural people, Gana and Galadima (2014) considered rural development as judicial application of quality knowledge, skill, and method of investing cash and kind resources to improve rural poor condition of living to attain appreciable life through provision of quality and sufficient agricultural inputs, creation of jobs for the jobless rural youths (entrepreneurship skill) and provision of all necessary basic amenities and including bridging the rural-urban socio-economic and political development. Going by the above definition the need for rural community development is paramount. Any nation therefore, that neglects the development and empowerment of the rural communities should not expect any meaningful development. According to Yahya (2009), any government that disregards the importance of developing its rural areas can be referred to as non serious and sensitive government. The neglect of rural areas has negative impact for the society as this usually resulted into migration of rural dwellers to urban area; and consequently result to unemployment, crimes, poverty, child labour, poverty, bribery, spread of diseases, environmental hazards, overstretching of the available amenities and infrastructure in the urban areas.

However, Egbe (2014) noted that since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 from British colonial government, there are several policies on the development of the rural communities, yet the rural areas are not developed and the qualities of life of the people in the rural areas has continued to deteriorate.

On this point, third world countries have recently come to realise that unless the rural communities are well developed, hardly would any meaningful development occur in these countries. Development in rural communities can only be effective if and when rural dwellers have access to the relevant, diverse information for their diverse activities. This view is buttressed by Islam(2013) who asserts that in Nigeria, the populace suffers from an acute low productivity, social and economic retrogression due mainly to ignorance which also result from inadequate or total absence of information. The access to proper and correct information that can bring development in rural areas can be achieved through the services of the public library.

The fundamental aim of libraries is to provide timely, accurate, pertinent and reliable information for their users. There is a growing recognition that library services, particularly in public libraries, are an integral part of national socio-economic development and improvement of the general quality of life. Ebiwolate (2010) describe public libraries in Nigeria as part of the government in terms of administration and procedures. The aim of establishing public libraries include: life-long education for the citizens as the basis for the nation's educational policy, the structuring of education system to develop the practice of self learning, making people to be actively literate and generally well-informed and the introduction of universal basic and compulsory education for all citizens. In order to meet these objectives, there is need for effective library services, public libraries services in rural community development is essentially a continuous process of generating and more efficiently allocating resources for achieving greater social satisfying ends.

Although there has been different views that library services in rural areas is not as bright as the one in developed countries (Agboola2000, Ikhizama and Okojie, 2001), nonetheless provision of a comfortable surroundings where the people can learn how to read and write in a relaxed setting should be a prerequisite, furthermore public libraries services to rural dwellers should also include reading to the people as this could contribute to pleasing experience for the rural dwellers, relatively, providing information about farming and other cultural matters, public affairs and entertainment. Public library or community information centre if found in the community at regular and specific times would encourage the rural dwellers to seek such information necessary and satisfactory. They are most likely

to be motivated in practicing “self-help” in seeking information being drawn into both personal and rural community development processes. Rural development involves economic growth, modernization, equitable distribution of income and social-economic transformation among other things. The contribution of information and library services to the development of rural areas is on focus in Odeda Local Government of Ogun State.

The condition of rural dwellers in Nigeria and indeed in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State is pathetic, traces of abject poverty and discomfort can be seen conspicuously. The living condition of the rural dwellers remains deplorable as attested to by many scholars studying the problems of rural communities. It is generally agreed that the rural areas in Nigeria lag behind in terms of development. They lack basic amenities like pipe-borne water, decent housing, good roads, electricity and health facilities.

The development of society and individuals can only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to play active roles in the society and to also exercise their democratic rights. This therefore signifies that if rural dwellers are adequately having access to quality information about every sphere of life, it will go a long way to achieve the development that the nation needs. In an acute shortage or absence of social amenities and essential commodities that will make their life bearable, rural dwellers adopt “rural-urban drift” as an alternative and solution to this terrible condition.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was a descriptive survey conducted in Ogun State, one of six states in the South West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Odeda local Government chosen for this study is one of the twenty local governments in Ogun State of Nigeria. It was created out of Egba Division council in October 1955 by the Action group control western Nigeria government of Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo the first premier of the region. The council area has an extensive landmass mostly grassland with an area of 1263.45sqkm and a population of 10,449 according to the 2006 population census figure. Odeda local Government shares boundaries with Abeokuta south, Abeokuta north, Obafemi owode Local Government and Oyo State in the South, West East North respectively.

The people of Odeda local government are predominantly farmers who engage in small scale farming the major food crops of the area including cassava, yam, cocoyam, plantain, maize and vegetable, while cocoa is the major cash crop, in the recent times however, the people of the area engage themselves in quarry business, trading, craft and artisan works, however, agric – based industries take a lead among know economic activities. Islam and Christianity are the major religion in the local government. Also, there still remain some committed traditional worshipers who are given free hand to operate as they allow people to go about their normal business unhindered. The communities that made up Odeda local government are : Odeda, Osiele, Ilugun, Olodo, Kila and Olugbo.

The sample size comprised of 300 male and female dwellers of Odeda local government through stratified sampling: Odeda (60), Osiele (60), Ilugun 60, Olodo (55), Kila (35) and Olugbo(30). The instruments for data collection are questionnaire and focus group discussion. The focus group discussion was specifically chosen in a bid to have an interactive session with the respondents so as to gain information not captured in the questionnaire. Mean and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data from the questionnaire while the FGD was analyzed qualitatively.

RESULTS

Areas Odeda Local Government dwellers need information for rural development.

Considering the information needs of the rural dwellers, the focus group discussion revealed that the rural dwellers gave the opinion that they would be very happy if they had access to different information about their different areas of occupation like farming, fishing, lumbering, trading etc; and especially to information on varieties of improved seedlings; and access to loan facilities, as the absence of these contributed to the reasons why their products were usually low. Some of their leaders also pointed out that they would love to have information on financial activities such taxation and policies of government so that they can be guided in making decisions.

Similar themes emerged from the questionnaire, where the rural dwellers were asked the areas of their information need for rural development. These factors and their relative importance can be seen on Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation showing areas in which rural dwellers of Odeda Local Government needed information for the development of rural area or community

S/N	Item Statements	Frequency				N=300		
		HN	MN	LN	NN	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Welfare and Family matters	88	155	56	1	3.10	0.70	MN
2	Employment opportunities	140	157	3	-	3.46	0.52	MN
3	Health conditions	61	234	4	1	3.18	0.44	MN
4	Matters relating to their occupation	203	90	7	3	3.65	0.52	HN
5	Environmental Conditions	200	37	63	-	3.46	0.82	MN
6	Policies and Government	148	147	5	-	3.48	0.53	MN
7	Sources of herbicides	147	146	6	1	3.46	0.56	MN
8	Financial activities	149	146	5	-	3.48	0.53	MN
9	Legal information	2	211	86	1	2.71	0.48	MN
10	Loan facilities/services	157	134	9	-	3.56	0.56	HN
	Grand Mean					3.44	0.57	MN

Key: HN- Highly Needed, MN- Moderately Needed, LN- Less Needed, NN- Not Needed

Specifically, information were highly needed on items four (occupation) and ten (loan facilities and services) for the development of the rural dwellers. The eight (8) remaining items (items number one, two, three, five, six, seven, eight and nine) serves as areas in which rural dwellers in Odeda Local Government moderately needed information for rural or community development, this therefore mean that on the grand mean of 3.44 with a standard deviation of 0.57, respondents of Odeda Local Government agreed Moderately on the need for the following information for their rural or community development. These includes: information on policies and government; and financial activities ranked highest with mean of 3.48 among the moderately needed items while lastly legal information with 2.71 ratings.

The services provided by the public libraries to the rural communities

The questionnaire result showed that Items such as Provision of library guide, provision of mobile library services, Shooting of films on specific Current subjects were highly provided, services such as production of library catalogue in full or in part, circulating of materials to users, photocopy services, extension services, translation services, current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI) were provided occasionally.

On the other hand information gathered from the rural dwellers through the focus group discussion, revealed most of these services were not provided, for example a village leader said there was nothing like mobile library since ten or twelve years now and it is once in a while when their relations in towns invites them that they use to have the privilege of watching films meant to teach new method to improve their work. They suggested that they preferred that the library will offer foremost current awareness service as this will enable them to quickly forge ahead, translation service as this help to understand the message the more; and shooting of films to give them a better understanding in a practical way. These items were given more preference above the others during the focus group discussion

Resources through which Rural Dwellers access Information for Community Development

Table 3 Frequency N=300

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
1	Reference materials	208	73	19	-	3.63	0.60	SA
2	Dictionary	116	184	-	-	3.39	0.49	A
3	Government publications	147	98	55	-	3.31	0.76	A
4	Encyclopedia	127	170	3	1	3.41	0.51	A
5	Textbooks	57	106	137	-	2.73	0.76	A
6	e-books	63	212	25	-	3.13	0.53	A
7	Journals	45	93	139	23	2.53	0.84	A
8	Websites	50	159	91	1	2.86	0.67	A
9	Newspapers	57	126	94	23	2.72	0.86	A

10	Conference proceedings	45	188	44	23	2.85	0.76	A
11	Reports	65	92	143	-	2.74	0.79	A
	Grand Mean					3.03	0.69	A

Key: SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the resources through which rural dwellers access information in the library for community development. This result revealed that since the mean ratings are above the criterion level of 2.50 for accepting an item; hence the respondents of Odeda Local Government Agreed on all the items on the above table as the resources through which rural dwellers access information in the library for community development These include: dictionary, government publications, encyclopedia, textbooks, e-books, journals, websites, newspapers, conference proceedings, and reports.

However, in the focus group discussion section, the rural dwellers said they preferred to access government publications and textbook as they believed that government publications will give them more current information than any material, if available.

Ways to increase access to, use of information, and enhance the provision of library service for rural community in Odeda Local Government Area.

S/N	Item Statements	VA	A	FA	NA	\bar{x}	SD	Dec .
1	Establishment of community libraries	299	1	-	-	4.00	0.06	VA
2	Establishment of information centres	79	189	32	-	3.16	0.59	A
3	Establishment of mobile libraries	108	134	58	-	3.17	0.73	A
4	Establishment of adult literacy centres	131	134	35	-	3.32	0.67	A
5	Exposing and training of rural dwellers in different income generating activities.	109	111	80	-	3.10	0.79	A
6	Deployment of extension workers to rural communities from government ministries and parastatals.	32	202	34	32	2.78	0.78	A
7	People's empowerment through education and enlightenment programmes	131	113	56	-	3.25	0.75	A

8	Making loan facilities for business investment	93	140	66	1	3.08	0.73	A
9	Repackaging and disseminating of information that can be accessible by the rural dwellers.	85	158	25	32	2.99	0.89	A
	Grand Mean					3.21	0.67	A

Key: VA- Very Appropriate, A- Appropriate, FA- Fairly Appropriate, NA- Not Appropriate

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation ways on how to increase access to the information, use the information and enhance the provision of library service for rural community and Odeda Local Government Area. This result revealed since the grand mean is 3.21, means that all the items on the table were accepted as ways of increasing access to information. Respondents revealed item 1 (establishment of community library) with the highest mean of 4.00 was Very Appropriate on how to increase access to, use the information and enhance the provision of library service for rural community in Odeda Local Government Area. Meanwhile, other items like 4 (establishment of adult literacy centres), 7 (people's empowerment through education and enlightenment programmes) with mean 3.25; 3 (establishment of mobile libraries) with mean 3.17; 2 (establishment of information centres) mean 3.16; 5 (exposing and training of rural dwellers in different income generating activities) mean 3.10; 8 (making loan facilities for business investment) with mean 3.08 and item 9 (repackaging and dissemination of information that can be accessible by the rural dwellers).

While Item 6 (deployment of extension workers to rural communities from government ministries and parastatals) has the lowest mean of 2.78 on the table were agreed on by the respondents of Odeda Local Government as Appropriate for increasing access to, use the information and enhance the provision of library service for rural community in Odeda Local Government Area.

The focus group revealed that the rural dwellers in their view said they would love it if there are more libraries and information centres established in Odeda Local Government, this according to them is because they have only one which is not adequate and functioning, they therefore requested the establishment of more functional libraries including mobile libraries and adult teaching centres where they can learn how to read and write; and also have access to current information, .

DISCUSSION

The diverse nature of rural communities indicates that their information needs are many and multidimensional and in line with the findings of the study, there is need for information for rural or community development. On the part of their occupation, there is need for information on how to access improved seedlings, farm credit, sources of herbicides and proper storage of farm products in order to have more substantial harvest. Inclusively, the rural dwellers need information to loan facilities as this will help them greatly to enlarge their various trades. Apart from those mentioned above, rural dwellers information needs on environmental sanitation, they need information on refuse disposal, house planning, road maintenance and drought; On employment, rural communities need information on employment opportunities and taxation, financial activities like investment and banking; Welfare and Family matters: information is required on problems of marriage, childcare, juvenile delinquency etc; Legal matters: information is needed on laws that affect the rural dwellers. Policies and Government: information is needed on political rights of the people and how they can exercise such right.

Enhancement of services will form a solid base for development of the entire rural setting in Nigeria. Enhanced and effective information service needs rural library services. The findings revealed that there is need for the services of public libraries to the rural communities. These services include: current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI), translation services, circulation of materials to users, shooting of films on specific Current subjects, translation services, and photocopy services.

CONCLUSION

Rural dwellers are a significant part of the population of this nation It is quite obvious that rural dwellers need information all human endeavors to improve their well being and to develop the nation. The development and transformation can only be possible, effective and relevant when information needs of the rural dwellers are met positively. Prominent among their information needs is occupation, information about the political trends, social and cultural happenings will help in educating the rural dwellers about social life and what is going on in the political life; and this will invariably lead to the

development of the rural dwellers. Enhanced rural library programmes can empower information services. Thus, if given the necessary attention, the public libraries, will play a great role in advancing the level of awareness of the rural dwellers.

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