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**Critical information literacy and participatory democracy: An analysis of the role of
libraries in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State**

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Abstract

Critical Information Literacy is a commitment to social justice by which people can be empowered through various information sources to question dominant values and beliefs in the society thereby enabling an awareness on issues of democracy and good governance. This article investigated some of the critical challenges faced by libraries with respect to information skills empowerment of the citizens of Jos, Plateau State in the democratic process. The paper is set within the context of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. It examined the ways that libraries in the city of Jos facilitate knowledge of political issues and awareness of electoral processes for effective democratic participation in elections through quality information provision. A survey research method was adopted for the study and data was collected through the administration of structured questionnaires. Outcomes from the study emphasized the collaborative role of libraries, the Plateau State government and other stakeholders in advocating for the importance of critical information literacy as an important policy agenda for providing access to quality information sources for informed political participation in the electoral process in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Information literacy, Critical literacy, Libraries, Democracy, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Reviews in Information Literacy (IL) research have indicated a continuous expansion in the field and an increasing interest in exploring the concept beyond educational institutions (Association of College and Research Libraries, (ACRL) 2000; Underwood, 2002; Association of College and Research Libraries, (ACRL), 2015). In the past few years, research in IL in the business sector and governmental agencies have been emerging and influencing decision-making processes that foster greater collaboration and partnership between researchers, practitioners and other community stakeholders thereby stimulating development in countries (Cordell, 2013; Amusa, Bello, Omotoso & Osunrinade, 2016). In governance specifically, studies are indicating a strong link with IL in empowering citizens for participatory democracy, particularly in developing countries (Hikwa, 2007; Johanna, 2017). The transformative power of IL is its ability to empower people with the capacity to make informed decisions; definitions of the concept which highlight the user's ability to learn how to learn emphasize its importance as a valuable resource for the exercise of responsible citizenship in a democratic society (Favier, 2010; Secker, 2018). Access to quality information empowers citizens to make informed decisions and encourage participation in the democratic process of communities. Globally, IL has also received recognition, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Prague Declaration (2003) has reaffirmed its importance as a pre-requisite for effective participation in the information society and as part of the basic human right for developing lifelong learning.

2. Background and rationale

In various countries, the quest for knowledge has become critical for effective participation in the information society. With the increasing organization of information sources into digital forms and the emergence of a generation of people with relatively strong digital literacies, IL and the allied concept of the information society have become vital tools for empowering people with the needed skills for socio-economic development. Progressive economies are therefore capitalizing on these to set up institutions, organisations and policies that strengthen democratic processes for good governance in their countries (Hikwa, 2007; Sturges & Gastinger, 2010; Secker, 2018). In Nigeria, changes in the information landscape in terms of the volume, format, content and the complexity of its delivery mechanisms have been significant. Increasing innovations in online information tools and resources have created a greater need for IL skills to enable users make informed choices

for decision making (Owoeye & Abolarinwa, 2016). Consequently, improving IL levels beyond the educational sector has become an important factor for improved national socio-economic outcomes which are essential for informed political participation and civic engagement in the democratic process.

Democracy has experienced critical challenges in Nigeria particularly in the areas of leadership, transparency, and accountability which have hindered good governance and participatory democracy in the political system (Igali, 2014). For democracy to succeed, it is imperative that governmental institutions are strengthened to facilitate the democratic process as well as encourage participation by the citizenry. In the past few years, electoral reforms in governmental institutions have inspired improved participation by the Nigerian populace in political decisions and other policies that directly affect their lives. This was evidenced in the 2015 national elections which recorded over 50 percent participation in the electoral process as compared to previous elections; this was transformative in the nation's history (The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives, 2015). The implication of this development is that Nigerians are becoming more aware of their civic rights and responsibilities, which is an indication of the need for greater participation and inclusion in the democratic process.

The political dimension of IL requires active participation by citizens in identifying, accessing, evaluating and using political information in all levels of governance which would influence the selection of credible leaders in the country (Attama & Igwe, 2015). This study is therefore closely tied to the concept of IL as a critical tool for encouraging active participation in the democratic process in Nigeria. This conception of IL can only be actualized through effective collaboration between the government, educational institutions and other civil society organizations in developing pedagogies that promote user engagement with the cultural contexts of IL in the respective communities where information is created and interpreted for the purpose of political empowerment. In this regard, this research investigates the critical role of libraries in the Jos Metropolis, Plateau State in encouraging participation in the democratic process through critical IL. The responsibility of libraries, in a democratic process is, among other things, to provide access to information, promote good governance and encourage civic literacy levels for informed political participation. This study examines issues of critical IL with regard to policy developments in

Nigeria with the objective of assessing efforts towards democratic inclusion by libraries as vital institutions particularly in view of the general elections in 2019. Among other things, the main objective of the study is to determine how critical IL can be used as an agency for encouraging participation in the democratic process by libraries in Plateau State. Outcomes from the study thus provide evidence of the important role IL plays in governance and economic development as an important aspect for social inclusion and sustainable development in Plateau State and also help towards the development of an IL policy framework for the sustainable growth of libraries as democratic institutions in Nigeria. The following are the research questions:

3. Research questions

1. What is the general nature of IL practices in Nigeria?
2. What is the responsibility of libraries in promoting participatory democracy and good governance through critical IL in Plateau State, Nigeria?
3. How can critical IL be used as an agency for encouraging participation in the democratic process by libraries in Plateau State?
4. What policies should be put in place in order to achieve good governance through the provision of access to quality information by libraries in Plateau State, Nigeria?

4. Critical information literacy: Definition and context

Information literacy is an important component of learning which also enhances the ability of the individual for critical thinking. Critical thinking and information literacy are inter-related and also closely aligned to critical literacy (Breivik, 2005; Limberg, Sundin & Talja 2012). Kapitzke (2003) identifies critical literacy with the ability to detect flaws in logic, factuality or argumentation; it is aligned with the skill to recognise accuracy and relevance and make meaning of sources in a document. Similarly, Morrell (2004) defines critical literacy as the act of decoding texts, analysing the underlying power structures, and using the analysis to drive equitable change. It is within the context of this understanding that the concept of critical information literacy has become a very important precondition for creating informed and critically-minded citizens that can participate in issues of democracy and governance in their communities.

Tewell (2018) defines Critical Information Literacy as “a way of thinking and teaching that examines the social construction and political dimensions of libraries and information, problematizing information’s production and use so that library users may think critically about such forces” (p. 1). Critical IL is seen by some researchers as an attempt to address some of the limitations of IL as a concept that is largely focused on a set of rubrics or skills which prevent learners from being able to use what they learn creatively in new situations and does not challenge people to question what they know (Downey, 2016). According to Elmborg (2012), Critical IL involves a commitment to social justice by which people can be empowered to question dominant values and beliefs in society and in this way gain an awareness of social injustice around them (Cope 2010). Consequently, current discourse on critical IL is aimed at adopting the social and political dimensions of information by recognizing the importance of social justice to libraries particularly in the educational sector where it can help to integrate critical approaches to IL practices and research.

In practice, critical IL seeks to emphasize the role of libraries in participating in issues of governance as instruments of social change particularly through educational institutions. Through critical pedagogy, it aims to help libraries reconsider their goals and approach to library instruction specifically in relation to IL (Elmborg, 2006; Grafstein, 2017). Pedagogical processes by this means enable libraries to empower people to question meanings inherent in texts and other information sources, dominant values and beliefs in society, thereby gaining an awareness of social injustice in their communities (Cope 2010). Critical IL has been recommended by authors as a valuable aspect to include in Information Literacy Instruction (ILI) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which could contribute to enabling the development of political agency and increasing meaningful and active involvement in democratic processes (Smith, 2013). Within the context of this study, critical IL seeks to investigate the factors and variables that affect and determine the use of information resources in the democratic process in the Jos Metropolis, Plateau State. It examines the level of empowerment by libraries of citizens of the city of Jos Metropolis with practical skills and techniques in ways that enable them to understand the underlying messages of the sources of information they encounter in the democratic process which could help influence their knowledge of political issues and awareness of electoral processes for effective democratic participation in the state (Johanna, 2017).

5. Literature review

A vast amount of research in IL has been developed since its emergence. The central position articulated by some of the most important documents in IL is the concern with the individual's skills development through lifelong learning (American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report, 1989; Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, 2000; Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, 2015; The Alexandria Declaration (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2015). The two concepts of IL and lifelong learning are considered of great value in developing people's critical thinking and creative abilities that foster active participation on issues of democracy and governance. It is in this regard that studies on a critical approach towards IL as a tool for public empowerment, democratic participation and national progress is investigated by various researchers.

Libraries have long been established as institutions for promoting democracy by ensuring access and equitable distribution of information resources (Maguire, 2012). With the increasing popularity of democratic forms of governance, this role has further been emphasised by the need for them to provide quality information services for the collective benefit of their clientele. According to Hikwa (2007), the value of critical IL to good governance is the applicability of information services to national development. This is because the provision of quality information sources is the basis for good decision making by citizens as it can serve as a tool for empowering citizens with the needed competencies to implement national plans for collective development. Hence, where information is viewed as a valued commodity in a democratic process, the role of libraries in equipping citizens with critical IL skills is highly encouraged for capacity building and sustainable development in a country (Sturges & Gastinger, 2010).

Lloyd, Lipu and Kennan (2010) in their study point out that active participation in all aspects of socio-economic and political life by citizens is one of the defining principles of an inclusive society particularly in a democratic setting. They argued that the ability to build peoples capacity to participate in the governance of their communities require a collaborative approach in which libraries as information providers and other governmental institutions can provide quality access to information, technological facilities as well as training that would motivate and enable people

to develop the ability to understand how information is effectively used to avoid social exclusion and marginalization in the democratic process. Limited information access and information skills often inhibit the capacity of individuals to fully participate in democratic processes and make informed decisions. Through critical IL, people can be provided with the potential to be informed on the critical and reflective use of information resources to contribute effectively in how they are governed in their communities.

In Nigeria, studies in IL by LIS researchers have examined different aspects of the concept as used by practitioners in various fields, for example, bankers (Amusa, Bello, Omotoso & Osunrinade, 2016), farmers (Sokoya, Alabi & Fagbola, 2014), religious groups (Phillip, 2013), political groups, Taiwo (2015), lawyers (Lawal, 2013), and so on. However, Attama and Igwe's (2015) article specifically provided an in-depth analysis of the dimensions of IL, particularly critical IL, in various contexts in Nigeria and the expected responsibilities of librarians in the multi-literacy era. According to the authors, the political dimension of IL requires active participation by citizens in identifying, accessing, evaluating and using political information in all levels of governance which could influence the selection of credible leaders in the country. They argued however, that this conception of IL can only be actualized through effective collaboration between the government, educational institutions and civil society organizations in developing pedagogies that promote user engagement with the cultural contexts of IL in the respective communities where information is created and interpreted for the purpose of political empowerment.

Another area that has been explored in the critical approaches to IL in Nigeria is Media Information Literacy (MIL). Taiwo (2015) in his paper articulated some of the critical issues regarding information dissemination through media platforms in Nigeria for political campaigns. He argues that the multicultural nature of Nigeria constitutes a major factor in its socio-political context which creates the need for access to adequate and beneficial information for educating and enlightening its citizens. The role of the media in this regard therefore, is the recognition and consideration of the right of citizens to have full access to accurate information and their ability to participate in political issues that affect their lives. This would be more effective if better support is provided by governmental institutions in the implementation of sound electoral processes and reforms in Nigeria.

Critical IL skills have also been linked to issues of responsible citizenship and good governance in democratic settings. In Nigeria however, Arowolo and Aluko (2012) observed that over the years, due to prevalent cases of electoral violence, manipulation of election results and low political participation, the practice of democracy has not yielded the desired results. He argued that in order for democratic dividends to be translated into good governance, it is important such identified factors that mitigate against the successful implementation of electoral processes are addressed. Similarly according to Ayee (2007), for purposes of good governance and responsible citizenship, there is a need to empower people through knowledge creation and dissemination in order to address some of the challenges encountered in participatory democracy if sustainable development is to be achieved in African countries (Kargbo, 1999). In this regard, the unique role of libraries as information service providers make them important developmental partners in all democratic settings. By providing access to quality information platforms, libraries can empower people to engage with governmental institutions and other stakeholders for effective civic participation in issues of governance (IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2015).

In summary, participation is indispensable to democracy; the idea of participation in a democratic process rests on the notion of a community of citizens who are united by a common purpose to perform their civic duties. Such communities are aimed at people-centred development which enables them to realize their potential and build self-confidence in their governance structures. Important aspects of participatory democracy include information gathering and sharing, consultation, community planning processes, collaborative decision-making, policy formulation, etc. which require that the necessary information systems and structures, particularly libraries, be put in place at various levels to ensure socio-political and economic growth. Through the provision of quality access to information resources, libraries can help support the inculcation of critical IL skills by preparing citizens for a lifetime of civic participation in the governance of their communities (Kranich, 2000).

6. Research design and method

The adopted research design for the study is the survey method; a simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the study population which consisted library users who were available in the library during the administration of the questionnaires. The target libraries comprised the four major libraries located within the city of Jos Metropolis in Plateau State namely, Plateau State Library Board, National Library of Nigeria and the University of Jos Library. The reason for the choice of these libraries is that they are centrally located within the Jos Metropolis and more easily accessible to users within the town. Similarly, as public and academic libraries, they serve the primary purpose of promoting good reading culture and provide educational opportunities for the general citizenry (Folorunso & Folorunso, 2010). Consequently, despite their varying nature, their roles and responsibilities as libraries are designed to ensure the provision of equal access to information to users as part of their human right especially in a democratic setting. A total of three hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to the libraries as follows: University of Jos Library (consisting of the Main library and other branch libraries) - 200 hundred questionnaires were distributed and 169 returned. Plateau State Library Board – 100 questionnaires were distributed and 55 returned. National Library of Nigeria – 100 were distributed and 57 returned. Hence a total of two hundred and eighty one (281) of the questionnaires were completed and returned representing 80% response rate.

7. Data presentation and analysis

A summary of the findings from the administered questionnaires to the respondents is presented below. The format of the research instrument which contained various sections was used as a guideline for analysing the data. The data is presented in simple tables. From the data obtained, the distribution of the states of origin of the respondents showed a representation of 26 states in Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Plateau State had the highest number with 52% followed by Benue (8%), Nasarawa and Kogi States (5%). This thus reflect the multicultural and diverse composition of residents within the Jos Metropolis, Plateau State.

Information on the demographic status of the respondents revealed that 63% were males, 36% females while 1% did not indicate their gender. Seventy three percent (73%) were single and 27% stated that they were married. Their educational qualifications showed that 1% had basic primary

education, 11% secondary education, 85% had tertiary education and 3% did not respond. Statistics on this information also showed that 57% were students, 40% civil servants while 3% were involved in other kinds of employment. The age distribution of the respondents is shown in table 1 below which indicates that majority were within the age category of 20-30 (53%) followed by 18-20 (18%) and 30-40 (15%). The importance of this data to the study is that a higher category of the respondents who are younger, were eligible to vote as recognised by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2011) which places them in a very important position to make critical decisions in the democratic process in Nigeria.

Table 1: Age of respondents

<i>18-20</i>	52 (18%)
<i>20-30</i>	150 (53%)
<i>30-40</i>	41 (15%)
<i>40-50</i>	19 (7%)
<i>50 and above</i>	14 (5%)
<i>No response</i>	5 (2%)
n=281	

In the second section of the questionnaire, the researcher sought to investigate the use of information resources for Critical IL. Consequently questions in this section were aimed at understanding how access to information resources in the library have influenced critical thinking among the respondents with respect to the general elections of 2019. Table 2 below shows that 41% of the respondents visited the library daily, 28% visited several times a month, 18% once a week and 12% several times a year.

Table 2: Use of library

<i>Almost daily</i>	115 (41%)
<i>Once a week</i>	50 (18%)
<i>Several times a month</i>	78 (28%)
<i>Several times a year</i>	33 (11%)
<i>No response</i>	5 (2%)
n=281	

The relevance of the above data is linked to the data in table 3 below in which respondents were asked to indicate if in their visit to the library, they had accessed any information on the democratic processes for the 2019 general elections? In their response, 71% said yes while 23% said no; 16%

did not respond to the question. Similarly, in table 3, a cross tabulation is made to show whether frequency of library visits by the respondents influenced the level of access to resources on the election. From the data, it is shown that regular visits to the library had the highest number (33%) of those who were able to access materials on the elections, followed by those who came several times a month (20%) and once a week (12%). The data also suggests that relevant information resources on the elections were available in the selected libraries thus ensuring accessibility and awareness on the election processes.

Table 3: Respondents' library use and access to information on the elections

<i>Library visit</i>	Access		
	Yes	No	No response
<i>Almost daily</i>	92 (33%)	20 (7%)	169 (60%)
<i>Once a week</i>	33 (12%)	11 (4%)	287 (84%)
<i>Several times a month</i>	55 (20%)	22 (8%)	204 (72%)
<i>Several times a year</i>	20 (7%)	9 (3%)	252 (90%)

n=281

Respondents who indicated that they were able to access information materials on the 2019 elections were also asked to identify the nature of the format of the information sources obtained. From the results shown on table 4 below, access to print sources were higher at 41%, social media 31%, electronic resources 30% and all of the formats, 15%. This data is important in guiding the library as to the most easily or readily accessible forms of information resources required by users on the elections thus influencing their resource acquisition policies for the elections.

Table 4: Format of information resources accessed by respondents

<i>Format</i>	%	No response
<i>a. Print (such as books, newspapers and journals)</i>	114 (41%)	167 (59%)
<i>b. Electronic (such as the Internet, databases and other online sources)</i>	83 (30%)	198 (70%)
<i>c. Social Media (such as Face Book, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram)</i>	86 (31%)	195 (69%)
<i>d. All of the above</i>	41 (15%)	240 (85%)

n=281

Respondents were further asked to tick what was their opinion of the content of the information resources accessed. From the data obtained, 35% indicated that they were informative, 28% said they were educative, 8% said they were inadequate while 1% said they were of poor quality. Twenty eight (28%) did not respond to this question.

In the attempt to investigate the level of IL critical thinking on the resources accessed by the respondents, the researcher inquired if the information resources accessed challenged them to think critically about the elections. Sixty two percent (62%) said yes, 9% said no and 29% did not respond. Respondents who indicated yes to the preceding question were then asked to identify the impact of the information sources accessed on their thinking on the 2019 elections from the list of options provided in the questionnaire. According to the data on table 5 below, 41% said they decided to actively participate in the 2019 elections from the information sources they accessed. Thirty seven percent (37%) said they gained a general awareness on the elections from accessed information, 27% indicated that they decided to create more awareness in their communities while 4% said the information accessed had no impact on them at all. This data further emphasises that access to quality information sources can influence decision making of citizens especially in a democratic process.

Table 5: Impact of accessed information of election resources on respondents

	<i>Impact</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>a. General awareness on the elections</i>	104 (37%)	177 (63%)	
<i>b. A decision to actively participate in the elections in your community</i>	115 (41%)	166 (59%)	
<i>c. A decision to create more awareness in your community</i>	77 (27%)	204 (73%)	
<i>d. Indifference or dis-interest in the election</i>	12 (4%)	269 (96%)	

n=281

For the respondents that indicated that they did not access any relevant information resource on the 2019 elections, the researcher further asked them to rate the general quality of available resources on the elections in the libraries they visited. Data in table 6 below shows that 33% indicated that the resources were of average quality, 22% said they were poor, 22% said they were good, while 5% indicated they were excellent.

Table 6: Rating of library election information resources by respondents

<i>Rating</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Poor</i>	72 (26%)
<i>Average</i>	92 (33%)
<i>Good</i>	63 (22%)
<i>Excellent</i>	13 (4%)
<i>No response</i>	41 (15%)

n=281

Based on the above responses, participants were also asked to indicate their opinions on what they think the library should do to create greater awareness on the democratic process in the general 2019 elections. In table 7 below, 65% suggested that libraries should provide more access to quality information to users. Fifty one (51%) identified collaboration between libraries and stakeholders as an important step in strengthening awareness efforts, 46% said training of users on how to think critically about accessed information resources on electoral processes is vital, while 17% of the respondents indicated that all the outlined options were important.

Table 7: Respondents views on the role of the library on the election

<i>Role of library</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>a. Provide more access to quality information sources on the elections to empower users</i>	183 (65%)	98 (35%)
<i>b. Collaborate with other stakeholders in creating more awareness to users on the elections</i>	144 (51%)	137 (49%)
<i>c. Provide training to users on how to think critically about information resources so as to make informed decisions during the elections</i>	130 (46%)	151 (54%)
<i>d. All of the above</i>	47 (17%)	234 (83%)

n=281

In the final stage of the questionnaire, the researcher sought to investigate the level of awareness and participation of the respondents during the 2019 elections. To this end, a five-point Likert scale question was asked in order to help indicate how strongly the respondents agree or disagree with a series of the statements presented. From the findings, data as indicated in table 8 below indicate that 38% rated their level of awareness as good, 26% average, 16% very good and 10%

poor. As to the level of participation, 27% indicated that they were average, 25% good, 24% very good and 10% said they were excellent. The suggestion from this data is that there was a higher level of awareness (38%) through the availability of library resources on the elections as compared to the level of participation (27%) by the respondents. It is also noteworthy that only 10% rated themselves as being excellent in their participation in the 2019 elections. Consequently, since the levels of awareness and participation are both below 50%, it is important that efforts towards creating awareness by libraries are greatly strengthened towards future elections particularly in the area of providing access to quality information resources as it also has a bearing on the level of participation by clientele in elections.

Table 8: Respondents level of awareness and participation on the elections

<i>Awareness</i>	%	Participation	%
<i>Poor</i>	27 (10%)	Poor	26 (9%)
<i>Average</i>	72 (26%)	Average	75 (27%)
<i>Good</i>	108 (38%)	Good	69 (25%)
<i>Very good</i>	46 (16%)	Very good	68 (24%)
<i>Excellent</i>	9 (3%)	Excellent	27 (10%)
<i>No response</i>	19 (7%)	No response	16 (5%)

n=281

8. Discussion of findings

The discussion of findings in relation to the outlined research questions are presented below.

1. What is the general nature of IL practices in Nigeria?

From a review of the literature, IL practices in Nigeria have been reflected in various dimensions particularly the educational sector. With the growth of democracy, it has become very important that principles of critical IL are incorporated into the governance structures in Nigeria through libraries in order to empower people towards more active participation in the electoral process.

2. What is the responsibility of libraries in promoting participatory democracy and good governance through critical IL in Plateau State, Nigeria?

From the findings, access to quality information is the most important requirement for individuals to participate in the democratic system. This is because it can increase their knowledge towards making informed decisions that influence policy and credible outcomes in the electoral process. Consequently, libraries as powerful instruments of social and political change can help create more awareness through the provision of relevant information on the election to help citizens develop confidence in the elections. With more professional training for staff, libraries can develop innovative ways of providing civic education to voters on how to avoid casting invalid votes, electoral violence as well as the dangers of not participating in the elections at all in order not to be disenfranchised. Similarly, it is noted that most libraries in Plateau State are located mainly within the Jos Metropolis, hence collaboration with other agencies of government such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Civil Liberties Organisations (CLOs), Local Government Areas (LGA) and so on, is vital in order to reach rural dwellers in the State.

3. How can critical IL be used as an agency for encouraging participation in the democratic process by libraries in Plateau State?

Critical IL involves the ability to employ information to one's advantage especially within a democratic context. It is seen from the findings of the study that practically libraries, particularly academic libraries, can serve as instruments of social change through their institutions. Through the adoption of pedagogical processes in Critical IL, instructional programmes can be integrated into the academic curricula that would ensure that students are taught the main principles of democracy which could contribute to enabling the development of political agency and increase meaningful and active involvement in democratic processes specifically among youths in Plateau State.

4. What policies should be put in place in order to achieve good governance through the provision of access to quality information by libraries in Plateau State, Nigeria?

The current context of the information society demands that access to quality information sources constitute a key factor for sustainable governance and economic development. In this regard, it is imperative that adequate policies are put in place by the Plateau State Government that ensures that contemporary political information are well documented and made available in all libraries

within the state. This would help to further establish the value of libraries to politicians, the media and other stakeholders who can influence public opinion in the democratic process. Similarly, the government should also ensure that effective policies are established that guarantee that democratic processes are strictly followed to reduce political apathy among the electorate during elections. In that way, efforts by libraries to encourage civic participation by clientele would be more effective and appreciated by the general citizenry.

9. Conclusion and recommendation

This study has been able to emphasise the value of critical IL as an important factor in the exercise of democracy and for achieving socio-economic development by libraries in the Jos metropolis, Plateau State. However, central to the goal of developing people's critical and creative ability to participate in issues of democracy and governance by libraries, is also the responsibility of the Plateau state government to create policies and strategies in collaboration with other stakeholders in order to encourage political participation by citizens. Similarly, this research has also highlighted the role librarians can play in advocating for the importance of IL as an important policy agenda for providing access to quality information sources for informed decision making in the electoral process in Nigeria in general.

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