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ASSESSMENT OF STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ENUGU STATE FROM 2010 – 2016.

BY

Comfort U. Uzoigwe, PhD and Akpom Chinwendu C.

Abstract

Provision of access to information resources is the responsibility of the libraries, be it academic, private, school or public libraries. This paper assessed Enugu State Government support to public library from 2010 – 2016. The casual comparative research design was adopted to determine the extent of influence of the Government support on the services rendered by the public library. Questionnaire and interview were the instruments used with librarians as the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The interview responses were analyzed qualitatively. The findings of the study include: poor funding, poor staffing, and poor remuneration by the state government that led to inadequate staff strength, lack of current collections, poor facilities and un-automated library services. Recommendations were proffered including, establishment of a grand design or model for sustainable funding, motivation of staff by enhanced salary, promotion and training, provision of virtual library and massive and aggressive advocacy campaigns.

Key Words: *Government support, Enugu state public library, services rendered.*

Introduction:

Access to information resources engenders knowledge which leads to the development of individuals and the nation as a whole. Provisions of access to information resources are the responsibilities of libraries-be it academic, private, school or public libraries.

Libraries are charged with the responsibility of providing reading materials in different formats (print and non-print), spaces and conducive accommodation that will make for easy access to information that will enhance study and learning in the community or the institution that such library serve. Public libraries are those libraries established by the state government to provide information resources to the general public.

In developed countries where books, journals, magazines and increasingly the internet, are normally found in homes and where public

libraries stock information resources in diversified media, access to useful information is never a problem. However, in developing countries throughout the world, reverse has been the case as access to such information resources in different homes cannot be afforded. This is because many families cannot afford to purchase information resources when their basic necessities of life such as food, water, light and shelter cannot be met. (Osuiigwe, Jiagbogu and Udeze, 2012). In a situation, like this, the only hope for the public to have access to information is through the public libraries.

Public libraries are established by state governments for the use of the populace. International Federation of Library Association (IFLA,2003) asserted that public libraries should be accessible to all groups of the society, regardless of gender, age and

ethnic affiliation. Achebe (2005) further avers that Public Libraries are also schooling centres for knowledge and information acquisition for all categories of users regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language, ideological base or social status.

The growth of Public libraries for dissemination of information in the developing countries is a necessity as the libraries would provide the entire populace with facilities for lifelong learning, support the curricula of all stages of education, offer access to government information and other types of information as well as boost economic and agricultural development and sustenance of democracy. (Osugwe, et al 2012). Public library renders the following services. Mobile library services, book depot, lending of reading materials to their patrons, inter library loan, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, reprographic services, Internet browsing, service to the physical challenged, user education and provision of e-books and e-journals.

Statement of Problem

The provision of information has been acknowledged as a prerequisite for the development and empowerment of the citizenry of any society in achieving economic, political and educational attainments. Public libraries are best suited to disseminate information resources to the entire community. This is as a result of the expected avalanche of resources they hold for the educational, skill and recreational activities of the clientele whom they are meant to serve.

The primary role of the Nigerian Public libraries should be that of public education, research and information for democratic living as obtainable in developed economies. However, it has been generally observed that public library services in Nigeria are waning probably due to poor funding. Most of the public libraries in Nigeria are apparently facing the problem of functionality. The problem of this study therefore is the state of government support to the Enugu state public library and its influence on the services rendered by the library from 2010 to 2016.

Purpose of the Study

Because of the importance of Public libraries in the provision of access to information to the citizenry, the main purpose of this research is to ascertain the Enugu State Government support to public library in Enugu State in relation to the services rendered by the libraries to their clientele. Specifically, the study goes to:

1. Ascertain the extent of Enugu State Government's support of public library in Enugu state from 2010 to 2016.
2. Examine how the government support influenced the services that the Public library rendered to their clientele in Enugu State from 2010 to 2016.
3. Find out the extent of utilization of available library facilities by the users.
4. Ascertain other sources of support to the public library by individuals and organizations.

5. Find out measures taken by the Public library to attract more governments and other external support to the library.

Research Questions

- (1) What was the extent of government support to the Public library in Enugu State from 2010 to 2016?
- (2) To what extent did the governments, support influence the services Public Library rendered to their clientele during the period under review?
- (3) What is the extent of utilization of available facilities by the users?
- (4) What other support were rendered to the public library by other organizations?
- (5) What were the measures taken by the public library to attract government support to the library?

Literature Review

The literature of the study was reviewed and discuss related to the research questions and focus of the study.

The first UNESCO Public library project in Nigeria was established in Enugu, the capital of the then Eastern Region of Nigeria in 1959 (Achebe, 2005). The project made tremendous impact in the region as this attracted investors and people from the book industries. As a medium for self-education and lifelong learning, this project also generated government interest in public library. This interest was evident in the numerous public libraries established all over Africa including Nigeria then. Public libraries are generally

regarded as the people's university providing access to information for independent decision making, continuous and lifelong education and individual development. (Akporobore, 2011 Eze and Uzoigwe 2012).

However, in recent years the Enugu state public library appears to have become a shadow of itself. The Public library depends on gifts to acquire their library collections. Such gifts from local and international donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) including the Book Aid International, the Enugu State Cultural Association, Southern California (ESCASC), the Education Trust Fund and legal deposits from authors. These organizations from time to time donate books and computers to the Enugu State public library that accept whatever forms and nature of collections that is donated. However, their donations were often times not based on considerations of their potential users.

The Enugu state Public library does not have standard library building and accommodation as obtainable in some developing and developed countries.

After 58 years of its existence, the Enugu state public library is still using the building of 1959 when the then Eastern Nigeria Library Board was established with Enugu as the headquarters. The building unfortunately is not maintained. Many of the branch libraries in Enugu State are today being located in rented apartments and in abandoned buildings. The location of the Enugu state public library at Enugu calls for concern. This library is located near a very busy road and the Ogbete Main Market. The library is surrounded by

many Motor Parks- ‘God is Good’, the ‘Young shall Grow’, ‘Okeyson’, ‘Aguata Mass Transit’ and ‘Rivers State Mass Transit’, these transport companies have loud speakers shouting on top of their voices trying to attract passengers. The deafening noise affects the patronage of the library. The staffs of Enugu state Public library appear to have low morale. This, as noted by Opara (2008) is as a result of inadequate attention given to these workers and their institutions. Considering the outlook of the Enugu State public library one can confidently assert that the library in its present status is not likely to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Akporobore in Eze and Uzoigwe (2012), asserts that public libraries are very important in the life of any nation, as it is the major indicator of level of the development in a country which measures the quality and caliber of her human resources who can generate capital. Invariably, individual development of the people that make up the work force guarantees national development. Also commenting on the importance of Public libraries- Barbary McCabe, (2015, p125) opines that “the library is a service for everyone in town, from cradle to grave, that engages the community in conversations not only with those here and now, but with past generations and generations to come”. She went further to affirm that there were some short- sighted individuals who did not see public libraries as an essential service.

According to her public libraries are the hearts of any community development and should not be neglected. The roles, and functions of

public libraries as contained in IFLA/UNESCO manifesto cited by Koneru (2008) and in Eze, Ugwuanyi and Anaeme (2010, p10) states that

“a public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization to provide access to information resources for all regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language and social status. Specific services and materials are provided for those users who cannot for any reason, use the regular services and materials for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison”.

This manifesto sums up the strategic roles of the public libraries in the various aspects of the society, which include educational and professional development as well as research, economic, social and cultural advancement. From the manifesto above, one can conclude confidently that the primary purposes for establishing public libraries are to promote access to knowledge to everybody in the society in the various aspects of human endeavors.

Public libraries if adequately equipped and maintained can play enviable roles in the following areas: education, informative role, capacity building and services to children and young adults. Public libraries support both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels through

its provision of access to knowledge in print and other formats to support formal and informal education. It can richly compliment the educational activities by assisting adults who are no longer of school age in developing their attitudes, extending their knowledge and acquiring necessary technical and vocational guidance to emerge as productive members of the society and the nation at large. Through education, the masses acquire literacy that is a prerequisite for any successful nation building.

The informative role of the public libraries cannot be overemphasized. A well-developed public library is an information system that provides information through varieties of library collections- books, journals, electronic media –computers, CD-ROMS, internet and so on as well as information forum- seminars, conferences and workshops. Opara (2008) citing Onadiran described the public library as a resource for self- education and centre for amusement. The Public library, according Public Library Manifesto (1994) is the local centre for information making for all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The public library's role in national economic development is obviously reflected through its informative function. As Dos Sencos (2009) puts is, the Public Library functions as an information provider for businesses and industrial professionals. These services contribute towards the nation's economic development which also varies depending on the community.

Public libraries promote capacity building. The need and opportunity to develop personal creativity and pursue new interest is very vital to human and national development. The public libraries can provide access in a variety of media to a rich and varied store of knowledge and creative achievements. When individuals acquire these, they pull skills and resources together towards the individual development and that of the nation at large.

Public libraries encourage the reading culture in children and young adults. The public library by its nature is meant to care for all in terms of library and information needs and services. Building good children of today ensures resourceful leaders and adults of tomorrow. Public Library Manifesto (1994) maintains that creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age is one of the core roles and special responsibility of Public libraries to meet the needs of children and young people. Such services are geared towards nation building.

According to Opara (2008) during the early years of public libraries development in Nigeria, Government funding was very substantial enabling the public libraries to render the following services: mobile library services, establishment of book depots, book lending, provision of current books, inter library loans, current awareness services and selective dissemination of information. However, in recent years during the dwindling of the economy, Government support to the library reduces to drastically. Consequently, the public libraries became incapacitated and

were unable to render essential services (Manbo 1998).

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is causal comparative or ex-post facto design. Causal comparative Research design scrutinizes the relationship among variables in studies in which the independent variable has already occurred. Because the independent variable (the variable for which the researcher wants to suggest causation) has already been completed, the researcher has no control over it. The researcher simply met the situations already assigned to the appropriate levels of the variables whose effects are being investigated.

In other words, data are collected after the event or phenomenon under investigation has taken place. The relationships of the independent variables on one or more dependent variables are measured and implications of possible causation are used to draw conclusions about the results. (Best and Kahn, 2006 and Nworgu 2006).

Data was collected from the librarians working at the Enugu State public library and its branch libraries. This was facilitated through the use of a structured interview and questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation as presented in the tables. Descriptive analysis was also used where necessary.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Available Facilities in Enugu State Public Library.

S/N	Facilities	Quantity Available	Not Available
15	Internet Connectivity	none	Not Available
16	Desktop/Computers	10	Not available
17	Laptop	None	Not available
18	I pads	None	Not available
19	Photocopiers	2	
20	E resources	None	Not available
21	Printers	3	
22	Scanners	None	Not available
23	Digital Cameras	None	Not available
24	Multi Media projectors	None	Not available
25	Generators/Capacity (KVA)	2	
26	Light	Available	
27	Air Conditioners	3	
28	Ceiling Fans	8	
29	Chairs	Available but not enough	
30	Reading tables	Available but not enough	

There was no internet connectivity in the libraries. The public libraries had ten computers, one computer at the Nsukka Branch library and the remaining nine computers, at the headquarters. The computers were used in the offices and not in

the library by the users. Furthermore, the following ICT facilities: Laptops, I pads, E-resources, Scanners, Digital Cameras, Multimedia projectors were not available in the library. The library did not have enough chairs and tables.

Table 2: Services Rendered by the Public Libraries Using Available Limited Resources During the Period under Review. N = 27

S/N	Services	Not Rendered (NR)	Remarks
31	Mobile Library	NR	Apparently not rendered due to poor support by the Government
32	Book Depot	NR	Apparently not rendered due to poor support by the Government
33	Lending	FR	Fairly rendered due to minimal support by Government
34	Inter Library Loan	PR	Apparently poorly rendered due to poor Government Support
35	Selective Dissemination of Information	PR	Apparently not Rendered due to poor Government support
36	Current Awareness Services	PR	Apparently poorly Rendered due to poor Government support
37	Reprographic Services	FR	Fairly Rendered due to limited support by the Government
38	Internet Browsing	NR	Apparently not Rendered due to Poor support by the Government
39	Services to the physically challenged	NR	Apparently not Rendered due to Poor support by the Government
40	Consultancy Services	FR	Fairly rendered due to minimal support by Government
41	User Education	FR	Fairly rendered due to minimal support by Government
42	Provision of e-books and e- journals	NR	Apparently not Rendered due to Poor support by the Government

Key: NR – Not rendered. PR – Poorly rendered. FR- Fairly rendered.

The following services were not rendered by the public library: mobile library, book depot, interlibrary loan, selective dissemination of information, current Awareness services,

internet browsing, services to the physically challenged and provision of e-books and e-journals apparently not rendered due to poor financial support to the public libraries by the

state government. The other services like lending, reprographic services, consultancy services and user education were fairly rendered due to the little support by the state

government. The views of the Director interviewed are similar to the responses of the respondents indicated above.

Table 3: Extent of Government Support Influence on the Public Library Services Provision

S/N	Services	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
43	Service delivery	2.48	1.02	LE
44	Patronage	2.48	1.31	LE
45	Reading Culture	2.14	1.06	LE
46	Lending	2.45	1.28	LE
47	Inter Library Loan	1.29	0.46	LE
48	Selective Dissemination of Information	2.18	1.17	LE
49	Current Awareness services	1.88	0.89	LE
50	Reprographic Services	3.18	1.07	HE
51	Internet Browsing	00	0	LE
52	Services to the Physically Challenged	1.25	0.44	LE
53	Consultancy Services	1.74	0.44	LE
54	User Education	1.74	0.44	LE
55	Provision of e-books e-journals	1.0	1.0	LE
	Grand mean and standard deviation	1.83	0.81	LE

Only reprographic services had high extent of influence of Government support. The influence of Government support on the other services was remarkably low and this explained why most of the services were rendered to a low extent by the public library.

The grand mean and standard deviation which were 1.83 and 0.81 respectively showed low extent of influence of government's support on public library services.

Table 4: Extent of Utilization of Available Facilities by Library Users.

S/N	Facilities	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
56	Internet Connectivity	0.0	0.0	LE
57	Desktop/Computers	1.96	0.89	LE
58	Laptop	1.00	1.00	LE
59	I Pads	1.00	1.00	LE
60	Photocopies	2.51	0.89	HE
61	E resources	1.00	1.00	LE
62	Printers	2.74	0.71	HE
63	Scanners	1.00	1.00	LE
64	Digital Cameras	1.03	0.19	LE
65	Multimedia Projectors	1.07	0.26	LE
66	Generators/Capacity (KVA)	3.40	0.97	HE
67	Light	3.37	1.04	HE
68	Air Conditioners	1.66	0.48	LE
69	Ceiling Fans	1.66	0.48	LE
70	Chairs	2.88	0.93	HE
71	Reading Tables	2.85	0.81	HE
	Mean and standard deviation	1.88	0.79	LE

The following facilities internet connectivity, Desktops/Computers, Laptops, I pads e-Resources, Scanners, Digital cameras, and multimedia projectors were being utilized to a low extent based on their mean and standard deviation. On the other hand the following facilities: photocopiers, light, chairs and

Reading tables were being utilized to a high extent based on the mean and standard deviation as reflected in table 7 above.

The facilities were simply not provided and could not have been used by library users. Besides, the grand mean and standard deviation which were 1.88 and 0.79

respectively indicated the low extent of utilization of the available facilities by library users based on the responses from the respondents.

Table 5: Other support Rendered to the Public Library by other Organizations and Individuals.

S/N	Name of Organization/Individuals	Nature of Support
1	Umuada WAWA, Texas, USA	Books/Computers Donation
2	Book Aid International (BAI)	Books Donation
3	Education Trust Fund (ETF)	Library equipment donation
4	Education sectors Support programme In Nigeria (ESSPIN)	Books Donation

The significant support outside the state government as indicated above was mainly on book donations and computers. Most of the books donated were obsolete and not helpful to the library users.

Table 6: Measures Taken by the Public Library to Attract Government Support and other Assistance to the Library.

S/N	Measures	Successful How	By Who? What Organization	Not Successful
1	Writing Appeal Letters	Not much successful	Library Management	

It appears the public library had not taken adequate measures to attract Government's, individuals' and organizations support as shown in table 9. The director of the public library interviewed explained that it was not

as if they were folding their arms rather than as a result of the several appeal letters, the Governor visited the library and promise to do something. He concluded that they were

still hopeful that the Governor would come to their rescue.

Summary of Findings.

The summary of findings of this study is as follows:

1. The public libraries in Enugu state were poorly funded during the period under review.
2. The staff strength of the library was inadequate.
3. The staffs of the library were poorly paid in terms of salaries and remunerations which might have affected their job satisfaction and job performance.
4. The public library in Enugu state did not have the needed facilities to function effectively. Above all in this digital age, the libraries were not automated and could not provide electronic services to their clientele.
5. The public library in Enugu state could not render their services obviously due to poor support to them by the state Government.
6. The influence of Government support to the public library was generally low as indicated by the mean and standard deviation for items in table 6.
7. Due to the inadequate facilities in the public library there were virtually no

resources to be effectively utilized by the library patrons.

8. The external donor organizations could not salvage the abysmal degeneration of the library because the books they donated were generally obsolete and were not very useful to the library patrons.
9. Unfortunately the public library did not take adequate measures to attract substantial support to the library by Government, individuals and external organizations/donors.

Conclusion

Public libraries have been an important resource necessary for sustainable democracy, educational development and provision of information for all aspects of human endeavour. In spite of these all important roles assigned to the Public libraries, the Enugu State Public library since 2010 could not accomplish these roles.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusion, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The Director of the Enugu State Public Library should liaise with their Board members to put in more efforts through aggressive advocacy,

lobbying and fund raising to get more funds to improve the state library.

2. There should therefore be a grand design or model for sustainable funding of the library.
3. Public libraries should enter into Public Private Partnership (PPP) with possible voluntary agencies, corporate entities and other non-governmental bodies willing to partner with them for the provision of essential services.
4. They should be motivated of staff by enhanced salary, promotion and other benefits.
5. Establishment of sustainable training and development programmes for the staff.
6. Modernization of the Public library including the provision of virtual library and other services to enhance prompt access to information resources.
7. Finally, there should be massive and aggressive advocacy campaigns aimed at making the public and individuals to know the importance of Public libraries in their communities. Also individuals that have interest of the library (friends of the library) should be approached to help the library.

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