

Full Length Research

Funding issues and implications for library services in the ministries, department and agencies (MDAS)

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This study focuses on funding issues and implication for library services in government establishment. Public libraries serve as vital social institutions that reflect the political and social realities of their communities. Functioning as "people's universities," they provide free and equitable access to knowledge, education, research, and cultural enrichment. Public libraries cater to a diverse range of users, including students, researchers, government officials, job seekers, and individuals with special needs, thereby playing a crucial role in lifelong learning and informed decision-making. However, despite their significance, public libraries face persistent funding challenges. Library funding, essential for sustaining operations, services, and resource acquisition, primarily depends on state government subventions, which remain inadequate. The lack of financial support is largely influenced by political continuity and governmental attitudes, leading to underfunded libraries that struggle to meet the growing demands of their communities. It is recommended that funding should be consistent in the annual budget; libraries can also explore alternative funding sources to augment government subvention and; library management should organise awareness campaign with a view to changing government and stakeholders' dull attitude about services.

Keywords: funding issues, library services, Public libraries, financial support

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INTRODUCTION

The public library is a social institution that is tied to the political and social realities of the communities where it is situated. As the name implies, it is a library that serves the public. The public library managed and run by a state government or a board set up by the state government and is regarded as people's university. It stocks every conceivable material that would add to the knowledge, education, research, information, and cultural needs of the society (Svendsen, 2013).

The public library was created to offer resources that share knowledge and thoughts between individuals and

are made promptly and freely accessible to everyone. The public library provides a variety of resources and services that provide access to knowledge, information, and creative works. Regardless of ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, work position, or level of education, it is equally accessible to all community members.

People use public libraries, resources, facilities, and services in all spheres of life. Public libraries are used by students, instructors, researchers, scientists, job seekers, senior citizens, tourists and visitors, business leaders, individual with special needs, government representatives, and even dropouts. Therefore, libraries

within ministries, departments, and agencies are vital resources that underpin informed decision-making, drive policy development, improve administrative efficiency, and foster lifelong learning. Their diverse functions are crucial to the seamless operation of these institutions.

Svendsen (2013) describes public libraries as meeting places that provide some individual and collective benefits to local communities free of charge. The author further mentioned some of the advantages which a public library provides to include self-education and development, information, social interaction and networking, cultural enrichment, and educational support towards the attainment of the goals of the public library. Making funds available for the library's daily operations is referred to as library funding. Making money or funding available to public libraries is the focus of financing in this context. The most important component of any business is funding, which is also its working capital.

The process of supplying or making accessible financial resources for the library's development and equipment is known as library funding. These monies are necessary to support library services, materials, and human resource development. In actuality, funds have the power to revitalize, maintain, and sustain university libraries, ensuring their longevity. However, the library's budget is negotiated with its parent institution, and it is always a component of a larger university. Therefore, the parent organisation bears full accountability for its finances as the proprietor. Funds from the parent universities' budgets support academic libraries. Usually, these funds only pay for current expenses. However, the Ministry of Education, among other government departments, non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, and private citizens, occasionally provide help to libraries.

Funding for public libraries typically refers to the different ways we generate the anticipated fund for both capital and ongoing expenses. It has to do with the funds that are available or allotted to the library in order to perform its daily operations. Nonetheless, public libraries have not received adequate financing or financial allocations in decades. To operate its services, pay and hire staff, provide up-to-date information items, and manage, organize, and monitor both human and material resources, public libraries require sufficient funding. Nigeria does not appreciate the importance and needs of public libraries and the services it provided, and this problem reflects in the level of funds allocated to it by the government, state government subventions which constitute about 80% of public library funds are grossly inadequate. This inadequacy is based on political continuity and government attitude Odebiyi, (2009).

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify source of funding for the libraries in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
2. determine the adequacy of the fund provided for the libraries in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies and
3. determine the implication of funding for the libraries in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

Statement of the problem

Many libraries' budgetary allotments have not been made available on time. Furthermore, this postponed the achievement of the library's goals. The federal, state, and local governments do not adequately fund public libraries, which hinders their ability to carry out their programmes. Additionally, there is a lack of government commitment to libraries.

Literature review

The users of public libraries are heterogeneous, owing to the uniqueness of this type of libraries, serving all categories of people in the community, Unagha (2010), Onoyeyan and Akanwa (2014) point out that public libraries provide unrestricted access to an array of library resources and services free of charge. They add that these libraries have a broader mandate than other types of the library – i.e., to develop their collections to reflect their users' diverse needs. Public libraries in the country are, no doubt battling to remain relevant and facing multiple challenges. News Agency of Nigeria (NAN, 2017). The survey across the six geo-political zones had revealed that public library services are going through hard times.

Oyeronke (2014) affirms that financial constraints constituted the major challenge facing the library in the country. He attributed the state's inability to restock the library regularly to the state of the economy, which has just come out of recession and the lackadaisical attitude of the government on the early release of funds to the library.

Arkorful (2010) asserts that libraries in Africa have difficulties in satisfying the information needs of their users because the amount of information is so vast that using the traditional method of retrieving information leaves much to be desired. She noted that at the same time, inadequate funding affects the number of materials the libraries can acquire. The library buildings were no longer able to accommodate the growing population of library users. Lack of capital funding had affected the expansion of the library space to accommodate the increasing population of clients. The computerization of libraries was under threat because of the lack of financial resources from the government to maintain the available equipment.

Ebiwolate (2009) observes that low financial support

was a significant factor hindering public library development in Nigeria. He explained further that the primary reasons for this inadequate library funding were the poor state of the economy and low priority given to libraries by the government. As a result, staff and material inputs had significantly been affected due to reduced library funding. Lack of funds also resulted in small collections, cancellation of periodical subscription space problems, cuts in library opening hours, reductions in staff, challenges in the conservation of material, and, more importantly, inadequate services.

Sewell (2010) explains that the public library budget was undergoing stress for a variety of reasons, which include inflation, cutbacks, and new fields of study, and new formats, especially electronic resources. Writing on the depreciation of the national economy, Badu (2010) affirms that the Ghana currency was depreciating daily. According to him, the librarians have to order from overseas the exchange rate changes by the time they put their orders through. This affects orders and payment of British interlibrary loans. The situation is not anything different in Nigeria, where the currency continues to depreciate when compared with other currencies.

Functions of Public Library

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995) states that "the public library shall in principle be free of charge and services should be provided based on equality of access for all regardless of age, race, gender religion, nationality, language or social status". To provide equality of access to users, specific services and materials must be provided for those users who for whatever reason cannot use the regular services and materials e.g. linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, in hospital or prison (Nwofor *et al*, 2015).

Providing facilities, resources, and services in a range of media to satisfy the informational and developmental needs of individuals and groups is the public library's main goal. It is the duty of public libraries to provide timely, accurate, relevant, and trustworthy information available to their patrons in all subjects by means of resources that facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among individuals, making them easily and freely accessible to everyone. In general, academics emphasized the following as public libraries' purposes:

- a) Provision of comfortable places physical and virtual spaces (Onwuka, 2016);
- b) Provision of access to all kinds of information to ensure intellectual freedom; cultural and personal development (LRCN, 2015);
- c) Preservation and development of cultural and antiquarian heritage of the community which contributes to socio-economic development and improvement of the general quality of life of people (Laspinas, 2014);

d) Provision of services, resources and facilities to reflect positive outcomes on the rapidly escalating changes of the intellectual outlook and whole personality of the end-users free of charge or at nominal rates without discrimination;

e) Special responsibility of meeting the needs of children and young people to encourage and strengthen the formation of reading habit through the provision of excellent fiction and general-interest material;

f) Making fundamental contribution to daily survival and social development by providing information to people in rural communities such as basic life skills, adult basic education and awareness programme;

g) Provision of facilities for leisure which engenders communal life;

h) Provision of free access to a myriad of information sources which makes for a liberal and knowledgeable mind required for democracy (Nwofor *et al*, 2015).

Sources of Funding Public Libraries in Nigeria

According to Ebiwolate (2010), public libraries in Nigeria are primarily funded by the State government, which typically does so through taxpayer funds and a special fund. Since public libraries are government agencies, they are responsible for budgeting and administration. Other funding sources for public libraries include:

i. Gift and Private Contribution: This includes monetary and book donations from international organisations, philanthropists, and corporate entities.

ii. Endowment: A form of benefaction that differs slightly from a gift. It is assistance provided to specific initiatives when certain libraries gain notoriety as a result of the services they provide.

iii. International Aid: This type of assistance is provided by international organizations and agencies, such as the World Bank, British Council, and UNESCO.

iii. Miscellaneous: These are internally produced incomes derived from patron and library activities. Sales of books, stationery, bindery services, registration fees for customers, late return fines for borrowed library materials, photocopying, and literature searches may all contribute to the organisation's income.

Public Library Resources

Public library has a wide range of resources that meet the needs of its users. These resources are both human and material.

Human Resources

The employees of public libraries constitute the human resources, fulfilling various roles such as director, deputy director, librarian, assistant librarian, library officer, and

non-professional support workers. These employees play a vital role in assisting users and ensuring their information needs are met. According to Federico and Diana (2016), human resources are defined as the subset of individuals working in a public or private organisation, performing diverse tasks and responsibilities based on their skills and talents. These individuals also manage other non-human, physical, and material resources within the organisation.

In public libraries, human resources are considered the most important asset, as all other resources depend on the staff to function effectively. Their primary purpose is to support and promote activities that address user needs. Human Resources (HR) in a public library refers to the department or function that manages staff and ensures smooth library operations. This includes recruiting and hiring personnel, providing training to improve community services, managing schedules and payroll, overseeing employee benefits, and fostering a positive workplace culture. Additionally, HR develops policies that promote respect and inclusivity for staff and patrons, helping the library achieve its goal of offering equitable access to knowledge and resources for the community.

Material Resources

Material resources in public libraries encompass a wide range of physical and digital items that support the library's mission of providing access to knowledge information, and cultural enrichment. These resources cater to the diverse needs of the library users, ensuring inclusivity and relevance. Textbooks, reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, gazette, journals, magazines, newspapers, computers, DVDs, videos, CDs, pictures, government documents, pamphlets, a few documentaries on related topics, drawings, charts, models, lectures in the vernacular, posters, accessible materials, audiovisuals, cassette tapes of government programmes, accomplishments, and issues, and more are all included in the material resources of public libraries.

According to Onwuazo (2003), public library resources include a variety of all published and unpublished information materials in various forms, readable with naked eyes or an aid for the clientele. He notes that these information resources include journals, online databases and software programmes to ensure a good learning environment for users to achieve educational goals.

Public Library Services

Various services are offered in public libraries. Ibe (2014) defined public library services as those jobs performed by public libraries for the benefit of the general public whom

they are meant to serve. IFLA (2011) emphasized that public library services include the loaning of books and other media, provision of books and other materials for use in the library, information service including print and electronic media, readers' advisory services including reservation services. Public library services include:

I. Educational Services: Public libraries provide varieties of resources and services to support education at all levels. IFLA/ UNESCO (2001) pointed out that access to information is the basic human right. Today, there is so much information available than ever before in the world's history. Public libraries acquire, process, organize and disseminate information free to all citizenry.

II. Information Awareness Services:

Public libraries provide information awareness services by spreading authentic information on current issues such as Covid-19 and other health matters. They also provide information on politics and governance. As a public service which is open to everybody, the public library has a key role of collecting, organising and disseminating information, as well as providing access to a wide range of information sources. The public library has a particular responsibility to collect local information and make it readily available.

III. Children Library Services: Public libraries expose children to information resources as early as possible. They provide picture books, storybooks, cartoons, games, poems, children's magazine, textbooks, fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults. The idea of children's library services being taken care of by the public library is an age long phenomenon. These services are presented in colorful mode to educate the children and help them imbibe reading habit. Other services provided by public libraries include reference services, storytelling hours, information literacy services, discussion groups/talk shows, circulation/ lending services, reading promotion campaign/ competition, mobile library services, library book/week, cultural services, recreational services, public library- community centre /public enlightenment centre, exhibitions, extension services.

Implications of funding issues for library services

The majority of public libraries do not currently have enough infrastructure. They use outdated reference materials. There are no dedicated spaces for the music library or audiovisual resources, nor are there any spaces for serious readers, particularly those conducting study. One of the issues is the government's policy makers' lack of appreciation. This shows that the public libraries in the nation Nigeria are not given due recognition and this is traceable not only to the non-quantifiable nature of library services but also the misconception given to libraries by

government to get off these problems. There must be a re-orientation on the part of the policy makers in government to accord the public libraries in the country the recognition they truly deserve.

The impediment to effective and efficient service delivery is attributed to a deficiency in political will, as noted by Ebiwolate (2010). He observed that this lack of political commitment results in governmental negligence regarding the proper funding of public libraries, budget non-approval, and the failure to release or implement approved budgets. Insufficient funding has culminated in substandard service conditions, a scarcity of professional staff, inadequate human resource management, severely deteriorated structures and facilities, outdated resources, challenges in extending services to rural areas, and insufficient ICT facilities, among other issues. Aina (2004) posits that the services of public libraries in Nigeria are grossly inadequate with outdated collections coupled with lack of sufficient professional librarians. The community's awareness and comprehension of the public library concept is low, bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate money, a lack of enthusiasm to launch new services, and low patronage of the current public libraries. Less pertinent resources are also obtained. Sadly, some public libraries are unable to maintain the Internet access they have established. As a result of insufficient funding for upkeep and feeding, they are no longer operational.

Challenges to the Provision of Public Library Services in Nigeria

Some challenges are facing public libraries in their effort to provide services to their users. Ebiwolate (2010) in agreement revealed that numerous problems are bedeviling public libraries in Nigeria in their bid to provide effective services to the users. Some of the challenges include inadequate funding, inadequate and outdated stock, bad location, lack of adequate and qualified staff, lack of staff motivation and insecurity of library materials.

a) Inadequate funding: Inadequate funding is a serious challenge affecting the activities of public libraries in Nigeria. The government does not fund the public library adequately and this has caused a lot of problems. It hinders effective and efficient service delivery. This problem, according to Ebiwolate (2010) can be likened to lack of political will. He observed that lack of political leads to negligence on the part of government to fund public library properly; non-approval of budget; and non-release or non-implementation of budget (where approved). Inadequate funding has led to poor condition of services, shortage of professional staff; poor human resource management; extreme dilapidated structures and facilities; obsolete resources; difficulty in extending services to the rural areas, inadequate ICT facilities and others.

b) Insufficient ICT Infrastructure & Staff with ICT Skills: Majority of the public library staff lack ICT skills. Studies have consistently reported inadequate levels of ICT literacy as one of the major problems facing libraries in Nigeria as they move into the 21st century. ICT infrastructure development and poor funding have been identified as problems, followed by poor ICT skills among staff (Ebiwolate, 2010).

c) Ethnicity (tribalism) and Religion: This problem exists in different degrees globally not only in Nigeria. Today, people are not employed based on confidence and merit but on "connections". This causes drawback in action and inefficiency in any organisation bearing in mind that one cannot give what he does not have.

d) Poor Conditions of Service and Prospects: In some public libraries, there is insufficient staff simply because of poor conditions of service. Young librarians usually prefer employment in federal government owned establishments for the following reasons: better salary, frequent promotion and study leave with pay which is not obtainable in public libraries. Poor conditions of service lead to poor staff employment which can hinder service delivery.

e) Library Location and Difficulty in Extending Services to the Rural Areas: In Nigeria, public libraries are located in urban areas. As a result, their services are limited to people who live in urban areas. The rural dwellers are not benefitting from public library services hence bookmobile services. Bookmobile was established according to Bioks and Papadimitrion (2018) to serve the public and disseminate knowledge to all, especially to those who find it difficult to resort to standard libraries due to social or geographic reasons or health issues or old age. Ebiwolate (2010) reported that the government established bookmobile services in the '60s and '70s however, this was not sustained in Nigeria due to certain factors like bad roads, long distances and use of dilapidated vehicles. These services were kept in abeyance and they create negative effect in public library service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The public is served by public libraries, which are supposed to satisfy the needs of the general public by offering pertinent services and materials, the public library's failure to fulfill its social duty to the people living in rural areas. Due to financial constraints, a lack of skilled staff, a lack of political will, severely deteriorated buildings, and outdated resources, the public library is unable to meet the information demands of its patrons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. To enable the libraries to carry out major projects, the state government should give them a sufficient amount of funding.
2. Libraries should look for alternative funding sources. The libraries should start offering services like photocopying, Internet access, computer training centers, abstracting, and the like that could bring in money for the library itself,
3. The state government should make sure that the annual budget includes funding for libraries is sufficient.
4. In order to change the government and other stakeholders' uncritical attitude about library services, the library director should plan awareness campaigns that will help them realise how important libraries are to society.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Increase Government Funding: The state government should provide libraries with sufficient funding to enable them to undertake and complete major projects, including building renovations, technological upgrades, and the acquisition of modern resources that cater to diverse user needs.
2. Diversify Funding Sources: Libraries should explore alternative sources of funding to supplement government allocations. This can include offering revenue-generating services such as photocopying, internet access, computer training centers, abstracting, digital archiving, event space rentals, and other specialized programs. Partnerships with private organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international donors can also be pursued to secure additional financial support.
3. Ensure Consistent Budget Allocation: The state government should integrate library funding into the annual budget, ensuring that allocations are consistent and sufficient to cover operational costs, resource acquisition, staff salaries, and community-oriented programmes. Mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee the timely release of allocated funds.
4. Raise Awareness of Library Value: Library directors should organise targeted awareness campaigns to educate government officials, stakeholders, and the general public about the vital role libraries play in fostering education, information access, and community development. These campaigns can include seminars, community outreach programmes,

social media advocacy, and collaboration with educational institutions.

5. Strengthen Library Advocacy: The library management should form alliances with professional bodies, educators, and community leaders to advocate for stronger governmental and societal support for libraries. Regular reports demonstrating the impact of library services on literacy, education, and economic development should be presented to stakeholders.
6. Invest in Staff Development: Libraries should allocate resources for staff training and professional development to enhance the quality of services provided. Training programmes should focus on modern librarianship practices, technology integration, customer service, and resource management.
7. Leverage Technology and Digital Transformation: Libraries should embrace digital tools and technologies to expand their reach and improve service delivery. Establishing robust online catalogues, e-resources, and virtual library services can attract more users and open up additional funding opportunities through subscriptions or partnerships.
8. Foster Community Engagement: Libraries should actively engage with the local community by organising programmes such as book clubs, literacy workshops, and cultural events. These activities can increase community support and highlight the library's relevance in addressing societal challenges.
9. Monitor and Evaluate Library Services: Libraries should establish mechanisms for regularly assessing their services to ensure they meet user needs effectively. Feedback from patrons should guide improvements, and performance reports should be shared with stakeholders to demonstrate accountability and the need for continued investment.
10. Develop a Strategic Plan: Library leadership should create a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines long-term goals, funding strategies, and action steps for addressing challenges and seizing opportunities. This plan should align with broader state or national development priorities.

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