

# THE USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCES IN OGUN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IJEBU NORTH L. G. A., NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study examined the use of school library resources in Ogun State Secondary Schools. The Population of the study consisted of selected Secondary Schools in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State. Out of the 240 copies of questionnaire administered, 200 were returned representing 87% and analyzed using simple percentage. The finding shows inadequacy of library resources, lack of space, unqualified library personnel and ineffective use of school library resources by students of the surveyed schools. The study recommended the provision of adequate accommodation, provision of audio-visual materials in school libraries, recruitment of qualified staff to man school libraries among others.*

**Keywords:** *School Library, use of school library resources, secondary school system, school library resources, Ogun - Nigeria.*

## INTRODUCTION

The role and contribution of school library services in the provision of education at all levels cannot be overemphasized especially when one considers the functions of a library within the school system. As the university library is the intellectual center of a university so also is a school library the center of intellectual activities in a school. For this reason many educationally advanced countries pay much attention to the development of school library services. Furthermore, many scholars, parents, principals and successive governments have recognized the fact that the presence of functional school libraries is essential to the educational development of the nation. This was clearly demonstrated in the National Policy on Education which clearly identifies libraries as one of the most important education services (FGN, 2004).

The policy therefore urges the various arms of libraries in all educational institutions to train librarians and library assistants for effective services and utilization of same. In spite of the above, however, school libraries in Nigerian secondary schools are still performing below the roles defined for them in the new national policy on education. That was why Ibrahim (1997) asked why in spite of technological advancement and the rapid growth in the Nigerian educational sectors, school libraries still display inadequacies in funding,

staffing, collection and services. Some of these variables as identified by Ibrahim are in one way or the other affecting the provisions of varied library resources for the use of the students of Nigerian secondary schools. The utter neglect of school library development in Ogun State prompted this study in order to ascertain the use of school library resources by students of some selected secondary schools in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State.

### **The School Library**

A school library according to Ayeni and Oyebanjo (1997) is a strategic arm of its parent institution. Its major aim is to organize collections of all human efforts either in print or non-print forms that are relevant to the educational development of the children. Whereas, Ezenwa (1993) was of the view that school libraries are libraries in primary and secondary schools whose collections are mainly for the young. For him the school library is not only a depository and a storehouse of knowledge and a center for the dissemination of knowledge but also a recreation and relaxation center.

Furthermore, a school library according to Elaturoti (1995) can be defined as a room or a building within the school premises where a collection of books and non-book materials in various subjects' fields is kept for reading. He further emphasized that apart from the school library, there is the classroom library. The classroom library according to Elaturoti is a small collection of books in a corner of the classroom. Its collection is meant to enrich and supplement the classroom study. Most classroom libraries are branches of school libraries.

Ezenwa (1993) refers to today's school libraries as a center for a wide variety of educational media. These media include books, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets, records and tapes, maps, films, photographs and painting; included also are equipment such as projectors, motion pictures and tape recorders. With the above, school libraries are sometimes referred to by other names such as, "media center" "resources center" "instructional material center". These are to reflect the expanded role of the school library in education.

### **Functions of School Libraries**

Some of the purposes of the school library according to Elaturoti (1995) include:

- i. To support the teaching and education work of the school and
- ii. To develop in young people a habit of reading both for pleasure and for the purpose of gathering information for themselves.

Ibrahim (1997) is of the opinion that the concept of education and its contents have been changing systematically and very rapidly too over the years. Due to this change, therefore, the functions of school libraries have also rapidly changed to include the following:

- i. To identify and provide adequate and comprehensive teaching and learning resources in different formats which will meet the intellectual and recreational needs of both teachers and the students.
- ii. To systematically organize its materials for easy retrieval access and utilization;
- iii. To help develop various skills, learning and information enquiry skills;
- iv. To relate its resources and services to the school's curriculum, extracurricular programme and anticipated requirements for all teaching units of the school;
- v. Instructing and orientating the teachers and students on the use of the library;
- vi. To liaise with other relevant external bodies for required information, resources and services;
- vii. To periodically evaluate its resources and services to determine their relevance to meeting the needs of the users.

### **Use of School Libraries and Resources**

Bolodeoku (1979) in her study on the use of school libraries in some secondary schools in Ibadan found out that only two schools out of the ten selected can be said to have school libraries. They were accommodated in separate buildings. Fayose (1982) in her survey on students' use of secondary school library resources in Ibadan and Benin City found out that the reason why many libraries have remained ineffective appendages of their schools is that they are managed by ill-prepared and incompetent staff who had not the least idea of what their duties are let alone understanding what role the school library should play in the intellectual and social life of the school.

In her study on secondary school library service in Oyo State of Nigeria, Opeke (1980) finds out that not all the schools investigated have libraries while the few that had were accommodated in classrooms. The school libraries were looked after by teachers/librarians or library clerks with the assistance of students in few cases. Similarly, Adeoti-Adeleke (1996) in the study carried out on the provision of school library services in selected secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis reports that though the selected schools have libraries but their development leaves much to be desired. Some of the problems as identified by this study include: lack of adequate furniture, obsolete library collection, unqualified library personnel, poor funding and apathy on the part of government and school heads towards school library development.

Quoting Udo (1987), Obajemu (2002) is of the view that school library services in Nigeria are still at the developing stage displaying inadequacies in staffing, funding and services provided. Tawete (1995) shared the opinion that the lack of vision of what school libraries can provide to education had led to their slow development in Africa. Ogunseye (1978) opines that neither a good

book nor a good library can make an individual education. To her it is the successful use of books and libraries that makes a well-informed, stable and well-adjusted learned individual. Thus for the school library to effectively perform the above role and also support effectively the educational programme of the school, it requires an organized collection of variety of learning resources - book and non book, the suitable accommodation that provides space for storage and utilization of the learning resources and the trained staff to develop and organized the collection and as well teach the students and teachers how to use the resources effectively. In this way, pupils are prepared and are well-grounded to continue learning even after their formal education comes to an end. Majid (2005) in the research on use of school library resources in Singapore revealed that teachers generally do not use their school libraries and various information resources effectively due to the inadequacy of their libraries in terms of education materials.

The results of these various studies were revealing and also show that school library development in this part of the world is not receiving the necessary attention it deserves. This is in contrast to what obtains in the developed countries where the school library has moved far beyond a room with books to become an active, technology-rich learning environment with an array of information resources. The school librarian in places like United State of America and Britain are referred to as school library media specialist whose focus is on process of learning rather than dissemination of information.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was to evaluate the extent to which school library resources are utilized by secondary school students. This survey was on some selected secondary schools in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State. The six schools were randomly selected. The collection of data for this survey involved the administration of questionnaire; oral interview; and personal observation. A total of 240 copies questionnaire were administered to the students. Out of these, only 200 copies were returned representing 87% of the sampled population. However, all the principals, teachers and librarians in the six schools surveyed who were also orally interviewed, returned their questionnaire.

Table 1 shows availability of dictionaries in all the sampled schools. However, where there are encyclopedias in AOA, MCI and IGHS, there are no encyclopedia in MCHS, MHS, IGHS and IMCHS. Yearbooks are available for use in AOA and MCI whereas MCHS, MHS, IGHS and IMCHS have no yearbooks. Atlases are available for use in all the sampled schools. All the sample schools have books on commercial subjects, science subjects, and languages. All the sampled schools have no audio-visual materials in their stocks.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Materials in the Library**

Materials	AOA	MCI	MCHS	MHS	IGHS	IMCHS
Dictionaries	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av
Encyclopedias	Av	Av	NAv	NAv	Av	Av
Yearbooks	Av	Av	NAv	NAv	NAv	NAv
Maps	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av
Atlases	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av
Textbooks on commercial subjects	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av
Textbooks on science subjects	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av
Textbooks on languages	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	AvAv
Audio-Visual	NAv	NAv	NAv	NAv	NAv	NAv
Magazines	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av	Av

N/B: Av = Available, NAv = Not Available

**Table 2: Purpose of using the Library**

Purpose of using the Library	ObF	%
To do assignments	14	7
To read news papers	07	3.5
To borrow books	42	21
To sit and read materials borrowed from the library	14	7
Browse through collections	11	5.5
To read personal books	112	56
Total	200	100

N/B: ObF = Observed frequency

Table 2 shows different levels of response from the users. The table also shows that users mostly students use the school library for more than one purpose. Out of the 200 respondents, 112 or 56% of the respondents use the library to read personal books brought from home, while 42 or 21% of the total population borrow books from the library. There is very low patronage of the users in the reading of newspaper. 7 or 3.5% of the sample population responded on the use of the school library for reading newspapers. 14 or 7% use the library to do class assignment, while 11 or 5.5% browse through the collections without borrowing anything.

**Table 3: Materials used by Students**

Materials used	ObF	%
Dictionaries	45	22.5
Encyclopedias	10	0.5
Yearbooks	5	2.5
Maps, Atlases, etc	40	20
Total	200	100

The most frequently used materials are textbooks while the least used materials are yearbooks. Maps, Atlases, though reference materials are also well used by students as frequency of use show 40 or 20% of the sample population.

**Table 4: Library Accommodation**

Accommodation	No of Schs.	AOA	MCI	MCHS	MHS	IGHS	IMCHS
Separate Building	1		Av				
Part of Classroom	5	Av		Av	Av	Av	Av
Total	6						

It was observed that out of the surveyed school libraries, only MCI (Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo) is separately accommodated while the other school libraries that is AOA, MCHS, MHS, IGHS and IMCHS are accommodated in classrooms.

**Table 5:** Library Staff

Schools	Qualification of librarian	Professional	
		Yes	No
AOA	B.A.	-	-
MCI	NCE	-	-
MCHS	NCE	-	-
MHS	NCE	-	-
IGHS	NCE	-	-
IMCHS	B.Ed.	-	-

Table 5 reveals that none of the school libraries surveyed is manned by a professional. This in itself has its own implications for provision of library services. The results of the data collected for this study show that school libraries resources are not properly utilized due to inadequacy of materials, lack of space, unqualified library personnel. All these according to the data collected are responsible for the ineffective use of school libraries resources by students. The study also revealed that there was an indication that students were aware of the need for using school libraries (Table 2). However, a more profitable use of the school library by students will result if improvements are made in the school library services. Table 3 indicates that students make use of some the resources of the school library. However, the issue here is whether the students find the resources useful.

The result also shows the problem of inadequate accommodation as being prevalent in 5 out of the 6 school libraries surveyed in the study. All the school libraries except Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo school library were either part of the classroom, a floor above the principal's office or very near the staff room. This in a way could impede the use of school libraries by students, as many to them would not want to pass either through the principal's office or the staffrooms before going to the library. As observed by this research, the furniture in the school libraries are grossly inadequate, many are badly damaged and need prompt repairs. In Muslim High School (MHS), Methodist Comprehensive High School (MCHS) and Itamerin Comprehensive High School (ICHS), the library furniture is mostly student's lockers and benches. There were no shelves, no cupboards, to shelf books. Books are haphazardly spread on benches for the use of the students. This pathetic situation of the school's libraries furniture confirms Bolodeoku (1979), Fayose (19820 and Opeke (1980) studies on the above results.

This study also reveals that none of the teacher-librarians had any training in librarianship. In one word, they were drafted to the school libraries because of their training in English Language. With this kind of situation, there is little hope, if there is any at all, for the development of school libraries.

This was confirmed by Fayose (1982) study, that many school libraries are manned by ill-prepared and incompetent staff that had not least idea of what their duties are.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigation was carried out among secondary school students in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State. From the investigation carried out, the results show that secondary school students in the studied local government in particular and Ogun State Secondary School students in general are aware that school libraries should provide library services to cater for their academic and informational needs. Table 3, 4, 5, indicate the above assertion. However, in order to carry out their functions so that students can use their resources better, the libraries face a lot of problems. These problems include: lack of government recognition, lack of accommodation and space, lack of qualified personnel, and finance. All these problems militate against the use and utilization of school libraries and resources in Ogun State secondary schools.

In order for the school library to function as an integral part of the total educational programme of the school, there is, therefore, the urgent need to improve the quality of school libraries in Ogun State secondary schools and take the advantage of modern instructional technique in education for better quality education for our youths. So, if all the recommendations and suggestions are implemented that will definitely evolve a brighter and rosy prospect for school library development in Ogun State secondary schools.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations which can aid the development of school libraries in Ogun State are hereby made.

**Accommodation:** School libraries should occupy as possible a central position in the school. It should not be near areas such as, playing field, dining hall, assembly hall, staff and principal's office. It should be a separate building and spacious enough. However, encouragement should be given to secondary school to establish classroom libraries to supplement the central school library. The classroom library will reduce to a great extent the pressure on the central school library.

**Provision of Audio-Visual Materials:** Nowadays, school libraries are often referred to as school "media center" or "educational resources center". In this way, the school library has in its stock both the books and non-book materials. In view of the above, it is hereby recommended that school libraries should acquire audio-visual materials which should be used along with books in view of the tremendous assistance which they render in instructional methods. Adequate supply of these materials makes classroom work more stimulating and efficient.

**Personnel:** There is need to recruit qualified staff into school libraries. A situation where English teachers are drafted to man school libraries would not augur well for their development. The English teachers so drafted should be encouraged to undergo training to acquire the necessary professional qualifications in librarianship. Also, clerks, cleaners, messengers that work in school libraries should also undergo refresher training courses in librarianship. Many of these training courses abound in state libraries across the nation, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. This will make them more prepared for library work. To effectively run school libraries therefore, there is need to employ the services of qualified teacher librarians in Ogun State Secondary Schools.

**Library Periods:** Library period should be incorporated in the school timetable. This period should not be used for leisure or relaxation in the library, rather during this period, library instructions should be vigorously taught by a teacher-librarian from the state or public libraries under the arrangement of the teacher-librarian.

**Funding:** The greatest problem facing all libraries in general is how to generate money to run efficient and effective library services. In order for school libraries to get out of this problem, it is recommended that government should put school libraries on its priority list by allocating to them capital and recurrent grants. Furthermore, library levy should be strictly used by the various principals in our secondary schools to develop the library and should not be diverted for other uses or projects. Old students, individuals, organization especially charitable and corporate organizations should be encouraged to donate books and non-book materials or sometimes money for the running of the school libraries.

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