

Public Libraries and Budget Costs: A Case Study of Osun State Library Services in Ife Central and Ife South Local Government Areas

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the conditions of public libraries in Osun State and found that little or no financial provision was made for library services in these local government areas of the state. Among the people interviewed for the study were local government officials, community leaders and students. Community leaders, students and other members of the community knew the importance of library services yet, they were at the mercy of local government officials who claimed that there was no budget provision for library services and as a result, they could not spend any amount for the library because it would amount to “virement” which is against financial regulations. Findings also revealed that the libraries housed obsolete and tattered books. The libraries were located in “hostile” environments that were not conducive to learning. The study came up with some strategies which might assist Public libraries to meet their objectives in the face of budget cuts. These include inauguration of library committees, library clubs, and formation of friends of the library groups, fund raising and advocacy. The study strongly advised Policy makers advised to make provisions for library services because its importance in a knowledge driven economy.

Keywords: Budget, public libraries, information dissemination, poverty, local government.

INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that information is a vital resource and that the difference between rich and poor nations in information dissemination is very wide. Information is needed for different purposes ranging from economy, social development, politics, education, technology to other areas of human endeavours.

Saleh (2011) defines public library as a place built for the collection of books and other printed resources with personnel to provide and interpret such resources as required to meet the information, research, educational, recreational, cultural and aesthetic needs of the varied users. Public libraries are usually financed with public funds. Public libraries exist to assist citizens to have an unrestricted access to information, be it inform of books or through wireless technology called the internet. Opara (2006) views the public library system as a social instrument designed to preserve and disseminate certain cultural products of the nation and community.

In Nigeria, public libraries are empowered by law as legal depositories even though the law is rarely observed. At this stage of Nigeria’s development and within the context of a globalized world, the public library ought to be empowered to provide ready and free access to books and other information sources for all members of the public. Marijike & Alice (2011)

assert that public libraries represent the metaphorical middle mile, providing the general public with access to rich information knowledge, subject matter, expertise and general training and support for library users.

It is obvious that without sufficient funding, the library will have a difficult time meeting the demands for its services to the people. Public libraries have always been situated in neutral places within the communities. A good librarian (or library?) can therefore be an advocate to effectively be understood or even recognized as important. This view was shared by Audunson (2005) where it was stated that “In a world where knowledge is power, libraries make everyone more powerful and they bring people and ideas together”. Libraries help bridge the gap between those who have access to information and those who do not. Families making less than N15, 000.00.annually are two to three times more likely to rely on library computers than those earning more than N75, 000.00. Libraries provide free and equal access to information in schools, colleges and universities in communities that are both large and small.

Libraries play a pivotal role in the sustenance of democracy. The fact that Nigeria’s democracy is shaky is due to the important role not played by libraries. People are not encouraged to read books that can expose them to different ideas and experiences which in turn can stimulate them to replicate such ideas in their localities. In public libraries, teenagers acquire knowledge that stimulate them to be patriotic citizens, thereby leading to communities that have peace and development.

Simic (2011) stated that reading books is slow, time – consuming and often a tedious process while the internet is a quick, distracting activity in which one searches for specific information, finds it, and then reads about it,

often by skipping a great deal of material and absorbing only the pertinent fragments. Books require patience, sustained attention to what is being read and frequent rest periods for review so that the meaning of what is read settles in the mind and makes its full impact. Internet has limited book lovers whereas libraries have turned out many books lovers. The slow disappearance of public libraries is a tragedy not just for the impoverished in villages, towns and cities but for everyone that has been denied access to information.

Ebiwolate (2011) was of the opinion that lack of funds was the greatest problem facing libraries, this has in no small way hindered the development of public libraries in Nigeria.

This view was shared by Ola (2012) when he reasoned that libraries are dependent institutions that derived their operational mandates from their principals i.e. their parent institutions. Ibrahim (2012) opined that with a well – funded and well organised library system, it would be possible to support and develop local authors while also developing generations of readers that will enjoy their youth in active intellectual work. It will also create generations of critical minds who will have access to information and will be able to ask questions about the running of society.

HISTORY OF OSUN STATE

Osun State was created in 1991. The 1991 census puts the population of the state at 2.2 million. There are more than 200 towns, villages and other settlements in the state. The state has a considerable number of highly urbanized settlements. Some of the major town are Osogbo, Ile- Ife, Ilesa, Ikirun, Iwo, Ede, Ila – Orangun, and Ikire. Others include Ipetumodu, Ejigbo, Ilobu , Gbogan, Okuku, Inisa, Ijebu-jesha, Ifon –Osun etc.

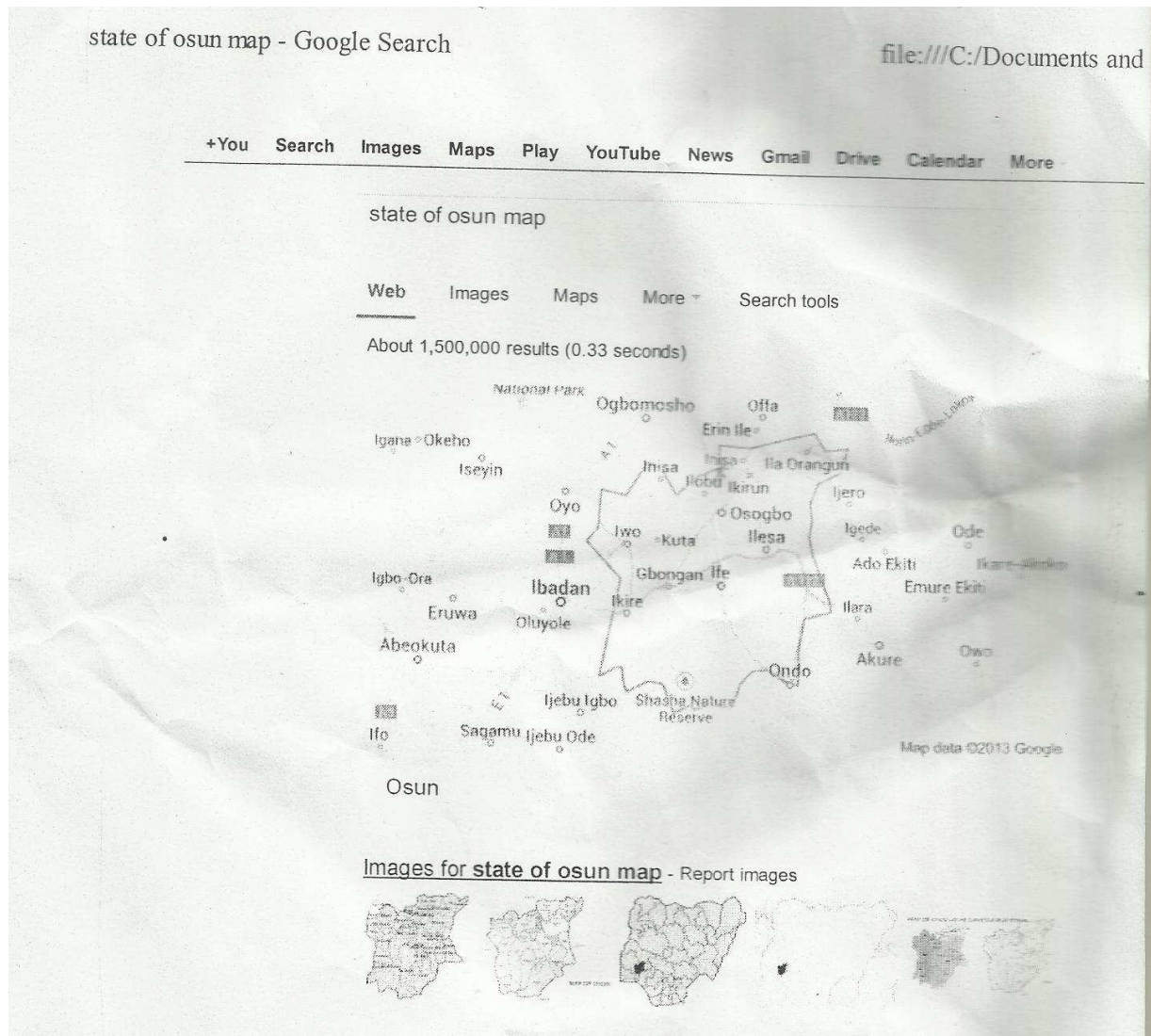
Local Government Areas and Population

Osun State has 30 local governments as enumerated below:

S/N	Local Government	Headquarters	Population
1.	Aiyedaade	Gbongan	150,392
2.	Ayedire	Bode Osi	75,846
3.	Atakumosa East	Iperindo	76,197
4.	Atakumosa West	Osu	68,643
5.	Boluwaduro	Otan – Ayegbaju	70,775
6.	Boripe	Iragbiji	139,358
7.	Ede North	Ede	83,831
8.	Ede South	Ede	76,035
9.	Egbedore	Awo	74,435
10.	Ejigbo	Ejigbo	132,641
11.	Ife Central	Ile – Ife	167,254
12.	Ife East	Oke Ogbo	188,087
13.	Ife North	Ipetumodu	153,694
14.	Ife South	Ifetedo	135,338
15.	Ifedayo	Oke – Ila	37,058
16.	Ifelodun	Ikirun	96,748
17.	Ila	Ila	62,049
18.	Ilesa East	Ilesha	106,586
19.	Ilesa West	Ilesha	103,555
20.	Irepodun	Ilobu	119,497
21.	Irewole	Ikire	143,599
22.	Isokan	Apomu	103,177
23.	Iwo	Iwo	191,348
24.	Obokun	Ibokun	116,511
25.	Odo – Otin	Okuku	134,110
26.	Ola – Oluwa	Bode – Osi	76,593
27.	Olorunda	Osogbo	131,761
28.	Oriade	Ijebu – jesa	148,617
29.	Orolu	Ifon	103,077
30.	Osogbo	Osogbo	156,694

Source:

Map of Osun State.



Budget

According to Ogbureke and Madueke (2007) a budget is a statement of expected income and expenditure of an individual, household /government organization within a specific period of time. Ogunpitan (2009) defined budget as a summary of estimated or intended expenditures for a given period along with proposals for financing them. With a budget, an individual is able to carefully look at how much money he is expecting as income during a given period and figure out the best way

to allocate it equitably among a variety of categories of needs. Budget determines, to a large extent, how the government collects revenue, distributes expenditure outlays, finances policy interventions and runs core public institutions.

IFE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LIBRARY

Ife Central Local Government Library was established in the 1970s. Early in its history, it was a beehive of activities owing to the influx of people from different centres especially

students who used the place to prepare for examinations. The library's collection then was good and funding was not a problem. However, the problem with the library started mid 1980s during the period of financial austerity measures introduced by the military government. Further coups and counter coups impacted seriously and negatively on the development of the library. At present, the Local Government does not have a budget for library services. There are old books on the floor and Library Assistants seldom go to the place. The youths and some community leaders expressed their concern about this situation. Youths in the area make use of classrooms that were not locked after school hours in nearby schools rather than the library for reading.

LACK OF PUBLIC LIBRARY IN IFE CENTRAL AND ITS EFFECTS IN THE AREA

Ife town is currently notorious for examination malpractices. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) had at one time blacklisted the town while National Examination Council (NECO) and West African Examination Council (WAEC) have always kept a close surveillance on the town during examination periods to check atrocities of gangsters involved in examination malpractices. In the 1970's and 1980's when the public library was functioning, the town did not experience examination malpractice; students were serious with their studies and the reading culture was high.

Table 1: IFE CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT LIBRARY COLLECTION

S/N	BOOK	NO OF COPIES	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CONDITION	
				GOOD	BAD
1	Reference	2	1970		x
2	Literature	15	1976-1988		x
3	Language	10	1989		x
4	Science	2	1968		x
5	Commercial	-	-		
6	Government	3	1975-1978		x
7	History	5	1972-1976		x
8	Geography	1	1968		x
9	Economics	1	1973		x
10	Home Economics	-	-		
11	Tech. Drawing	-	-		
12	Mathematics	1	1972		x
13	Others	50	1962-1978		

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The table shows the appalling condition of the public library in the area. There were no current books while the few ones available were old and tattered.

THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF IFE SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT LIBRARY, IFETEDO

The Local Government has a library that was established in 1999. According to the library officer in charge, the seating capacity is 250. As a result of paucity of funds, the library has just 124 volumes in its collection in the following subjects: Literature in English, English Language, Science, Commerce, Government,

History, Geography, Economics, Home Economics, Technical Drawing, Mathematics and Newspapers. The building has become dilapidated. The ceiling is in a bad shape and falling apart. The surrounding of the library is overgrown with weeds. The roof leaks and whenever it rains, water floods the whole place making it difficult for the staff and users to stay in the library. The library is poorly maintained and the place is not conducive for reading. The library had not received yearly subventions from the Local Government for years except when a sum of N200, 000 was released for the purchase of books in 2007 and since then nothing has



been heard from the Local Government.

Fig. 1: The Public Library in Ifetedo. It is unkempt and in a state of disrepair.



Fig. 2 : Loans desk without staff to attend to the users in Ifetedo.

VIEWS OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

Some community leaders were interviewed on the condition of the library and they expressed grave concern on the situation. The current President of Ifetedo Progressive Union (IPU) said that although he would have loved to visit the Library but he did not go there because there was “nothing there”. He stated further that he used to patronize public library when he was in Ibadan, but the condition of the Ifetedo library was a source of concern to the people. He concluded that the library was “a political gimmick of dividend of democracy”



Fig. 3: Mr. S. O. Obadare chatting with Chief Fapohunda, a Community Leader in Ifetedo



Fig. 4: Mr. S. O. Obadare chatting with the Local Government Staff in Ifetedo



Fig. 5: Mr. S. O. Obadare in a chat with Mr. Olagunju, a Local Government Staff in Ifetedo.

STUDENT’S VIEWS

The welfare officer of National Association of Ifetedo Students Union (NISU) was also

interviewed, he said that the present condition of the Library was pathetic. He expressed his annoyance and utmost disgust about the situation. He said that plans were in the offing to confront the Local Government Chairman on the matter.

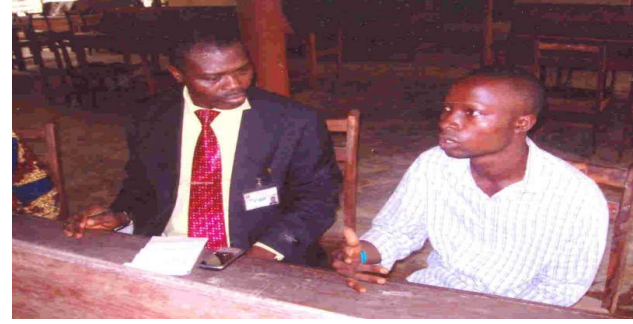


Fig. 6: Mr. S. O. Obadare discussing with a student in Ifetedo.

IFE SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT LIBRARY

S/N	BOOK	NO OF COPIES	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CONDITION	
				GOOD	BAD
1	Literature	10	1996		X
2	Language	7	1998	X	
3	Science	-			X
4	Commercial	-			X
5	Government	3	1999		X
6	History	2	1997		X
7	Geography	-			X
8	Economics	1	1995	X	X
9	Home Economics	-	-		X
10	Technical Drawing	-	-		X
11	Mathematics	1	1997		X
12	Reference books	-	-		X
13	Others	-	-		X

Field Survey: 2012.

The table showed the currency of books in the Library. The most recent title was published in 1999. Users were not provided with latest books in different subjects for their research.

SERVICES OFFERED IN THE TWO LIBRARIES : IFE CENTRAL AND IFE SOUTH

S/N	SERVICES	IFE CENTRAL	IFE SOUTH
1	Circulation	-	-
2	Indexing and Abstracting	x	x
3	Reference	-	-
4	Bibliography	x	x
5	Adult Literacy	x	x
6	Online Services	x	x
7	Newspapers	-	-
8	General Reading	-	-

Field Survey:2012.

The table showed the services that were available in both Libraries were available in both Libraries. Both libraries were only used as reading rooms while other essential services such as indexing and abstracting, bibliography, adult literacy were not available. Users were not allowed to borrow books .

Local government libraries in Osun State

Town	Physical Condition	
	Functional	Not Functional
Osogbo		x
Ilobu	✓	
Ile-Ife		x
Ilesha		x
Ifetedo	✓	

Field Survey:2012.

Although there are library buildings in the towns listed above, only two libraries were functional.

STRATEGIES FOR THE REVIVAL OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE STATE

There is no doubt that we need to proffer solutions to some of the problems which are militating against development of public libraries in the state. Some strategies are necessary to revive public libraries. Aundunson (2005) listed them as follows:

- (a) Presentation to groups,
- (b) Publications,
- (c) Formation of friendship group,
- (d) Fund raising,
- (e) Advocacy,
- (f) Special events/Promotion,
- (g) Income generation,
- (h) Formation of Library Committee

PRESENTATION TO GROUPS

The Library can be presented to the public in a way that will stimulate interest and support for its cause. The Librarian in charge can reach out

to community leaders and influential personalities in the area. There should be a strong relationship between the public and the library since that happenings and developments in the community would be publicised by the library.

SPECIAL EVENTS/PROMOTIONS

The Library must of necessity be a beehive of activities in order to stimulate reading culture among different categories of people in the community. Special events can be designed to take library message outside by interacting with lawmakers, businessmen and influential people in the society. Library week can be organized where there would be raffle draws and exhibition of books and materials.

PUBLICATION

The power of print communication is still a potent factor in any society, in view of this, library activities can be disseminated periodically to their clientele. This can be through bulletins where library activities and challenges will be highlighted. It must be pointed out that the design of the publication must be attractive such that people would be fascinated by it and would love to have it for keeps.

FORMATION OF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

Public libraries, being public oriented establishment, have long been neglected by the public owing to the general apathy to revitalizing the sector. It becomes imperative to identify certain individuals who have passion for library in the community.

FUND RAISING

Public Libraries can organise fund raising activities. Funding is a major challenge in public libraries and it has to be tackled headlong so that envisaged development would not be hindered. Such fund raising events may include internet services, sales of forms for

different Institutions such as JAMB, NECO and photocopying services and raffle draws.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. There should be a yearly budget provision for library services. Library development must also be on government priority list so that adequate attention would be given to it.
2. Public libraries in the state must be seen as community centres such that students and other library users can perform different tasks there like internet surfing, secretarial services, information provision, relaxation and other services that will motivate youths and as well sustain the place.
3. The library environment must of necessity be user friendly such that different categories of users would be motivated and encouraged to patronize the library not only to read but for the sake of the environment.
4. Public libraries must endeavour to find ways of benefitting from public private partnership through donation of books/materials and equipment. Library collection can be increased through this strategy.

CONCLUSION

There is no gainsaying the fact that public libraries are needed in the state for the transformation of the populace in all facets of life. The provision of public libraries should as a matter of fact be on the priority list of governments at all levels. In addition, communities, individual philanthropists corporate organizations should be encouraged to establish libraries in their domains. This would in the long run accelerate development of the state and at the same time salvage the library from neglect. Public libraries are important and should not be left solely at the mercy of the policy makers. Hence all and sundry must rise up and impress it on the government to establish more public libraries as well make the existing ones functional. According the library its importance is a sure avenue to aid the development of Nigeria.

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