AVAILABILITY AND ADEQUACY OF LIBRARY IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a prominent role in the human capacity development and economic progress of any nation. For sound education, reading for self-development and actualisation, learners must be able to get along with extra sources of supplementary books apart from classroom work. Hence, the need for adequately equipped library in the primary schools for effective training of young minds. The study therefore examined the status of school libraries in Oyo State public primary schools. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 56 public primary schools in the study area. Data generated was analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that majority (68.9%) of the public primary schools do not have a school library, where they are available, the learning materials are outdated. Furthermore, the study revealed non- availability of essential library resources such as dictionaries (60.5%), encyclopaedia (86.0%) and information books (79.1%).There is the need for the Ministry of Education and relevant stakeholders to devote more funds for the procurement of educational materials and provision of standard school libraries in primary schools.

Key words: Textbooks, Reading corners, Education, Library availability

Introduction

The central role of education as an instrument for social transformation and national development is globally acknowledged. It is indisputable that education will perform this role more effectively, if it is qualitative. According to Akinbote (2001), primary education is available in both the developed and the developing countries as well as in urban and rural areas. Primary education is the instructional base of the educational pyramid on which the success or otherwise of other systems of education and, by implication, manpower development, national advancement and growth depend. Since the rest of the educational system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the value system. Mandela (2006) claim that developing nations have realized the importance of education in development and economic progress. Education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world. The school library is pivotal to the success of the basic primary education. Learning takes place through the interaction with different resources. When children study under an enabling environment and have access to resources that will encourage reading, develop

learning skills, critical thinking, good values and attitudes, then the country will have a solid workforce and there will be economic and social development.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) School Library Manifesto (2004) says that the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge based society. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizen. Tahir (2005) asserts that the school library enhances literacy and numeracy through access to a variety of relevant learning resources, encourages sharing and caring for communal resource. While Williams, Coles and Wavell (2002) opine that libraries play an important role in the acquisition, maintenance and development of literacy skills. They achieve this through offering access to reading materials that are relevant, stimulating, enjoyable or useful. Library provision can also contribute to academic achievement, particularly in reading literacy, in primary level students. According to Oyebola (2003) books are vital for both teaching and learning at the primary level of education. Books are used by teachers at this level as tools for passing knowledge to their pupils.

The World Declaration on Education for all (UNESCO, 2004) asserts that basic learning needs comprise both the essential learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. Davidson (2001) says that Information literacy is a progressive and cumulative process which should start from early childhood. This implies that children should be exposed to study and learning skills from a very tender age.

Goals of the School Library

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Manifesto (2004), the following are essential to the development of literacy, information literacy, teaching, learning and culture and are core school library services:

I. Supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum;

II. Developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives;

Offering opportunities for experiences in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment;

III. Supporting all students in learning and practising skills for evaluating and using information, regardless of form, format or medium, including sensitivity to the modes of communication within the community;

IV. Providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions;

V. Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity;

VI. Working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school;

VII. Proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy;

VIII. Promoting reading and the resources and services of the school library to the whole school community and beyond.

Montagnes (2001) in the report on the availability of books and learning materials in Africa produced for the 2000 Education For All assessment commented that, "As the decade came to a close, school libraries were said to have the lowest of priorities in educational spending. The majority of schools possessed no library. Where some semblance of a school library did exist, it was often no more than a few shelves of outdated and worn out material, inadequately staffed." National Policy on Education (2004) highlighted the provision of libraries in schools as an integral compliment of quality education and stated that each school is to be provided libraries with trained staff to run them. This aspect of the policy according to Elaturoti (2000) has been poorly implemented; hence the persistent poor quality of school library service in Nigerian schools.

Durosaro (2011) reported that in a survey conducted on primary education cost, financing and management in Federal Capital Territory, Kogi, Kwara and Niger States, it was discovered that only 9.57% of the schools in Kwara and 27.08% of the schools in FCT had school libraries while none of the schools in both Kogi and Niger States had any school library. Ahunanya and Akinyemi (2010) aver that government spending on basic education per pupil has been very low compared to what the household spends per pupil. More disturbingly the high cost of basic education, coupled with meagre allocation from the government, seems to be negatively affecting access to education, retention rates and increasingly dropout rates. It was revealed in this study that enrolment declined in 2003.

Montagnes (2001) gave the report of a study conducted by READ Educational Trust in South Africa. The report according to him states that children in classes with classroom libraries outperformed control school counterparts by as much as 189 per cent, and were ahead by 187 points in reading scores and two years in writing scores. Nigerian school libraries exhibit inadequacies in personnel, and funding. Fayose (2003) avers that the government has always paid lip service to school library development, but many policies remain on paper and are never implemented. Dike (1993) also asserts that, "funds that could be used to develop school library services were more than expended on crash programmes." A second reason is perhaps that there was insufficient fund.

Objectives of the Study
1. To identify the year of school establishment and availability of school libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the educational background of primary school pupils' parents.
3. To identify the resources that is available in primary school libraries.
4. To determine the level of accessibility of pupils to the library resources.
5. To ascertain the number of teacher-librarian in the schools.

Research Questions
1. What is the present status of school libraries in public primary schools in Oyo State?
2. What is the educational background of primary school pupils' parents?
3. What are the resources available in public primary schools in Oyo State?

4. What is the extent of accessibility of library resources to pupils in Oyo State?
5. What is the level of availability of teacher-librarian in public primary schools in Oyo State?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey method. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to assign subjects in this study. Seven (7) out of the 8 educational zones in Oyo State were used. Two local government areas randomly selected from the 7 educational zones making a total of 14 local governments. Four schools were randomly selected from each of the 14 local government areas making a total of 56 schools randomly selected for the study. A self - constructed questionnaire, Interview schedule and observation were the major instruments used to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire comprises two sections. Section A seeks information on pupils' and parents' backgrounds, that is location, sex, age, qualification and the occupation of the parents. Section B elicits information on the usage frequency of recommended textbooks on the four major subjects, namely Mathematics, English Language, Social Studies, and Basic Science and Technology.

The reliability coefficient established on this section using Cronbach Alpha method was 0.85, meaning that the items measuring the usage of different recommended textbooks were sufficiently reliable The author conducted interviews with heads of schools and primary school teachers. Observations were also used as complement. The interview schedule made use of a check-list with questions on library availability, resources, level of pupil access to library resources and availability of teacher –librarians. Analysis of the data was done descriptively, using tables and percentages where applicable.

Results and Discussion

One thousand six hundred and eight copies of parents' questionnaire were administered out of which 1198 (71.3%) were retrieved and found usable. Key informant interview guide was used to elicit information from head teachers (56) and classroom teachers (101) in 56 schools. The result of the study revealed that most public primary schools are without libraries and only few schools have school libraries with adequate and relevant resources to meet the information needs of children (Fig.1).
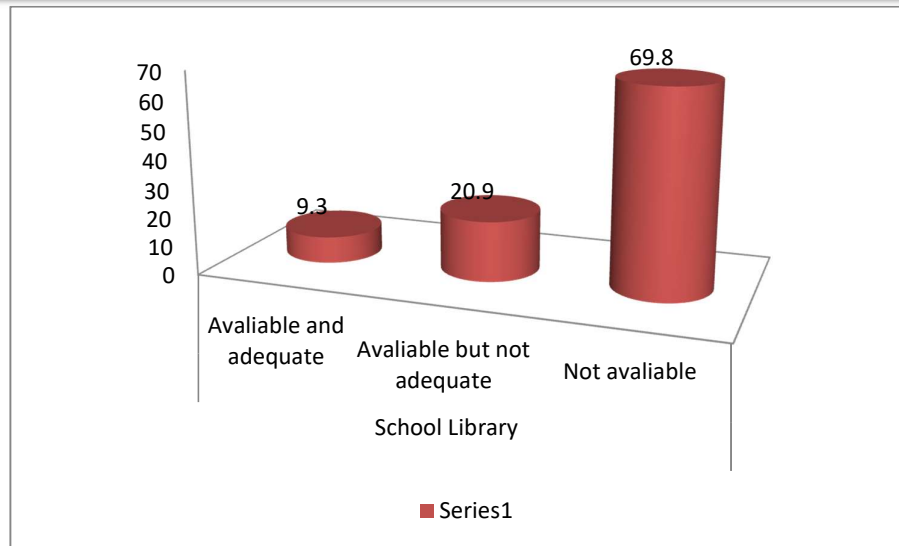
Fig:1 Avalability of school libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria

None of the rural public primary schools surveyed had any school library. Whereas the national policy on education stated that government should provide enough funds to ensure that schools are properly equipped with suitable libraries to promote sound and effective teaching, but this has never been implemented. IFLA/UNESCO (2004) stated that the school library should equip children with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens. According to Elaturoti (2000) learning resources for school libraries consist of print and non-print media. The print media include books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, handbills and ephemerals while the non-print materials comprise of photographs, slide, audio tapes, film strips, motion films, video tapes, computers and realia. All these were observed missing in the schools surveyed
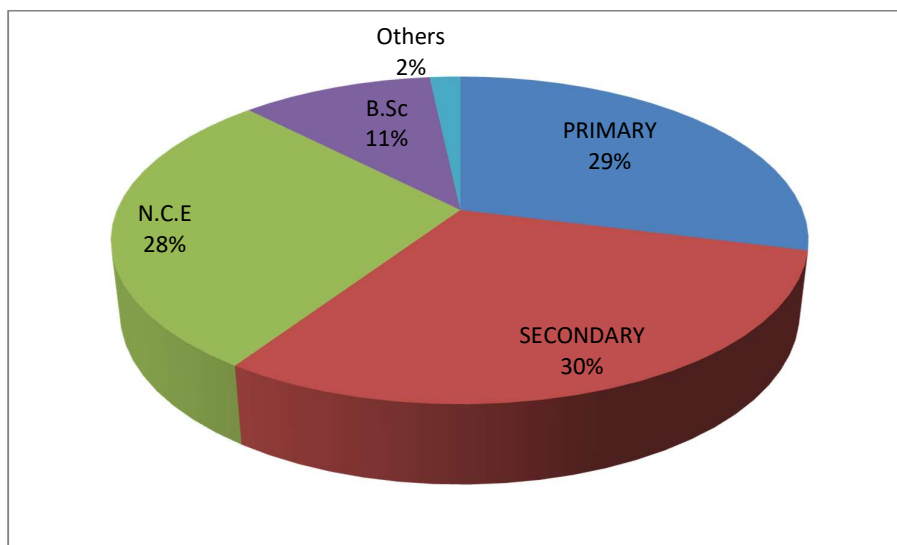
Fig:2: Educational qualification of parents

Majority of the parents of pupils these public primary schools are semi illiterate (Fig.2) .Primary and secondary school graduates who might not know the importance of a library or encourage their children to develop a reading culture were 59%. Some of the pupils still hawk for their parents after school. It was also observed there was no teacher – Librarian in the all the primary school surveyed. The presence of a teacher librarian will definitely help in the implementation of the curriculum and   teach the children how to source and use information. Libraries do have a significant impact on pupils' personal development. Okwilagwe (1999) opine that reading of books plays a vital role in the development of personality; it helps in character formation and in the activation of intelligence, which makes an individual to be more mature.

The study also reveal that schools that has being establish as far back as 1915 do not possess any library, reading corners were also not available in the schools (Fig.3).
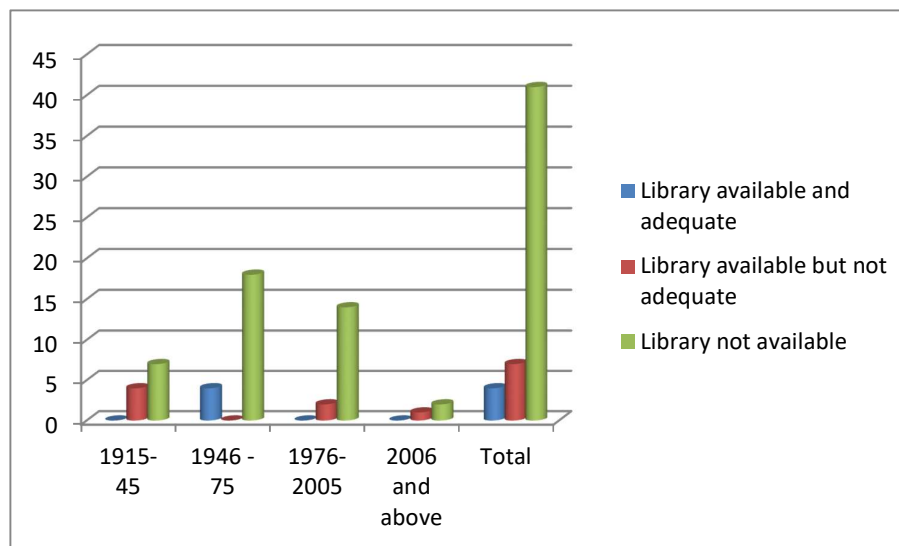

Fig.3 Years of establishment and availability of schools libraries

However, pupils have access to core textbooks, more information books Mathematics textbooks 58.1 %, English Language textbooks 58.1 %, Science textbooks, 27.9% Social studies 41.9% (Fig.4) while there was 60.5% non-availability of dictionaries, 86.0% of encyclopaedia and 79.1%   of information books. (Fig.4)
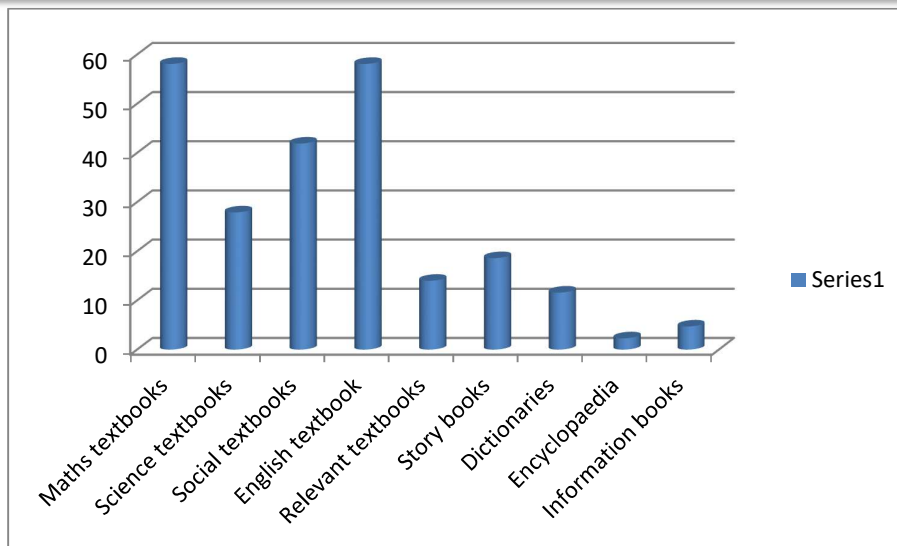
Fig.4 Resources available in each school.

The implication of this is that good reading habit will not be developed in the pupils; they will not be able to do adequate independent study. According to Lawal-Solarin (1999) children's books are the most important tools for sustainable educational and social growth and we must consistently strive to realize this objective by catching them young and educating them thoroughly, not only through formal education but also by encouraging the habit of reading for information and pleasure. Achebe (2010) state that modern educational philosophy stipulates that child-centred and user friendly school library was critical to issues of relevance and quality assurance in the training of the school child.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The study revealed that majority of primary schools sampled do not have school libraries, classroom reading corners and school librarians. However, where they are available, resources are not adequate. Primary education is the core of development and progress in modern societies. Books, constitute a very important component in the educational system Research have shown that Libraries do have positive effect on the intellectual development of primary school pupils. The library plays a significant role in supporting and enhancing educational goals .When pupils are not expose to books at an early stage, independent reading becomes a problem and it is difficult for them to develop a reading habit. The government should invest more on the basic primary education. In order to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals '2', libraries are expected to play a critical role in providing timely and relevant information books, provide quality information services that ensure adequate support for primary school pupils and teachers.

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