AN ASSESSMENT OF LBRARY SERVICES RENDERED BY PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study set out to assess the services provided by public libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to assess the services of public libraries in Rivers State to know if it is in line with the UNESCO public library standard. A survey design was employed for the study. The population of the study comprised (1150) public library users and librarians in Rivers State. The sample size of two hundred and thirty (230) respondents, made up of (220) library users and 10 librarians were selected for the study through purposive sampling techniques. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. An instrument titled; Assessment of Public Library Services in Rivers State, (APLSR) was designed based on views and findings from related literature to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts comprised librarians and measurement and evaluation professionals for face and content validation. Internal consistency reliability using Cronbach Alpha method was computed for each section of the rating scale. Data collected were analyzed using Mean, and the hypothesis tested using z-test statistic*s*. A mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as a cut-off point, while scores below 2.50 were taken as a non significant result. The study revealed; that services are rendered by public libraries in Rivers State to a low extent, awareness of users with services provided is low, and problems faced by public libraries are lack of ICT resources, absence of vans, and boats for extension services and inadequate funds among other challenges. Some recommendations were made among which include that, the State Government should provide fund for staff training, and that public library should adopt strategies to create awareness among users to know various services available in the library.

Keywords: Assessment Library Services Public Libraries Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.0   Introduction

Libraries have for long served as store of information materials that enable individuals develop ideas, knowledge and experiences that are transmitted from one generation to another. The role of public library in making information available for users' is one of the most important contributions ever made to human culture. The International Federation of Library Association (2003) asserts that services provided by public libraries are expected to be accessible to all groups in the society without regard to gender or affiliations. In reality, public libraries are established to provide free and quality information services to the people. The need to provide means for educational opportunities towards achieving self-development, awareness and potentials stimulated the establishment of libraries (Olayinka and Joseph, 2010)   Library services as used here according to Adomi (2009) are the operations, activities and programmes of libraries and information centres that are organized with the aim of ensuring the smooth running of the library targeted at patrons to enable them meet their information need. Similarly, library services can also be defined as a planned framework of activities or operations that involves provision of accommodation and facilities with the aim to meet library goals and objectives. For public libraries to perform its various functions effectively, the UNESCO Public Library Standard (2001), provides that public Libraries should render services based on analysis of the library and information need of the community. The document provides that services of public library should include: Loan of books and other materials, provision of audio and braille materials for the handicapped, provision of books and other materials, readers advisory services including reservation services, government information services, community information services, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), provision of services for disable people (Users), services to children, Inter-library loan services, literacy programmes, Current Awareness Services (CAS), Indexing and abstracting services, consultancy services, On-line services, bibliographic services, hospital services, services to prisons, Services to elderly people's homes among others.

For any public library to achieve its objectives it is expected to provide effective library services to meet the UNESCO Public Library Standard. The aim of establishing public libraries in Rivers State which is in line with the UNESCO public library standard is to provide services based on the analysis of the library and information need of the community. Public library is expected to offer different kind of services to users. However, observation revealed that public libraries in Rivers State seem not to provide effective and efficient library services for users. For instance, mobile library services used in the past to disseminate information to rural communities, homes for the elderly, prisons, hospitals and some other basic services are no

longer provided by public libraries in the State. This may be why Koneru (2014), said; at a time when access to information is vital to all levels of global economy, people who need quality information are disappointed in public library services and are increasingly turning elsewhere for solution to their information need. This paper therefore, attempt to assess the services of public library in Rivers State, with the aim to proffer solutions.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The philosophy underlying the establishment of public libraries in Rivers State is to provide library services to every member of the community according to their needs and circumstances.

However, pre-research observation revealed that public libraries in Rivers State may not be fulfilling these objectives satisfactorily as library services are discharged in a manner that seems not to make much impact on the users. For instance mobile library services used in the past to disseminate information to rural communities, social homes for the elderly, prisons, hospitals, physically challenged persons and some other basic services are no longer provided, other sevices like current awareness, internet service, selective dissemination of information, adequate reading spaces and reading carrels, etc, are not provided. These prevailing condition seems to compelled Wodi (2009) to lament that library users in Rivers State have not been very lucky as it cannot boast of any coordinated efforts at modern library services, that the storey-building which captures the laughable tradition of the British colonial architecture has only 65 reading seats. Worse still, the author noted that when pressure becomes so much, readers who are lucky to secure seats in the morning must vacate them by 2.00pm for afternoon session.

In spite of the considerable resources the Rivers State government claimed to have spent on development of public libraries in the state, users appear to be disappointed in the provision services and are increasingly turning elsewhere for solution to their information needs. Studies were carried out in most public libraries in Nigeria but non has been done on the services provided by public library services in Rivers State Library Board. Hence, there is knowledge gap on the status of services available in public libraries in Rivers State. Therefore, the present study is set out to fill this gap by assessing the services of the Rivers State library Board.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to assess the services of public libraries in Rivers State to know if it is actually in line with the UNESCO Public Library Standard

In specific terms, the purpose of this study is to:

1.   Assess the services provided by public libraries in Rivers State
2.   Find out users awareness of various services offered by public libraries in Rivers State.
3.   To ascertain the problems hindering public libraries with particular reference to services delivery.

1.4   Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1.   To what extent are services offered by public libraries in Rivers State?
2.   What is the extent of users' awareness of various services rendered by public libraries in Rivers State?
3.   What are the problems faced by public libraries with particular reference to services?

1.5   Research Hypotheses

The following research hypothesis was posed to guide the study:

Ho$_1$: Public libraries in Rivers State do not significantly render effective library services to users.

1.6   Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will hopefully be relevant to the management of public libraries, members of the public, librarians, library users, Rivers State government, and researchers as well. Results obtained from the study will help the management of library to identify the areas of needs where library does not adequately provides adequate library services, armed with these knowledge, they will be able to set goals and monitor progress achieved within specify period.

Some members of the library community who may not consider public library as an important factor in their lives, due to lack of knowledge of what the library can offer, will come to know various information services available and the benefit they stand to derive from library services. This study will help librarians to know various information services needed by the community, their characteristics, cultural and ethnic interest, their expectations, reading preferences, organized groups whose activities could relate to reading.

Findings of this research work will expose public library users to different library services available in the library that will appeal to their information needs.

The Rivers State government is the major financier of the Rivers State public library; therefore this research will reveal the true position of the library in terms of services, problems facing the library and areas that need intervention. Finally, this work, will also serves as a ready reference tools for any researcher who may be interested in other areas of public library services.

2.0 Literature Review

Library services are those frameworks of activities or operations put in place by the library to ensure that users or patrons utilizes information materials made available in the library. Imeremba (2011), sees library services as various library activities or operations carried out to satisfy user's information need. Information materials in a library are put in place at considerable expense for the overall purpose of providing effective services to library users with the aim to find solution to their information requirements. Aina (2004), pointed out that services rendered by libraries include: Current awareness services, reference services, display, accession list, library publication, literacy programme, extension services, on-line services exhibition, display, user education, literature search, selective dissemination of information, referral services and outreach services. Iwuagwu and Uko (2012) emphasize that the important function of the library is to provide information services to users on request and maximization of resources is one of the principles underlying the concept of library services.

Reference service is one of the important services rendered by public library. It is of direct personal assistance to readers seeking information. This service may take the form of provision of references, fact finding or document finding tools. Osinulu and Balogun (2012), observed that reference service is established primarily to facilitate the use of library and its resources. Also, it allows information to flow efficiently from information sources to the enquirer. Madu (2008), agreed with this assertion and posited that reference service is a personal assistance eagerly given to library users in pursuit of information. Kumar (2015), explain reference service as a process of establishing contact between reader and his document in a personal way. It is a service that is carried out to either provide or locate answers to queries asks by users. Reference service is generally a person to person service. This service brings into contact the right reader and the right book or the right information sources at the right time, (Opara, 2016).

Current Awareness Services (CAS): Harrods librarian Glossary (2000) define current awareness as a system and often a publication for notifying current documents to users of libraries and information services. It is the establishment of a system for reviewing publications on receipt, selecting information pertinent to the programme of the organization served and recording individual items to be brought to the attention of persons whose work are related. At the moment the volumes of information resources in the library are numerous and users hardly know of their existence hence the need to create awareness amongst users. Many public libraries according to Schmiott (2017), have wonderful services but users are unaware of their availability. This assertion agrees with the postulation of Abdulkarim (2010), that public libraries are currently, experiencing low patronage as a result of the fact that patrons are not aware of different services rendered by public libraries. This agrees with Osuigwe, Jiagbogu, and Udeze, (2012) who found out that lack of awareness of library services rank among major hindrances of public library development. Also the issues of lack of awareness make public libraries to remain inaccessible and underutilized. Greeves (2011), asserted that the aim of creating awareness amongst users is to keep them abreast of the existence of services and to

increase user's patronage. Collaborating with this view Omotoso and Dikki (2012), remarked that lack of awareness is a serious challenge library users' encounter in getting access to information. The study further stressed that many library users in Nigeria have always had the problem of not being aware of the services available in the library except borrowing of books and reference services. Buckland (2005) had a contrary view that users are aware of various services offered in the library. This awareness has increased their level of patronage of services like referral services, loan services and how to use other reference materials among other available services. Public libraries need to take proactive approach in motivating users to utilize their services by embarking on awareness strategies and literacy programmes. In the same view, Ahiauzu (2009), reiterated the need for public libraries in responding to users' expectation in digital environment to improve facilities, market and promote product. The modern marketing and promotional strategies of library products include the use of slogans, logos, seminars, newsletters, hand bills, manuals and website among others. According to Odeh and Zino (2011), current awareness has to do with keeping information seekers up -to- date in the various areas of their information need. The library should ensure that user information need are met through enlightenment or awareness programmes. Other channels such as routing of periodicals, current contents of information resources, list of on-going seminars, conferences and workshops could be helpful. Nolan (2014), noted that awareness services include a variety of processes through which the library conveys to its users the ways and methods by which they can access the needed information. Fernandez (2012),- observed that many users are unaware of the resources and services available in libraries. Current awareness is the establishment of a system for reviewing publication on receipt, selecting information pertinent to the programme of the organization. Current awareness is also a method by which library furnishes users with relevant information on newly published materials. The study further stressed that exhibition and display or mounting of newly acquired information resources on shelves at strategic position in a library helps to draw the library users attention. It keep them well informed and up-to-date and creates demand for use. Some aspects of current awareness are discussed below:

Display: is one of the services rendered by public libraries to create awareness on resources available. Anafulu (2013), states that display draw users attention to recent addition. The impact of display as portrayed by Ranganatha's philosophy is to save the time of the user. The major goal of this service is to help users access relevant sources on time. This is essentially to advertise the services and resources of a library. Nwalo (2013), remarks that display of current resources are those information services whose primary aim is to keep information users abreast of advances in their fields.

Accession list is another component of current awareness services which library utilizes to acquaint users on the availability of information sources. Information sources acquired are periodically compiled and made available to users as a medium to inform them of current titles added to the collection. Nwosu (2010), remarked that it is the list of newly acquired books within a given period of time that are made available to users. The library issue accession list of newly acquired information sources quarterly, bi-quarterly or yearly, or as determined by the library to informing users of new addition to the stock.

Public libraries also offer its services to the physically challenged persons. Ogba (2010) opined that a library service to physically challenged persons is another aspect of information service. He maintained that library services to this group of persons involves much more than simple every day library services provided in the library. Library services is expected to be available and accessible as far as possible to the handicapped house bound readers to-up-date their knowledge on how to cope with their conditions and everyday activities.

Extension services: Public library carryout extension services to cater for people that the library by their design and focus could not reach. This implies that extension services could be seen as out-reach programmes which aim at providing the information need of people outside the library. Public libraries render this service in order to extend its services to every

information seekers in the state. Okoye (2009), noted that most of the information for public consumption is disseminated through newspapers, television or radio, which for various reasons is out of reach of the common man, both in rural and urban areas. With the aim to provide the information materials Okiy (2014), stated that mobile library services was launched in order to extend library services to everyone in the state. She maintained that extension services have reached segments of the rural population that would not otherwise have any library facilities at all. It has brought improvement to rural areas, stimulated reading interest and have increased general reading interest. Areas also affected included awareness on health and nutrition, child care, and family planning.

On-line Information Services: Public library also involved in on-line information services. This is a process of retrieving information from databases. Similarly, it is also a means of measuring the volume and quantity of relevant information available from a range of sources (Batley, 2005). On-line databases are described by Igwela (2007), is a computer store of information which is accessible through the host computer or a cross computer networks. This service helps users to search databases from remote computers or terminals interactively. With the increase in human knowledge, public libraries use it for more effective information search and delivery services. On-line service is one of the preferred services ever created and have greatly influenced the operational functions and activities of modern day library services. Ahiauzu (2009), also outlined other services provided by libraries to include but not limited to loan or lending services, inter-library loan services, reprographic services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), abstracting and indexing services as well as translation services.

3.0 Methodology

A. Research Design

The study adopted a descrptive survey design. The choice was carefully made after weighing the population and the geographical spread of the study area. The design helped the researchers to lay hands on the required data that explains the current library service in public libraries under investigation.

B. Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of the study comprised 1150 public library users and librarians in five public libraries in Rivers State. The sample size comprised 220 library users and 10 libraries selected through purposive sampling techniques.

C. Instrumentation

Three research questions were posed for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a rating scale titled; Assessment of Library Services by Public Libraries in Rivers State (ALSERPLR).It was designed to elicit information from respondents regarding the types of services offered by public libraries in Rivers State. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). While questions one and three were designed for librarians, question two was designed for library users. Data collected were analyzed using Arithmetic mean and the null hypothesis was tested with z-test at 0.05 level of significance. A mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as a cut-off point, while scores below 2.50 were taken as a non significant result.

D. Validation of instrument

The draft questionnaire was submitted to three experts, two from the department of library and information science and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation all from the for face and content validation. Their suggestions and advise led to the modification of the instrument in vital areas as advised.

E. Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher distributed twenty (20) copies of the instruments to twenty (20) respondents' comprising ten (10) library users and ten (10) librarians in Imo State Library Board Owerri. All the twenty copies were retrieved. The

reliability of the instrument were calculated using Cronbach Alpha reliability formula because it is ideal for four-point scale questionnaire. Internal consistency reliability index using cronbach Alpha method was computed for each research question. The internal reliability co-efficient obtained for research questions 1, 2 and 3, are 0.84, 0.83, 0.85 respectively after computation. These were indications that the various sections of the instruments are substantially related and as such will be fit to collect data for the study.

F.   Scope of the Study

The study focused on servives provided by public libraries, users awareness of services and to ascertain the problems hindering public libraries in service delivery. The justification for the above content scope was besed on the fact that they are perceived to be linked and can improved library patronage. The study covers all the four public libraries in rivers State. This is made up of the central library at Bennard Carr Street, Port Harcourt, the public library in D-Line Port Harcourt, Public Library in Okrika, Khana and Gokana local governments.

4.0   Results/Findings

Research question 1: To what extent are services offered by public libraries in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Scores on Extent of Library Services offered by Public Libraries   in Rivers   State

	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Provision of shelf guides	3.70	High extent
2.	Reference services	3.50	High extent
3.	Service of children	3.50	High extent
4.	Provision of catalogue cards	3.50	High extent
5.	Loan services	3.20	High extent
6.	Open access	3.20	High extent
7.	Photocopying services	3.10	High extent
8.	Display	3.00	High extent
9.	Service to rural communities	2.90	High extent
10.	Consultancy services	2.80	High extent
11.	Literature search	2.80	High extent
12.	Adult literacy	2.70	High extent
13.	Service to schools	2.40	Low extent
14.	Service to disable persons	2.30	Low extent
15.	Provision of up- to- date materials	2.30	Low extent
16.	Abstracting services	2.30	Low extent
17.	Exhibition	2.30	Low extent
18.	Bindery services	2.20	Low extent
19.	Online service	2.10	Low extent
20.	Bibliographic service	2.10	Low extent
21.	SDI	2.10	Low extent
22.	Extension services	1.80	Low extent
23.	Indexing services	1.60	Low extent
24.	Translation services	1.60	Low extent
25.	Service to penal institutions	1.50	Low extent
26.	Service to hospitals	1.50	Low extent
	Overall Mean	**2.53**	**High extent**

The analysis in Table 1 shows the extent various services are offered. The item by item analysis indicates that the extent to which 12 services are offered by the library is high. The rest of the 14 library services are offered to a low extent.

Research question 2: What is the extent of user's awareness of various services rendered by public libraries in Rivers state?

Table 2: Mean Scores on Extent of Awareness of Various Services Rendered by Public Library

	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Provision of guides	2.55	High extent
2.	Consultancy services	2.54	High extent
3.	Loan services	2.53	High extent
4.	Photocopying service	2.50	High extent
5.	Free access	2.50	High extent
6.	Reference service	2.46	Low extent
7.	Serv. to schools	2.39	Low extent
8.	Catalogues	2.34	Low extent
9.	Assistance to users	2.33	Low extent
10.	Service to children	2.29	Low extent
11.	Display	2.21	Low extent
12.	Online services	2.06	Low extent
13.	Indexing services	2.04	Low extent
14.	Serv. to prisons	2.02	Low extent
15.	Adult literacy services	2.00	Low extent
16.	Exhibition	1.96	Low extent
17.	Accession list serv.	1.97	Low extent
18.	SDI	1.95	Low extent
19.	Abstracting services	1.94	Low extent
20.	Translation services	1.93	Low extent
21.	Mobile serv. to disable	1.91	Low extent
22.	Mobile lib. Services	1.89	Low extent
23.	Serv. to communities	1.80	Low extent
24.	Bindery services	1.80	Low extent
	Overall Mean	**2.16**	**Low extent**

The analysis in Table 2 shows that extent of awareness of various services rendered by public library is low. The item by item analysis shows that the extent of awareness of 19 items is low, with their mean ranging from 1.80 to 2.46

Research question 3: What are the problems faced by public libraries with particular reference to services?

Table 3: Mean Scores on the Problems faced by Public Libraries in Rivers State while Providing Information Resources and Services

	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of training among staff	3.90	High extent
2.	Inadequate ICT services	3.70	High extent
3.	Absence of vans/boats	3.70	High extent
4.	Inadequate fund	3.30	High extent

5.	Shortage of professional staff	3.10	High extent
6.	Inadequate fund	3.00	High extent
7.	Lack of selection tools	2.10	Low extent
8.	Mutilation of library resources	2.10	Low extent
9.	Theft of library resources	2.00	Low extent
10.	Shelving of library resource	1.90	Low extent
	Average Mean	**2.88**	**High extent**

From the mean of responses in Table 3 above, 6 item out of 10 listed are accepted as the problems faced by public libraries in Rivers State while providing information and services. Their mean ranges from 3.00 to 3. 90.

Hypothesis testing:

Ho1: Public libraries in Rivers State do not significantly render effective library services to users.

Table 4: Test Analysis on Provision of Adequate Library Services

	Items	mean	SD	df	t- cal	t-crit
1.	Aware of loan Servicers	2.45	1.08	219	33.63	1.96
2.	Ref. servicers	2.47	1.06	219	35.08	1.96
3.	Photocopying	2.46	1.04	219	35.08	1.96
4.	Mobile lib. Serv.	1.89	.94	219	29.84	1.96
5.	Serv. to Disable	1.91	.89	219	31.90	1.96
6.	Indexing serv.	2.04	.92	219	32.96	1.96
7.	Online service	2.06	.85	219	36.13	1.96
8.	SDI	1.95	.96	219	30.0 7	1.96
9.	Consultancy serv.	2.01	1.00	219	30.00	1.96
10.	Translation serv.	1.93	.88	219	32.52	1.96
11.	Adult literacy serv	2.00	.85	219	34.72	1.96
12.	Accession list	1.98	.76	219	38.83	1.96
13.	Abstracting serv.	1.95	.74	219	38.76	1.96
14.	Shelf guides	2.42	.98	219	36.49	1.96
15.	Catalogues	2.35	1.10	219	31.70	1.96
16.	Users assist.	2.33	1.00	219	34.44	1.96
17.	Exhibition	1.97	.93	219	31.27	1.96
18.	Service to schs.	2.39	.81	219	43.67	1.96
19.	Serv. to prisons	2.02	.78	219	38.51	1.96
20.	Service to children	2.29	.88	219	38.41	1.96
21.	Services to comm.	1.80	.79	219	33.89	1.96
22.	Serv. to hospitals	1.87	.59	219	47.29	1.96
23.	Bindery serv.	1.80	.70	219	38.16	1.96
24.	Open access	2.39	.80	219	44.24	1.96
25.	Display	2.21	.81	219	40.35	1.96

The hypothesis sample z-test analysis presented in Table 4 shows that public libraries in Rivers State do not offer adequate library services to users as all the observed mean ratings were less that the test value (2.50). This was shown by the fact that all the calculated z-values in the above items were greater than the critical z-value of 1.96. This is an indication that the respondents mean ratings on all these items were significantly below the scale average of 2.50. It was therefore revealed that Rivers State public library does not offer efficient library services to users. The hypothesis was therefore accepted that Rivers State public libraries do not significantly offer efficient library services to users.

5.0   Discussion of Results

The study found out that services are rendered by public libraries in Rivers State to a low extent. The study discovered that some aspect of awareness services, search aid, personalized services, services to disable persons, provision of up-to-date materials, bibliographic services Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), indexing and abstracting services recommended by the UNESCO Public Library Standard were not rendered. This finding agree with Owornakpor (2008), Osuigwe, Jiagbogu andUdeze (2006), Okeji and Bosah (2012) and Unagha (2015).

Owornakpor (2008) found out that none of the public libraries investigated in Delta State in Nigeria, are connected to the internet thereby making thew process of information search difficult for library users. The study further revealed that funds allocation to librariesin the state are not adequate. Osuigwe, Jiagbogu and Udeze (2006) discovered in their study tha mobile library services used in the past to provide services by public libraries in Imo State are no longer available, no new services such as personalize services, selected dissemination of information (SDI), bibliographic services, indexing and abstracting services are no longer available. The authors further revealed in their study that public libraries are on the decline, where they are not static, inadequate fund and lack of recognition of the importance of public libraries are visible. Okeji and Bosah (2012) found out that out-dated information resources and poor service delivery are among the challenges facing public libraries in Nigeria. This also corroborrate with Nwachukwu (2012) affirm that information resources and services provided by public libraries in Nigeria are lamentably inadequate in terms of currency, quality and quantity. Hoever, the study conducted on factors affecting public library service delivery in Imo State, by Anumkua and Unagha (2015) disagree with the finding, as it found out that public libraries in the state render adequate services such reference, lending, literature search and other relevant services to the physically challenged in public libraries.

The finding of this study also reveals that user's awareness of services rendered by public libraries in Rivers State is low. Out of numerous services rendered by public libraries in the State, users are aware of only five types of services which are provision of guides, loan services, free access to information records and photocopying services. The position of this finding is in agreement with the result of a study by Nwosu (2010) who found out that a reasonable number of library users claim that their hindrances in the library emanate from lack of awareness of information records in the library, inadequate guidance to available sources, lack of knowledge on how to use specific materials and access to relevant information.

Finding in this study further revealed the problems hindering effectiveservice delivery in public libraries in Rivers state to include; lack of training among staff, inadequate ICT services, absence of vans/boats, inadequate fund, shortage of professional staff and inadequate fund.   The finding validate the revealation of Tathagatha (2010) who found out that inadequate funding, shortage manpower, lack of infrastructural facilities, non compliance to ICT implementation in libraries are some of the factors militating against the provision of adequate services by public libraries.

Finally, test of hypothesis indicate that public libraries in Rivers state do not offer significant library service to users.

The finding of this study supports the results of the study of Saleh and Lasisi (2011) who found out that public libraries lack adequate and qualified personnel, and such services as

indexing and abstracting and bibliographic services, that they arestocked with out-dated information resources. The study further found out the absence of information and communication technology facilities in public libraries. Asoqwa, Asadu, Ezema,Ugwu and Ugwanyi (2014) recently confirm similar result that some factors hindering effective service delivery in public libraries are lack of modern facilities, poor funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities and equipment. The finding of this study however contradicts the result of Antwi (2000) who found out that users of public libraries are fully aware of various services rendered to clientile.

6.0 Recommendations

Consequent upon the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. That State Government should endeavour to provide fund for the training of professionals and supports staff of public libraries from time-to time to improve their competence in handling various library routine services.
2. The public libraries should create awareness among users on various information services available, through user- education, orientation, regular publication and provision of error free catalogues, library guides, exhibitions to acquaint users' with various available resources.
3. The Rivers State government should provide vans and boats for public libraries in the state to enable them carry out extension services.

With the provision of vans and boats, public library in Rivers State will be able to provide library services to communities in the creeks and other village's upland. This will cause a revival of interest in library use amongst the Rivers people.

7.0 Conclusion

The study set out to assess the services provided by public libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to assess the services of public libraries in Rivers State to know if it is in line with the UNESCO public library standard. The study however found out that provision of services in public libraries in Rivers State does not meet the standard recommended as various services such as services to the physically challenged, abstracting and indexing, online services, bibliographic services selective dissemination of information (SDI), extension services among others are not adequately provided. The finding of this study also reveals that user's awareness of services rendered by public libraries in Rivers State is low. Out of numerous services rendered by public libraries in the State, users are aware of only five types of services which are provision of guides, loan services, free access to information records and photocopying services.The study also identified some challenges faced by public libraries to include lack of ICT resources, absence of vans, and boats for extension services and inadequate funds among other challenges. Some recommendations were made among which were that, the State Government should provide fund for staff training, and that public library should adopt strategies to make users know various services available for utilization.

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