EXTENT OF AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES AMONG OUT – OF- SCHOOL YOUNG PRISONERS IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Information is very crucial to the development of mankind. It is also an asset that is necessary to facilitate human activities. It is for this reason that libraries are established to meet information needs of citizens, particularly, those of the out- of – school young prisoners in Nigerian prisons. The study, therefore, attempted an investigation into the availability and utilisation of library resources for the prisoners. The sample was drawn from prison population of prisoners in two major cities randomly selected in South Western Nigeria. The sample drawn was 500 out of the total population of 1,625 in the sampled prisons. Questionnaire titled: Availability and Utilization of Library information Resources for Prisoners (AULIRPO) was used to collect data on availability and utilization of library information resources by the out- of- school prisoners and descriptive statistics of survey type was employed to analyse the data collected. The result indicated that only newspapers, textbooks, dictionaries and encyclopedias are the only available and frequently utilised library information resources by the out of school prisoners who are discovered to be in their productive ages of between 45- 54 years. Challenges like inadequate provision of library cresources, poor funding and lack of good building facilities affect prisoners' utilisation of library information resources. It was concluded that out- of- school prisoners have access to a few library resources and it was recommended that government should be more sensitive to providing befitting library facilities and relevant library information resources to out- of- school prisoners, among others.*

KEYWORDS: availability, utilization, prisoners, out- of- school, library resources

INTRODUCTION

Prisoners are defined by Ejike, et al (2014) as people who are incarcerated and whose movements are restricted because of the crimes they commit . According to Shirley (2006), the prison population in Nigeria is made up of convicted persons and those awaiting trial but in the advanced

countries like the United States, State and Federal prisons house convicted prisoners who are incarcerated for longer periods than prisoners in jails and detention centres.

Prisons are meant to be habitations meant for correcting, rehabilitating and reforming people with undesirable characters which pose problems to other members of the community. It is also the responsibility of prisons to provide information and information resources for the information of prison inmates. This is in line with the advocacy of Prison Reform Movement (PRM) that campaigned for rehabilitation and education of prison for re-entry to the society and particularly out of school prisoners to forge ahead, though restricted, with their education.

In addition, United Nations' recognition of prisoners' rights to information is contained in the United Nations (rule 40) which has been established since 1955. The rule states that every institution shall have an adequately stocked library for use of all categories of prisoners (out-of-school young prisoners inclusive) and they shall be encouraged to make use of the information. The chapter, for the Reader (1994) by UNESCO International Book Committee, in addition, affirms that all including prisoners are entitled to have access to information and libraries providing this information should be located within the prison environment.

The out-of-school prisoners are among categories of prisoners in Nigerian prisons. They need information and information resources more than other categories of prison inmates to the able to continue their education. Libraries are therefore charged with the information responsibility of providing relevant information resources like library collections, legal texts, fictions, non-fictions, textbooks, magazines, newspapers coupled with human resources to facilitate information provision and utilization. Inability to provide library information resources to meet information needs of prison inmates may underscore the reformative and transformative roles of prisons in ensuring that inmates become better and educated citizens.

In the view of Anguolu and Anguolu, resources may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one's interest, but the user may not be able to lay hands on them. This means that the more accessible information resources are to the prison inmates the more the chances of their utilisation of the resources to meet their information needs It is on this premise that the study attempted on investigation into availability and utilization of information resources among the young out-of-school prison inmates in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the various categories of out-of-school young inmates in southern-western Nigeria who make use of the library information resources.

2. Establish the availability of library information resources for young out-of-school inmates in Nigeria.
3. Find out the extent of access that out-of-school young inmates have to library information resources.
4. Identify the frequency of use of library information resources by out-of-school young prisoners.
5. Identify the problems regarding provision and utilization of library information

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study and they are;

1. What categories of out-of-school young inmates make use of library information resources in South-Western Nigeria?
2. What types of library information resources are available in South-Western prisons?
3. What is the extent of the access that out-of-school young inmates have to library information resources?
4. How regularly do the out-of-school young prisoners make use of library information resources?
5. What are the problems militating against provision and utilization of library information resources in South-Western prisons?

Statement of Problem

Establishment of libraries stocked with relevant information resources is vital to educational growth and development of citizens. Utilization of information through appropriate information resources is also not to be underscored realizing its roles in virtually all areas of human life, particularly, those of the prisoners. Many prisons in Nigeria have libraries established to meet divergent information needs of out-of-school young inmates to actually make use of the library information resources. One thing is to provide the necessary information for users but the other is for users (young prison inmates) to have access to such information materials. Another issue bothers on the motivation on the part of the users to utilize the resources. One can only talk of utilization only if the inmates have access to the available information resources in the prisons. This study has attempted, based on these issues, to find out whether out-of-school young prison inmates do make use of the available information materials to meet their information needs, how regularly they utilize the information resources and the challenges that militate against their utilization of the available library information resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of information for human development in today's world is very crucial and cannot be underestimated. It is a very significant resource that can be used positively to transform human lives including those of the out-of-school inmates (Anyakoha, 2005). The library, as a harbinger of information, therefore takes the lead ensuring that inmates have access to information for development in all areas of life. The library provides services and materials through which they can meet their various information needs. The responsibility on the part of the library necessitates the establishment of prison libraries to cater for different information needs of varied categories of prisoners. Ejike, et al, (2014) explained this further by affirming that a lot of changes were fueled by the prison reform movement which advocated rehabilitation of prisoners over punishment, education for re-entry to the society and the rights of prison inmates.

Prison libraries, in collaboration with the prison itself whose functions are to keep safe custody of inmates legally detained, identify causes of inmates' antisocial behavior and treat and reform inmates, are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring a guaranty of information resources provision that involves diverse categories in print and non-print forms(Shirley, 2006).

In Nigerian context, emphasis has been placed on custodial functions of prisons coupled with rising prison population led to consideration of reductive and reformative programs and information services to assist both inmates awaiting trials and those that have been convicted. It is, however, a cause of worry looking at the state of Nigerian prison libraries. Generally, the status of Nigerian prison libraries is very poor and not encouraging. Most of the libraries have reneged in their responsibility to provide information services and make available and accessible information resources for the prison inmates, particularly, the out-of-school young ones. The need for rehabilitation, re-socialization, re-adoption and total transformation of prison inmates to become better, more responsible, law abiding and self-fulfilled citizens has become more complex because of inadequate provision of information resources to those needs (Amnesty International, 2008).

METHOD

The population for the study comprised all the prison inmates in Southwestern Nigeria. Two prisons were randomly selected from two capital cities in Southwestern Nigeria. The cities are Ibadan and Akure. Two hundred inmates were randomly selected from Akure prison out of 650 inmates detained while 300 inmates were randomly selected from detained 975 inmates in Agodi prison at Ibadan. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the inmates. The questionnaires has five main sections which consist of information about inmates biography, category of information resources used, access to information resources, regularity of use information resources and challenges militating against effective provision and utilization of information

resources by out-of-school inmates. Percentages and frequency counts were used for analyzing the data collected .

Table I : Biographical Information of Out – of- school Inmates.

S/N	Biographical Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Gender		
1	Male	381	77
2	Female	119	23
	Total	500	100
	Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	15- 25	170	34
2	26- 40	231	46
3	41- 54	90	18
4	55 and above	09	02
	Total	500	100
	Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Completed J.S.S.	6	1.2
2	Under senior secondary school	25	05
3	Completed S.S.S.	314	62.8
4	Under Higher Education	150	30
5	Completed Higher Education	05	01

Table 1 shows that there are more males 77% than females 23% out-of-school inmates in the sampled prisons. Also, many out-of-school inmates fall within the ages range of between 26-40 (46%) followed by those that fall between age range of between 15-25 (34%). A few also fall between age range of between 41-54 (18%) but only 9 (02%). This implies that many young out-of-school inmates were discovered to have completed senior secondary school (62.8%) followed by those who are into higher education but due to oneC reason or the other could not complete their education (30%). Other category (01%) were able to complete their higher studies but were imprisoned for reasons known to them.

Table ll : Category of Library Information Resources Available for the Out- of – school Young

Inmates.

C	Category	Available	Not Available
1	Newspaper	428 (85.6%)	01 (0.2%)
2	Textbooks	361 (72.2%)	00 (00%)
3	Dictionaries	349 (69.8%)	01 (0.2%)
4	Encyclopedia	321 (64.4%)	02 (0.4%)
5	Atlases	250 (50%)	01 (0.2%)
6	Human Resources	10 (2%)	422 (84.4%)
7	Computers	06(1.2%)	392(78.4%)
8	Fiction	06(1.2%)	300 (60%)
9	Internet facilities	04 (0.4%)	492 (98.4%)
10	Handbooks	03 (0.6%)	421 (84.2%)
11	Magazines and Bulletins	02 (0.4%)	499(99.8%)
12	Journals	02(0.4%)	411(82.2%)
13	Non-fiction	01 (0.2%)	32 (64.2%)

Table ii indicates that 85.6% of the inmates confirmed the presence of Newspaper, 72.2% agreed to the availability of textbooks while (69.8%), 64.4% agreed to the fact that dictionaries and encyclopedias are available. However, 98.4% of the inmates confirmed that internet facilitates were not available while 84.4% agreed to the non-existence of handbooks and journals respectively. The result implies that only textbook, dictionaries, encyclopedias and newspapers are the material resources available in the prison libraries. Further still, 84.4% agreed to the non-existence of professional librarians to man the existing libraries.

Table III : Inmates' Access to Library Information Resources

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	492	98.4
2	Dictionaries	489	97.8
3	Encyclopedia	482	96.4
4	Textbooks	461	92.2
5	Atlases	324	64.8
6	Human Resources	10	02
7	Non- fiction	05	01
8	Magazines and Bulletines	04	0.8
9	Handbooks	03	0.6
10	Journals	03	0.6
11	Computers	02	0.6
12	Fiction	02	0.4
13	Internet facilities	01	0.2

It was shown in table III that newspapers (98.4%), dictionaries (97.8%), encyclopedias (96.4%) and textbooks (92.2%) are the library information resources that out-of-school young inmates are able to access for their information needs. Human resources (02%), internet facilities (0.2%) and computers (0.4%) are the least accessible information resources in the prison libraries. This means that inmates access to library information resources is limited only to a few conventional print information resources like textbooks, encyclopedias and newspapers.

Table IV: Regularity of Use of Library Information Resources by Prison Inmates

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	496	99.2
2	Textbooks	492	98.4
3	Dictionaries	400	80
4	Encyclopedia	389	77.4
5	Atlases	274	54.8
6	Human Resources	09	1.8
7	Magazines and bulletines	03	0.6
8	Fiction	02	0.4
9	Non- fiction	01	0.2
10	Handbooks	01	0.2
11	Journals	01	0.2
12	Computers	00	00
13	Internet facilities	00	00

The table indicates that prison inmates frequently utilize newspapers (99.2%), textbooks (98.4%), dictionaries (80%), encyclopedias (77.5%) and atlases (54.8%). On the contrary, all the prison inmates confirmed not using internet facilities (00%) computers (00%). Their patronage of other library information resources like handbook (0.2%), journals (0.2%), non-fiction (0.2%), and fiction (0.4%) has been very low. Generally, prison libraries in the sampled areas do not have adequate information resources and this affects their patronage of the library which on long run may mar their chances of getting necessary information to solve their information problem.

Table V : Challenges of Library Information Resources for Out-of-school Prison Inmates

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Inadequacy of relevant information resources.	498	99.6
2	Lack of adequate funding	497	99.4
3	Problem of access to information resources.	493	98.6
4	Lack of standard library facilities like buildings and sitting facilities	488	97.5
5	Government insensitivity to prison development.	451	90.2
6	Psychological factors	347	68
7	Legal issues.	245	49
8	Problem of professionalism.	204	40.8
9	Lack of training for prison staff.	204	40.8

Inadequacy of information resources (99.6%), access problem (98.6%), lack of adequate funding (99.4%), lack of standard library facilities (97.6%) and government insensitivity (90.2%) are crucial challenges as indicated by the inmates others not as important as those identified earlier like lack of training for prison staff (40.8%) and legal issues (49%) were also mentioned by the inmates.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the library information resources in Nigerian prison in the selected areas are grossly inadequate and that building facilities provided are not conducive enough to guarantee information provision to meet information needs of prison inmates. This is corroborated by singer (2000) who explained that the library should provide a safe environment for inmates which is by making available conducive library, accommodation stocked with adequate information resources. The study indicated that library information resources like magazines and bulletines, internet facilities and human resources were the most available library information resources while resources like texbooks, atlases and dictionaries were the least available. The study also indicated that prisoners do not have much access to the library information resources because of inadequacy

that characterizes the library information resources provision. This also, as indicated by the study, affects their use and patronage of the information resources. Bucker (2007) supported this by affirming that the size of the library collections should reflect the size of the inmates' population before they can meet up with inmates information's needs. The two prison libraries lack library professionals as indicated by inmates. There are no goo and qualified library staff that have the grasp of library basics.

American Library Association (2008) explained in her library standard for correctional institutions document that libraries should be made up of library directors, technicians and clerks. This was also buttressed by IFLA (1995) guideline for library services to prison inmates recommending professionals for prison libraries.

The findings also revealed that the out-of-school prison inmates are in their productive ages. Therefore, young prisoners dominate the prisoners' population with little middle aged and elderly. This is also in consonance with Amnesty International (2008) which confirmed that majority of Nigerian prisoners are young adults between the ages of 15-35 years. Finally, more males are recorded in the prisons than females and this is supported by Shirley (2006) that male prisoners outnumber female ones. The findings revealed inadequacy of relevant information resources, lack adequate funding, lack of standard library facilities and problem of access to libray information resources as problems militating effective use of library information resources by prison inmates. This is in accordance with the submission of Olowu(2004) yhat Nigerian prison libraries are characterized by natural and artificial barriers to free access to information resources.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded therefore that prison libraries in Nigeria have few collections which, prison inmates utilized to meet their information need. The libraries also failed to provide conducive library accommodation and facilities and some of them are manned by non-professionals. Therefore, the library information resources provided are grossly inadequate for the libraries are also patronized by out-of-school inmates that are still in their productive ages. It was however recommended that more information resources and conducive library accommodation be provided by the government of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made that:

- Government at all levels should make available fund for prison library development.
- More information resources can be acquired to stock prison libraries.

- Computer and internet resources be made available to make information more available and accessible to prison inmates.
- Training be organized to educate prion workers in their handling of prison inmates as a way of motivating them to utilize library information resources.
- Library professionals be employed to man prison libraries in order to manage effectively prison libraries and prison inmates' information.

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