MEETING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY THROUGH MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICES IN NIGERIA

FESTUS ONIFADE
J.C. Pool Library,
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary,
Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.
onifadefestus19@gmail.com
&
DR. BILIKIS ADEFUNKE BABARINDE
Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies,
University of Ibadan,
Oyo State, Nigeria.
babarindefunke3@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study discusses meeting the information needs of people with disabilities through mobile library in Nigeria, it focused on disability person, their information needs and considered people with disability as ones who cannot functions well, they oftentimes referred to as people with impairments such as blindness, deafness, crippled and mentally retarded, concept of information need was examined and information needs of people with disability highlighted to be :recreational, medical, religion, educational and employment needs, concept of disability was also dealt with, mobile library for people with disability explained as library services that does not stay in a place which move from one place to another to served people with disability and through mobile devices such as cell phones computers, UM PCs (Ultra Mobile Pc) and through the use of internet, the paper summarized the possible mobile library services to people with disability to identified the information needs at first instance, promoting love for reading , using interest of internet to facilitates information usage, couple with education and life-long learning entertainment, paper concluded that people with disability also have right to good and quality information which can be provided through mobile library.

Keywords: Meeting, Information needs, Disability, Mobile library, Nigeria

Introduction

Meeting Information needs is very essential in every facet of lives and living, most especially the targeted group called "disabled", to this extent, meeting information needs transcend beyond what we can trivialize in our society that full of information explosion, therefore every government, organizations, institutions, businesses, educational institutions and so on needs correct and adequate information to make decisions and implementation of policies. The term information need is often understood as an individual or a group's desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. Rarely mentioned in general literature about needs, it is a common term in information science. A need is something necessary for an organism to live a healthy life.

Information is an important resource for national development and should be considered as a prerequisite for sound decision making in all areas of activities such as: research, development, academics, planning, industrial development, and investment. The most critical commodity influencing changes in the urban situation is information. Ajibero (2000) opined that, "information value is frequently expressed as a derivation from communication utility". Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. Information is needed to be able to take the right decision and also reduce uncertainty. Yusuf (2012) cited Taylor (2008) viewed that information need is the personal and unconscious condition. He articulated four levels of information needs that an individual pass through before he or she makes formal encounters with information professionals. These levels are the visceral need, conscious need, formalized need and compromised need. Information is needed at every level of business activities. Information is a vital resource for everyone.

The library must find and select the most profitably useful information for its clients. Mbeki (1997) further explained that the concept of a caring society is strengthened and deepened when we recognized that people with disabilities enjoy the same rights as we do and that we have a responsibility towards the promotion of their quality of life. Junren, Rong and Ruide (2021) emphasized on the unceasing advancement of mobile technologies, the mobile library service has changed dramatically. Library/book on wheel is the oldest mobile library service, and also known as mobile bus library, mobile train library, and bookmobile. It transfers some library resources from library to places where there is no library, such as rural districts or remote areas, and provides library services essentially to disabled persons.

For disability, these set of people suffer humiliation, segregation, and discrimination in accessing information in all sectors, consider the banks of various types, buildings structure of various companies, churches and mosques, markets places and malls including our universities buildings and even library that is popularly regarded as heart of university, all of these mentioned are built without consideration of people with disabilities, then the library must do something different to reach out to these people with disability through mobile library, hence professional educators tend to classify people with special needs by the degree of their disability. The magnitude of disability differs from one group to another group, ranging from blindness, deafness, crippled persons, and the mentally retarded. Oftentimes, the terms of impairment, physically challenged, handicapped, disabled, and special needs persons are used interchangeably (Atabor, 2015).

Nevertheless, everyone has certain abilities that can explode and useful with appropriate education and training even with their disability, to be developed to maximum capability. No matter what the state of an individual's disability, it is necessary for the library to meet the information needs of people with disabilities, since the library in any establishment is a repository of information sources. Major functions of a library include the collections, organization, storage, and dissemination of information. Miaoji (2021) established a library mobile user behavior analysis model for personalized information services can enable the library to better discover the characteristics and needs of mobile user.

A library is a resource center for students, teachers, researchers, and others. The involvement of libraries in meeting the information needs of people with disability will avail them the opportunity of wider exposure and bring them out unfair treatments of

humiliation, segregations and discrimination that they suffer, so that they will be able to have information at their disposer to be a better person in the society and have equal right with people without disability when it comes to getting information from the library of any types especially academic library. Kiruki and Mutula (2021) recommended that library websites must contain disability services page containing information specific to persons with disabilities and libraries should develop disability policy to provide guidance on provision of information services to persons with disabilities. This paper-borne out of the interest and passion to examine how library with a lot of collections stocked can meet the information needs of people with disability through mobile library and information communication technology in Nigeria.

An Overview of the Literature

Concept of Information Needs

The concept of information need is a factual situation in which there exists an inseparable interconnection with 'information' and 'need'. Information originates and generated because there exists a need or an interest. The presence of a purpose for the use of information leads us to conclude that it is needed. Thus the presence of what might be called an 'information purpose' is a necessary condition of information needs (Sankpal & Punwatkar, 2015). According to Leckie *et al.* (1996), information need is not constant and can be influenced by several variables. Such as age, experience, education and geographic location, etc.; the context within which the information need arises, the frequency, importance and the complexity of the tasks are also important factors. All of these factors can influence the formulation of information need.

Crawford (2003) described the information need to be very difficult to define and measure but it involves a cognitive process that may operate different levels of consciousness, hence may not be clear even not the inquirer. Yusuf (2012) cited Thompson (2004) further asserted that, needs is objective in the sense that, they are what one must look for to support his or her profession. Information needs could be seen as a demand requirement and want desire. Haruna and Mabawonku (2001) contend that needs arise when the state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issues, and that information needs are diverse, consistently changing and not amenable to generalization.

Wilson (2000) opined that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as the range of information sources available; the uses to which the information will be put; the background, motivation, professional orientation and individual characteristics of the user. Other factors are socio-political, economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the users as well as the consequences of information use. The quality of sources of information available to the users is also important because relevant sources are most likely to get useful information.

Information Needs of People with Disability

The information needs of people with disability conditions extend beyond medical information to know how to manage their daily living and the stresses that having a disability can bring: different information needs require different information sources. Health professionals, parents, the psycho-social information needs, others with the same condition and written information are important information sources; it is not possible to use age to predict when a young person may need a particular piece of information. Atabor (2015) categorized the information needs of people with disability to

include educational, recreational, medical/health, religious, employment, civil and socio-cultural information needs.

Educational Information Needs

People with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination, stigmatization, and humiliation from people without disability which normally leads to their exclusion from society and school, people attitude towards the people with disabilities is worrisome as well as lack of resources to accommodate them, compound with the challenges they face in accessing education while lack of access to educational information needs becomes an issues, then an equal concern is the inability of the education system to ensure quality education for people with disabilities. All people with disabilities need special education information needs and have right to an education which is appropriate to their needs, the arms of education for people without disabilities are the same arms apply to all people with disability. Educational information needs should be about enabling special people with their disabilities lives a full and independent life so that they can contribute their quota to their communities, societies and cooperate with other people to learn, if adequate educational information needs are provided.

Recreational Information Needs

Peniston (1998) stated that, perhaps nothing reveals so much about individuals as to how they choose to play, how they invest their time and energy for leisure time. Leisure is that time free from the demands of school, work, or required activities of daily living. Everyone needs regular recreation that develops skills, promotes good health, relieves stress, facilitates social interactions, and provides a general joy and happiness for a living. For recreation, we choose activities at which we can be successful. A good reader reads. Athletes seek sports' activities. Musicians lose themselves into music. Visual artists paint or draw. Craftspeople create. Social individuals engage in group activities. Observers appreciate the efforts of others - whether a basketball game, painting, fine meal, or concert, reading newspapers People with disabilities need information in all of these aspects and must be adequately provided.

Because every person has the freedom to participate in social life and to do his / her activities, people with disabilities often have discretion in terms of participation in social life. Today, the most important obstacles for people with disabilities are limited freedom to act. For education to be permanent and effective, it is necessary to meet the recreation activities of the individuals at an early stage. The habit of recreational activity acquired in childhood may become a permanent and desirable behavior in later periods.

Medical and Health Information Needs

For some people with disabilities, access to health care can be challenging. See what health care providers and public health professionals can do, to address the barriers that keep people with disabilities from obtaining the health care services and programs they need to stay healthy. People with disabilities need information on health care and public health programs for the same reasons anyone else does to stay well, active, and a part of the community. However, for people with disabilities, access to health care can be difficult, because they lack access to information that can guide them for health services.

Studies show that individuals with disabilities are more likely to report that people without disabilities on: having poorer overall health, having less access to adequate

health care, engaging in risky health behaviors, including smoking and physical inactivity, to save them from all these, libraries can be involved by providing adequate information on the health care. Health disparities and secondary conditions can be the result of inaccessible to health care facilities and equipment, lack of good knowledge among health professionals about specific differences among people with disabilities, transportation difficulties, and higher poverty rates among people with disabilities. Academic libraries can print leaflets or flyers and handbills to state the descriptions of how they can be treated of their disabilities, the leaflets can be placed at the entrance of the library for them to pick and read for their health care services.

Religious Information Needs

Religion is a cultural system of designated behavior and practices, moral, worldviews texts sanctified places, prophecies, ethics and organizations that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental or spiritual elements. The intersection of disability and religion concentrates on how disabled people are treated within religious communities, the religious texts of those religions, or the general input from the religious discourse on matters relating to disability. Studies on the relationship between religion and disability vary widely, with some postulating the existence of ableism and others viewing religion as a primary medium through which to assist disabled people.

Information Needs for Employments

People with disability needs information on employment to serve the community they belong, since they are recognized as citizens of a country, going by that indication, twenty-five years ago, Congress enacted the Landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and other aspects of community life. Since then, public policy at all levels has demonstrated growing support for the employment of people with disabilities, as part of a broad societal shift toward promoting these Americans' independence and full participation in mainstream society.

Today, the employment of people with disabilities is seen not only as a civil rights issue but also as a practical boon for businesses, government budgets, and citizens. Employing people with disabilities has been shown to benefit businesses, for example, as a result of lower turnover, increased productivity and access to a broader pool of skilled workers. Also, increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities "save the federal and state government money by reducing dependency on cash and medical and disability benefits," according to a 2013 Employer Assistance and Resource Network report. Employment means greater economic self-sufficiency, an opportunity to use their skills, and more active participation in community life; the library should provide them information on employment opportunities.

Civic Information Needs

Civic information needs is a right of individuals comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation, civic responsibilities can include participation in government, church, volunteers, and memberships of voluntary associations. Civic responsibility is defined as the "responsibility of a citizen". If that is the case, persons with disabilities should be eligible to perform the civic responsibility in their country, such to participate in government, to vote and to be voted for. During general election in 2019, one can boldly say that people with disability also participated in the process of election by exercised their franchise without any mayhem. However, according to the World Health Organization's 2011 World Disability Report,

about 15 percent of Nigeria's population, or at least 25 million people, have a disability. Many of them face several human rights cases of abuse including stigma, discrimination, violence, and lack of access to healthcare, housing, and education.

Nigeria ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2007 and its Optional Protocol in 2010. Since then, civil society groups and people with disabilities have called on the government to put it into practice. In 2011 and 2015, the National Assembly passed the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Bill 2009. Here comes the responsibility of the library in educating their disability library users on available civic information, so that their needs will be met on civic information need.

Concept of Disability

Disability is part of the human condition. Almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life, and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning. Most extended families have a disabled member, and many non-disabled people take responsibility for supporting and caring for their relatives and friends with disability (Seelman & Bury, 2001).

Disability is a complex term that includes multiple definitions, approaches and perspectives, each with its distinct angle and purpose, ranging from the very narrow to very broad boundaries, and looks very different from various models from the medical to the social and from the cultural to the local. According to Acharya (2004), there is no universally agreed way of defining and understanding disability. The definition of disability is continuously changing, and it varies greatly not only from country to country but also within each country. Barik (2009) noted that defining disability is also difficult because there are several kinds of disabilities from the one intended to integrate into society to the one for exclusion and segregation.

Hence, there are bound to be differences in the understanding of an individual or group who looks at disability from its integration and inclusion in the society and another who, for certain reasons, believes in its exclusion and elimination. Wasserman (2011) stressed that there are differences of perception and approach within the disabled individuals and groups themselves which should not be surprising since there are so many different kinds and degrees of disabilities ranging from physical to mental and developmental levels, not excluding the various kinds of invisible disabilities, some of which are not even seen and recognized as disabilities.

A general definition of disability, according to the World Health Organization manual relates to "any restriction or lack resulting from an impairment of the ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (Ramesh & Singh, 2011). A disability may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, and developmental or sometimes a combination of these. In the broader term, people who are labeled as disabled or handicapped because they look different from the rest of the society on account of their appearance or behavior or capacity to learn and develop. Rehabilitation Council of India (1992) defines a disabled person as one "who in his/her society is regarded as disabled, because of a difference in appearances and behavior, in combination with a functional limitation or an activity restriction"

Definition of disability, according to Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, includes seven broad categories

related to blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, mental retardation, and mental illness and locomotors disability; whereas mental illness means any mental disorder other than mental retardation, mental retardation means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of the mind of a person, which is especially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence. According to the Disability Act, a person with a disability must suffer from not less than forty percent of any disability, to be certified for the same by a medical authority. A person with low vision means a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive correction but who uses or is capable of using vision for the planning or execution of appropriate assistive devices.

Thus, the term disability summarizes a great number of different functional limitations occurring in any population, in any country of the world related to the physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medical conditions or mental illness. WHO (2001) rightly looks at disability as an: Umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure. An activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. People with invisible disabilities are discriminated because they are defective and people with invisible disabilities are usually accused of being attention seekers as they seemingly look normal (Beer, 2011). In other words, the medical model of disability can lead to misperceptions and misunderstandings that prompt some people to be "insensitive and less willing to accommodate the needs of people whose disabilities are not outwardly apparent". Due to the lack of resources, the disabled came to be considered helpless by the more privileged members of society.

They were thought to be objects of pity. In recent times, the concept of disability has come to have a socio-political construct as the rights-based model of disability has created space for it. People with a disability have, their voices and are now politically motivated to fight for the rights of the disabled. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2011)

Mobile Library for People with Disability

How can the library be mobile for people with disabilities? How can Library take their services to disabled through mobile library? In order to meet information needs of people with disability, what can library do differently to help disabled persons? Since they cannot navigate the library building as people without disability will navigate it, the library can be more proactive to advance in meeting the information needs of disability through mobile library, what is mobile library? Stringer (2017) stated "any library service that does not stay in one place is classed as a Mobile Library". Anything that can be moved and carry books or relevant materials can be called a Mobile Library as long as its aim is to serve the public and disseminate knowledge to all, especially to those who find it difficult to resort to standard libraries due to old age, social, geographic and health issues like people with disability.

When we think about the library or perhaps a specific area inside a building (for example, in a school, a hospital, etc.) where books and relevant materials are kept and circulated. Hishan and Abdullah (2018) opined that some libraries do not operate behind walls, nor do they wait for their users to find them; they make their way to them in the most unexpected ways: with buses, ships, trains, bicycles, elephants, camels, and donkeys. The Library Association Record (1960) defined the mobile library as "a vehicle devised, equipped and operated to provide as far as reasonably practicable, a

service comparable to a part-time branch library". Eastwood (1991) gave an improved definition of the mobile library as "a road vehicle especially equipped and furnished to provide a professional library service direct to the people".

It obvious that two basic conditions must be fulfilled to classify a Library as Mobile: (1) to provide library services and (2) to be mobile, in other words, not to operate permanently in a specific place or area, but to move from one place to another place. Nalluri and Gaddam (2016) expatiated further that mobile technology has now come up with "Libraries in hand". Librarians are to be on the move to determine these devices which are propelling information access and ensure that they are communicating with patrons and providing web content in the most appropriate and effective ways. Librarians must be prepared to take this challenge to increase the market and demand for mobile access to personalized facts and information anytime, anywhere especially to meet the respective information needs of disability (Barile, 2010).

Users do not want to wait for the list of web results, libraries today are covering most of the technologies given by mobile industry like PDAs, Blackberry, iPod, cell phones, UM PCs (Ultra Mobile PC) and mobilizing library contents in a portable from suitable for small screen and delivering short services in the form of contents and information which devices multiple searching features (Kroski, 2008). Librarians will need to become proficient in using these devices to enable people with disability users have access to them anywhere from any place. As the information revolution continues to unfold, libraries will experiment with mobile devices and services to support the information needs of their special person users wherever they may be (Kosturski & Skornia, 2014).

Mobile devices today can run increasingly complex software, interact with cloud services, play rich multimedia content, and allow for advanced user interactivity. New hardware and technologies such as Bluetooth, accelerometers, and multi-touch screens, as well as text, messaging, smartphone software applications, mobile websites, global positioning systems (GPS), Wi-Fi, and media creation and capture tools, these are all part of the mobile environment which library in Nigeria should employed. Many of today's mobile devices are increasingly, that is, by no default means to be connected to a wireless (Lippincott, 2008). Mobile devices include laptops, net books, notebook computers, cell phones, audio players such as MP3 Players, cameras and other items. Almost every student in Nigerian Universities, polytechnics and colleges of Education especially people with disabilities owning smartphones to access the Internet, since mobile phones come with a variety of applications, which can support storing, receiving and easy access to file and use full information which students require in advancing their studies (Karim, Darus, & Hussin, 2006). Nonetheless, people with disabilities can successfully use the library resources and services through the application of and available mobile library via internet to create more electronic mode of accessibility (Fengling, 2021).

Therefore, the mobile library can use these whole several advantages to offer services to meet the information needs of people with disability through mobile devices used in the libraries such as: PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), tablets, iPods and MP3 players, smart phones as well as cell phones. The paper summaries the possible mobile library services to people with disability in the following ways:

1. The first thing to do is to identify their information needs especially people with disabilities before meeting the needs.

2. Promoting the love for reading to people with disabilities through encouragement and support by mailing information to them at the appropriate times.

3. To provide access to the disabilities library users through cell phones.

4. Using the internet to facilitates the interest of disabilities to the usage of library resources.

5. The mobile library can help people with disabilities to have access to campus information, especially from the library or librarians' desk.

6. Providing information needs for people with a disability easy location and time saving through mobile devices.

7. Education and lifelong learning: Mobile libraries in Nigeria can offer knowledge, education, and culture to everyone, the group address here are people with disability, appropriate arranged Mobile libraries should be able to link to an educational resulted oriented, for those who are ready and eager to learn.

8. Entertainment: Mobile libraries can provide the opportunity for substantial entertainment, both through their materials and by the organization of relevant activities (for example, cultural events, projects centered around what is known as love of reading, invitations of authors, festival carnivals and shows etc.) which should be organized in cooperation with archives, museums, galleries, display and exhibitions, most especially it can be achieved during NLA Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) days or weeks of the meeting can be extended to accommodate this.

Recommendations

1) The information need of people with disability must be met through the mobile library

2) People with disability should have right to use good information communication technology devices such as PDA's, Blackberry, iPod, cell phones

3) There should be provision of education, recreational, religious, employment as well as civic responsibilities for people living with disability.

4) Library of any kind especially Academic library needs to stand up to make library home and accessible without wall.

5) Library is for all disabled persons deserve right to access information materials.

6) People living with disability should not be regarded as separated, rejected and discriminated rather libraries should see ability in disability by meeting their information needs.

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AUTHORS' PROFILES

Festus Onifade graduated from the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria where he obtained National Diploma and Higher National Diploma (2003-2006), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (2010) from Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria and Bachelor of Library and Information Studies BLIS (2017) from University of Ibadan. He works with The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria, Oyo State, as a Senior Librarian. His areas of specialization are Target groups, Disabled library users, Academic libraries, ICT and Mobile libraries.

Dr. Bilikis Adefunke Babarinde graduated from University of Ibadan, where she obtained Bachelor of Library and Information Studies (BLIS), Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) all in the Department of Library, Archival and information Studies. She authored a book, titled, *Information Sources in Science and Technology*, widely used by all students of Library and Information Science and several publications to her credits. She is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Her areas of specialization are Knowledge Management, ICT, Collection Management, Entrepreneurship, Academic libraries and School libraries.