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PROVISION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS AT OYO STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA.

Festus onifade
festusonifade82@gmail.com

Bilikis Funke Babarinde
University of Ibadan, Nigeria, babarindefunke3@gmail.com

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BY

Bilikis Adefunke Babarinde.
E-mail: babarindefunke3@gmail.com.
Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies,
University of Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria
          and

Festus Onifade
Senior Librarian (SL)
J.C Pool Library,
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary,
Ogbomoso, Oyo State. Nigeria.
Onifadefestus19@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper examined provision of library resources and services to visually impaired students at Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomoso, Nigeria, the study preempt at the type of visual impaired students to be partially sighted, low vision, legal blind and totally blind, provision of information resources and services are important ranging from braille books, large print books, audio tape, tactile sign, language book, braille machine, adaptive technology, CCTV, magnifying glass/sheet and audio magazines among others should be provided for these target groups, the descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, using questionnaire as instrument for data collection, sample of 50 visual impaired students was used ,the findings of the study revealed that, information need on health, job security, education scholarship, sport and recreation etc are not provided at all. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, the visually impaired students need special attention, care and all information resources should be adequately provided, make available for use with ease and established good relationship among the library staff and students with disabilities and government should pay good attention to these categories of students.

Introduction

Resources and services are activities provided by libraries to address information needs of users which include circulation services, reference services, online information services, interlibrary loan, information literacy skills and training services, library is a curated collection of sources of information and similar resources selected by experts and made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to materials and it may be a physical location or a virtual space.

Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/libaray retrieved on June 19, 2019

The library plays a key role in the provision of good information resources in appropriate format and services knowing full well that they are rendering services to visually impaired persons who have different kinds of information needs. Chioma, E and Japheth, A. (2016) stressed that the provision of library resources and information services to visually impaired young people in any country especially pupils in the elementary and colleges is very essential to every educational society. According to Ayiah M.E (2007) said the provision of library and information services to students with visually impaired in most developed countries is considered social services and it depends on the nature of their disability. However, Machell (1996) believes that "the ideal library service is one where each individual regardless of the degree of visual impairment" they have access to the information materials at the time required in format they can be easily used, in the quantities and qualities that are needed and where the needs of the users are understood by the library staff, for library to be effectively and efficiently functions for these categories of students with visually impaired the appropriate provision of needed materials should be available

and accessible. American Library Association (2001) itemized different Library Service required by the visually impaired people such as extended loan periods, the waiving of late return fines, extended reserve periods, volunteer's readers in the library, volunteers' technology assistant in the library and radio reading services. All these services mentioned needed to be provided for students with visually impaired. But today especially in school libraries, visually impaired persons/students wondering around without good library resources and information services, the condition of school libraries in Nigeria is worrisome, let alone of school for the blind, therefore this paper borne out of sympathy for this particular target groups and what libraries and librarians can do to improve and provide library resources and services for visually impaired students at Oyo State school for the blind in Ogbomoso, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

The term visual impairment refers to anyone who has difficulty in reading an ordinary front size on paper or screen (Kinnell, & Creaser 2000). The National Health Service in England (2006) renewed its definition of visual impairment as follows "there is been a change in the terminology of the registers, blind and partially sights should now be expressed as severely sight impaired (blind) and sight impaired, Partially sighted. This change was lobbied for by service users/patients as it more accurately describes their situation as people who may be technically blind or partially sighted could have a useful residual vision (NHS 2006).

Visual impairment has become a global change, especially for developing countries (WHO) in 2010, The World Health Organization estimated that 285million people were living with visual impairment worldwide, and 90% lived in low and middle – income countries.

However, visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that even with correction; it, therefore, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness. The impairment refers to an abnormality in the eyes the optic nerve or the visual center for the brain resulting in decreased visual acuity.

Students with visual impairments are identified as those with a corrected visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eyes of field restriction of fewer than 20 degrees at its widest point.

TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

The terms partially sighted, low vision, legally blind, and blind are used in the educational context to described students with visual impairment. These defined as follows.

➢ Partially sighted indicates some type of visual problem has resulted in a need special education.

➢ Low vision generally refers to a severe visual impairment necessarily limited to distance vision; low vision applies to all individuals' sight that is unable to read the newspaper at a normal viewing distance.

➢ Legally blind indicated that a person has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye or a very limited field of vision.

➢ Blind students learn through braille or other non-visual media.

Visual impairment is a challenge that limits an individual's ability to access information and library services that is available only in conventional print form and it is a common disability in all countries of the world. Whatever is the degree of impairment, students who are visually impaired should be expected to participate fully in classroom activities, although they may confront limitations, with proper planning and adaptive types of equipment their participation can be maximized. Chioma & Japheth (2016) Cited Igiamoh and Ogunwemim (2013) submit that

the society discriminates against the visually impaired persons because of their status issues on attitude, culture belief and neglect from the society are all forms of discrimination, humiliation, and segregations against visually impaired persons. The visual impaired person should fight for their right to make themselves relevant, both in terms of means of livelihood and education so that they will have the equal provision of library services without restriction and stress

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

The major library role is to support lifelong learning and underpin the move towards increased social inclusion and economic participation; libraries should be the resources that are easily accessible and universally available, offering a nonjudgmental environment for people from all backgrounds. Davis (2009) cited by Majinge, R & Stillwell,C (2013) with regards to this statement. Kharamin and Siamian (2011) stressed that libraries have to play a vital role in building an inclusive society serving all kinds of users including people with visual impairments. However, a person with visual impairments needs information resources which are in Braille and large print. To support this assertion, Gunde (1991) emphasized that the library must provide an appropriate selection of books in formats that are useable by the student with visual impairment, Such as large print, audiobooks, talking books, and Braille materials. Similarly, Adetoro (2011) in American foundation for the Blind (2013) claims that information materials become useful to students with visual impairments when they are transcribed into alternative formats. Atkinson, M and Dhiensa, J (2007) itemized the main alternative to standard print used by students with visual impairments: Braille is a form of tactile communication used majority by students who are blind or have very low vision. Braille is based on a twelve – dot-cell two-dots wide by six dots high. A combination of dots stands for letters or sounds. Large printed materials is another alternative used by partially – sighted users.

In providing library resources and services to students with visual Impairments Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a significant role to locate and access information, to scan, translate and print materials in appropriate formats through various devices (Chioma and Japheth 2016). Information and Communication Technology applications in Libraries have continued to ease and promote quick and timely access to library and information services, especially for the visually impaired students. Bell and Peter (2005) added that in the 21st Century, talking book libraries and mainstream libraries are convening together to use technological innovation to deliver cutting edge service. Programs and a wide variety of electronic books to ensure students with visual impairment have the same access to library materials and services as their sighted colleagues have.

The researcher emphasize that, the library resources and services to the visually impaired students are generally not the same as that of the sighted students, however, visually impaired students cannot use conventional printed materials, they must depend on large type audio (Spoken words) textile services such as Braille and mechanical and optical aids, library resources for visually impaired students should therefore include the following:

Large print books for students

Talking books audio magazine and newspapers

Computer files or text

Braille and other tactile materials

Audio – descriptive videos

It was observed that these above-mentioned library resources are not available at Oyo State School for the Blind, Ogbomoso Nigeria for students with visual impaired.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRED

Information communication technology (ICT) plays a great indispensable role in assisting people with visual impairment to gain access to the information resources available in the library. Atkinson and Dhiensa (2007) stated that the student who cannot use traditional print can use many of the electronic resources now available and I.C.T has been developed to facilities access to print materials.

Tilley, Bruce and Hallam (2007) buttressed that " by using appropriate assistive technology, which refers to any product, device, equipment, services strategies and practices that are applied to maintain, increase or improve the functioning of capabilities of individuals with disability, libraries can improve information access and quality of life for large numbers of their patrons.

Majinge and Stilwell (2016) Cited Babalola and Haliso (2011) advice that the libraries should take the advantages of advances in ICT to increase information access for people with visual impairments, coupled with that, a broad range of assistive technologies such as Closed Circuit Television CCTV, Braille embossers screen magnification and (JAWS) are available to provide access to information in electronic databases and on the internet, thereby giving users with visual impairments equal opportunities to those of the sighted ones.

Visually impaired students cannot use regular size print materials for reading and are unable to perform that task or activities of reading standard printed materials for information gathering, implying that visually impaired students do not exercise vision capacity, to do this Library should provide the following information needs for visually impaired students:

- Information on managing their visual impairment

- Health information

- Currents affairs and politics

- Information on educational opportunities

- Information need on job vacancies

- Information on career choices and vocation

- Travel information

- Information on security

- Information on library use/services

- Information on ICT

- Information on sport/recreational.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher had personally observed that students of Oyo state school for the blind Ogbomoso had no adequate and funded library and information resources and services, therefore provision of library resources and services becomes a mirage in the school library, then if visually impaired students will have access to provision of library and information resources and services, there must be adequate and appropriate library resources and services. According to Ogba (1993) emphasized that, providing a wide range of information resources and services both books and non-books resources that serve the various categories of physically challenged which include visually impaired students example of such resources are: Braille books, large print books audiotapes, moon type books, twin-vision books, tactile, sign language book, Braille Machine adaptive technology assistive devices for mobility, etc. Therefore, the study aimed to uncover the provision of library resources and services to visually impaired students at Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomoso.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study generally intends to examine the provision of library resources and services to visually impaired students at Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomoso. While the specific objectives of this paper are to:

1. Identify the types of visual impairments among students of Oyo state School for the Blind, Ogbomoso

2. Examine the library resources available for visually impaired students of Oyo state School for Blind Ogbomoso

3. Investigate information needs provided for visually impaired students of Oyo state School for the Blind, Ogbomoso

4. Examine challenges faced by visually impaired students of Oyo state school for the Blind, Ogbomoso in using library resources and services

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this paper:

1. What are the types of visual impairments among students of Oyo state School for the Blind, Ogbomoso

2. What are the library resources available for visually impaired students at Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomoso?

3. What is the information that needs to be provided for visually impaired students at Oyo state School for the Blind, Ogbomoso?

4. What are the challenges faced by visually impaired students in using library resources and services at Oyo state school for the Blind, Ogbomoso?

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out among virtually impaired students, using descriptive survey research design adopted and questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The Population of the study is made up of 89 eighty-nine students who are visually impaired; the scope of the study is Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomoso. The sample of the study was 50 (fifty) students. Self-structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher which was used as a data collection instrument; the questionnaire was divided into five sections A to E, the instrument was subjected to both face validation by the principal and the head teachers of the school and the experts on disability. The researcher administered the questionnaire through the assistance of the teachers in the school. The questionnaire administered was returned for data analysis using frequency and standard derivation. The responses were tabulated, analyzed and (SPSS) statistical packages for social sciences were employed based on frequency and percentage.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Fifty (50) questionnaires were administered to the student that was elected for this study and the whole fifty (50) were duly returned with useful responses for analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	26	52
	Male	24	48
Age (years)	18 – 25	16	32
	25 – 30	18	36
	31 and above	16	32

Total		**50**	**100**

The above table shows the demographical information of students; the results indicated that (52%) were female, while (48%) were male. The age range of respondents from the table shows that (32%) fell within 18-25years, (36%) fell within 25-30years and (32%) fell within 31years above.

Table 2: Type of Visual Impairment among Students

Visual impairment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Partially sighted	2	4
Totally blind	48	96
Total	**50**	**100**

The above table shows the frequency of type of visual impairment among students of Oyo state school for the blind, Ogbomos. The results indicate that (4%) of respondents were partially sighted while (96%) were totally blind.

Table 3: Library Resources Available For Visually Impaired Students

The chart above revealed that the frequency of availability and not availability of library resources for the blind it indicate that (32%) of respondents said large print books are available (68%) not available (92%) braille books is available, (8%)not available, playback machine/ talking books(100) not available, tape recorder(28%) available,(72%) not available, screen reader and audio descriptive videos(100) not available. Assistive technology (8%) available,(92%) not available, CCTV(closed circuit television) (96%) not available, magnifying glass, sheet, audio magazines and newspapers(100) not available.

The interpretation above signifies that library resources are not well provided for the virtually impaired students a at the Oyo state school for the blind. Such resources as large prints books, play back machines, talking books, tape recorder, screen reader, audio- descriptive videos are not available in the school library.

This negate the view of Wright (1979) posits that all library and information services available to other persons should also be made available to the physically challenges individual in a manner which does not stress the individual. Similarly Maina (2009) submitted that library

services for the blind must enable them to have access to equipment's such as Braille printers, Braille embosser and tape duplicators etc .Guyer and Uzeta (2009) agreed that libraries should have provision of adaptive assistive technologies for person with disabilities. Ogba (1993) also supported providing a wide range of information resources and services both book and non-book resources that serves the various categories of people with disabilities such as braille book, large print books, audio tape, tactile sign language book, braille machine adaptive technology, assistive devices for mobility e.t.c.

Table 4: Information Needs Provided For Visually Impaired Students
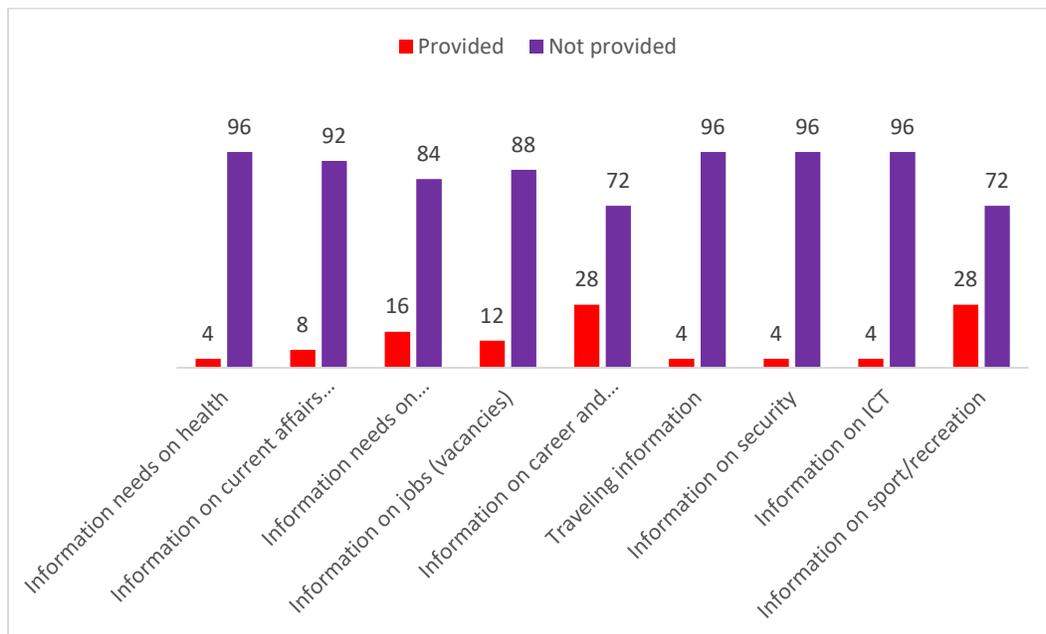

The chart above explained information needs of visually impaired students, information need on health (96%) not provided, information needs on current affairs and politics (92%) not provided, information need on educational opportunities (84) not provided, information on job vacancies

(88%) not provided, information on career and vocation (72%) not provided information on travelling and on security (96%) respectively not provided.

The results of findings in table four above clearly and glaring that information for visual impaired are not provide at all. This is actually contradicts the assertion of Adesina (2003) posits that, information for educational development, information for social and personal development and information needs for recreational are of paramount importance for disability should be provided and available for use. Onifade and Sowole (2009) noted that, for libraries to add to the advancement of knowledge they must not only provided information resources but also ensure that the information resources are effectively used especially by people with disabilities.

Table 5: Challenges Faced By Visually Impaired Students in Using Library Resources And Services
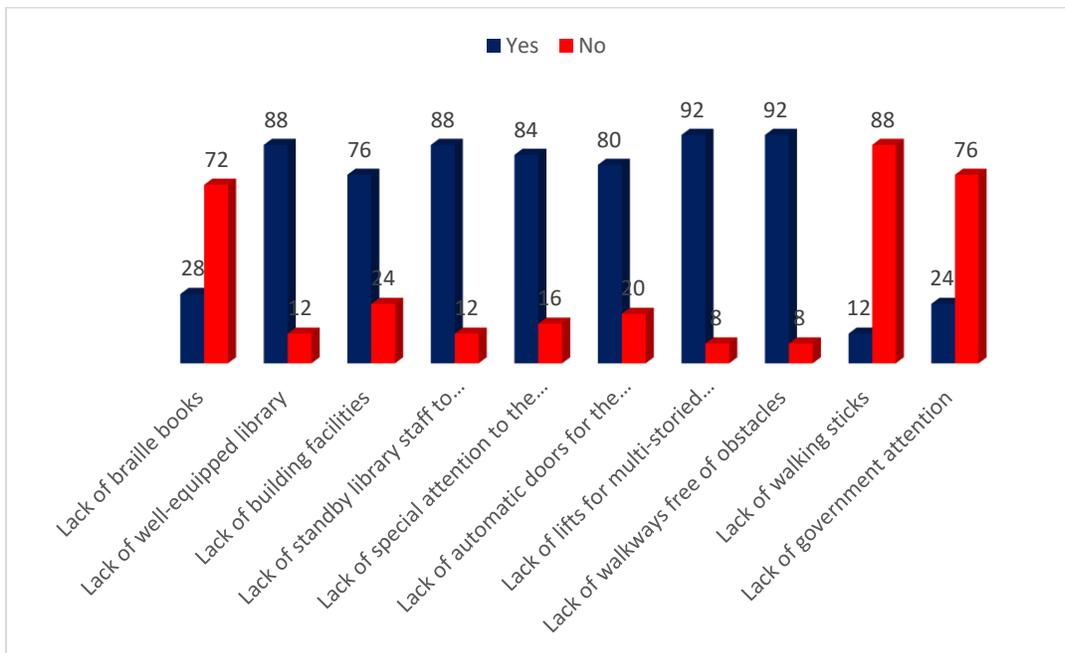
The above chart revealed the challenges faced by visually impaired students in using library resources and services the results indicate that (72%) respondents said no they do not lack braille

books (88%) yes they lack well-equipped library,(76%) yes lack of building facilities,(88%) yes lack of standby library staff to assist, (84%) lack of special attention to the blind, (80%) yes lack of automatic doors for the visually impaired, (92%) yes lack of lifts for muilti-stories building and lack of walkway free of obstacles. (88%) and (76%) no they did not lack walking sticks and government attention respectively.

The issue of challenges faced by students with disabilities is on high rate, from isolation, humiliation and segregation in using the library resources and services. This problem can also be attributed to libraries failure to procure adequate and relevant materials, not only for people with disabilities, but also in other format .A study conducted by chaputula (2011) showed that many libraries in Malawi especially in academic sector, experience challenges of growing their collections because of financial resources constraints .lack of knowledge library staff pertaining to disability also seem to be a big issue. This is possibly a reason people with disabilities face so many challenges while using libraries. According to Oppenheim (2003) recommended specialized training for library which it is hoped would result in library staff being a position to offer users-friendly services to people with disabilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Harris and Oppenheim (2003) advised that walkways should be clearly defined and free of obstacles; signs in the building should be clear and well lit; and service points should have low desks and hearing loops for hearing-impaired users. Furthermore, the doors to the library should be wide enough to ensure that clients using wheelchairs and walkers are able to access the library. More recently, electric doors are being recommended to achieve this objective. It is also suggested that electronic lifts be provided for high-rise buildings to ensure that people with disabilities can easily access the upper floors of the library. By and large, there should be

provision for all levels of blind students either partially nor totally blinded, these target groups of students faced with a lot of challenges in accessing the library resources and services such as lack of braille books, building facilities, lack of standby library staff to assist, lack of special attention to virtual impaired and lack of government attention among others, all these listed challenges must be met because ***what's good for the goose is good for the gander.***

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that students with disabilities need special attention when they visited the school library, the staff that are compassionate and have large heart in term of sympathy should always be deployed to the school library to care for disabilities students, In addition good relationship should be established between library staff and students with special needs, there should be time to time government attention in term of providing information needs such as on health, politics, job, recreational and sport, education scholarship etc and resources such as braille book, large print books, audio tape, tactile sign language book, braille machine adaptive technology should be adequately provided for disabilities students.

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