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SCHOOL LIBRAR1ANSHIP AND ITS PLACE IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF ZARIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY, KADUNA STATE

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BY

DR. (MRS.) H. M. DAUDU

LIBRARIAN, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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Abstract

This paper titled School Librarianship and its place in Nigerian Education is a research pape on the availability of school libraries in Zaria Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) As one of the education services to be offered in schools, the National Policy on Education particular about the provision of libraries in schools and the training of librarians and library assistants for effective services. Four objectives were set to find out the availability of libraries, to identify qualification of staff to find out the types of resources and how functional the libraries are. Survey research method was used to describe the state of school libraries in Zaria. The population was made up of all the 116 schools in six (6) districts of Zaria Local Government Education Area. The whole population was used for the study. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire, interview and document assessment. Descriptive statistics and a decision rule were relied upon for analysis. The results revealed that most schools don 7 have libraries as only 27 (23.3%) have libraries and only two (2) staff have professional qualification. Only one (1) library has a significant level (2.50) of functionality. It was recommended that provision of school libraries should be made mandatory for primary schools, and professional staff should be provided to render service, that this can be achieved through sending teachers for training in the area of librarianship. Learning resources that prepare the ground for lifelong education should be made available to primary school pupils.

Keywords: *Availability, Education, Librarianship, Primary School Libraries, School Librarianship, School Libraries.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is very essential for the transformation of individual, society and a nation. In fact it is a basic human need which should not be compromised. In life, education is a continuous process that is why we often say, there is no end to learning. According to Omolayole (2001) education is not only a continuous process but also a life-long experience. In the light of this, functional facilities have to be made available if life-long experience can be achieved. In the National Policy on Education (2004), the library is part of the educational facilities that is referred to as "educational services." Educational services according to the policy "facilitate the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system." All through the educational policy of Nigeria, there is emphasis for self-directed learning to be enshrined in the teaching/learning method in schools beginning from primary school level. It is for this reason that educational facilities including libraries are required.

The need for education in Nigeria

The World Book Encyclopedia states that "education in its broadest sense refers to the ways in which people learn skills and knowledge and understanding about the world and about themselves." Education is so important that it is engraved in the Nigerian constitution; Education is what gives those who acquire it the ability to look at issues objectively. It provides the individual the opportunity to contribute his/her own quota to the development of the nation. When a large number of people in a nation are educated, they can resist so many ills that stand against the development of that nation because the level of reasoning of educated people is different from the non-educated.

Education helps us with many things, but most importantly, it empowers the individual to think, ask questions and see beyond the obvious. Education broadens our horizon and gives us a better understanding of the world around us and how things work. Nigeria as a nation should be mature enough, having attained 100 years of existence, to be able to pursue educational policies using the appropriate facilities at our disposal without sentiments. It is as a result of education that transformation takes place since it is the basis of a civilized, structured society. It helps people to think rationally, avoid illusions in life, reduce social and economic disparity allowing

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progress to be shared equally. Education cannot be fully achieved except it is given under a conducive environment using quality facilities and services. Library service is part of the educational facilities and services that provide life-long education in Nigeria. The struggle to provide and establish library services in our schools in Nigeria has a long history.

Library Services in Nigeria

Immediately after Nigerian independence, a commission called "Banjo Commission" was set up in 1961 to review the educational system in Western Nigeria. The report of the commission revealed that there was no serious consideration given to the building of libraries in secondary schools. As a result, recommendations were made. The recommendations were the basis for provision of school libraries as part of educational service in schools. It was recommended that:-

- a library should, be an integral part of the school, a community centre which is opened during break and outside school hours.
- The school library should be used to store and organize the schools teaching aids, pictures, illustrations filmstrips etc
- There should be a teacher who has had training in librarianship. (Fafunwa 2004)

From that time on, each National policy on Education ensures that the issue of library service is included in it. This explains the effort of Federal Government of Nigeria in investing on school libraries development over the years. The government ensures that school libraries are provided with qualified librarians in Federal Government Colleges. But what happens to states schools and primary schools?

State Ministries of Education in their own effort to comply with the recommendation of providing library service in state schools collect library levies from students to equip school libraries. They also empower library boards to supervise school libraries and invest in their growth. All these efforts are geared towards providing library service in secondary schools. Though, only very few primary schools particularly the private schools have libraries, the contribution of World Bank assisted primary education project of 1999 was felt when assistance was provided for setting up of libraries especially in the public primary schools. In addition, the Universal Basic Education Board was to ensure that school libraries are part of the facilities for successful primary school programme hence books and other learning

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resources are being provided. The effort of the Nigerian School Library Association cannot be overlooked. Workshops and conferences are held to interact and sensitize the education sector on the need for school libraries. They have even gone ahead to recommend the replacement of school libraries with school library Media Centre, to meet the requirements of the modern philosophy of education that stresses the need for individualized instruction and the use of multi-media resources in teaching the curriculum (Elaturoti 1990).

Statement of the problem

The effectiveness of primary school libraries in the learning process has been demonstrated especially in developed countries where school libraries in those countries have become part of a good modern school. In Nigeria, making the school library a part of the school system became prominent when the machinery for the production of National Policy on Education (NPE) began. As a result of this, pronouncements were made in the NPE of 1977, 1981, 1985 and 2004 concerning the issue of libraries in schools. The NPE included as part of the requirement for successful library services in school to provide for training of librarians and library assistants for library services (FGN 2004).

As a follow up of this, several scholars Dike (2001), and Obanya (2001), recommended the establishment of school libraries because they see them to be facilities or agents of improving performance of school children. The children's performance is improved if library resources are adequately provided, and trained staff are there to make the children use them. In addition to library resources, the NPE suggests the use of virtual library as a platform for sharing knowledge.

Though there has been emphasis on the provision of libraries in schools, the focus has always been on secondary schools mostly hence the availability of libraries in Federal Government Colleges. The primary school is where the foundation of education should be laid, and where libraries are needed most. This study was therefore carried out based on the following objectives.

1. To identify the schools that have libraries in Zaria Local Education Authority
2. To identify qualification of staff in charge of the libraries
3. To find out types of resources that are available in the school library

4. To find out how functional the libraries are by examining the level of use.

Review of related literature

Concept of Availability of Libraries

The National Policy on Education (2004) instructed that since libraries constitute one of the most important educational services, proprietors of schools shall also provide functional libraries in all their educational institutions in accordance with the established standards. Elaturoti (2000), states that the policy on providing libraries in schools is yet to be achieved. For schools to make libraries available, they must agree that libraries are significant. To begin, offset (2011) is of the opinion that there is need to develop a vision of how the library integrates into the aims of the school, how you want it to be used. Without a vision, nothing good can come to existence. Schools do not have the vision that is why they claim they have libraries when a class room or store is labeled library.

Where primary school libraries are available, you will find around the school an attractive and well-stocked place that is often available to provide effective support for pupils' wider reading and information retrieval skills. There will be activities which should show the presence of the library. In a study by Creaser and Maynard (2008), school libraries were presented as libraries that are being well-used and demonstrating innovative approaches to engaging children reading. It is believed that school libraries provide an excellent means of giving all children the opportunity to enjoy books. It is not enough to say libraries are available; they have to be seen being functional. If we are not paying lip-service to education, and if we believe that the library is the heart of education enterprise (NPE 2004), then every level of education including primary school should have functional libraries.

It is not surprising that in some parts of Nigeria, most children (especially those from rural areas or economically disadvantaged backgrounds) first meet books and reading materials in the school. The availability of school library encourages its users to fully accept the responsibility for education and development through the use of that facility. You can imagine the reaction of a rural child going to school empty handed and the teacher takes him/her to a well stocked library. He/she will be overwhelmed especially if they meet a good teacher librarian that

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will introduce them to the library. School libraries are as fundamental as they are indispensable to learning and attainment of educational goals and objectives.

Library Staff Qualifications

Running a successful school library requires the involvement of staff, pupils, parents and the governing body. To ensure that the library is strategically managed and developed as well as open and available to children as much as possible, it is recommended that schools employ a professional librarian to work alongside a library assistant. Lack of professional and dedicated staff in primary schools libraries tend to limit the quality of service rendered in the school library.

The Australian school Library Association (2012) recommends that a teacher librarian should be a person who holds a recognized teaching qualification and a qualification in librarianship. This is valuable because curriculum knowledge and pedagogy are combined with library and information management knowledge and skills. Teacher librarian support and implement the vision of their school communities through advocating and building effective library and information services and programmes that contribute to the development of lifelong learning. In the light of this, Nigerian primary schools are yet to have qualified library staff in our schools.

Resources in Primary School Libraries

A UNESCO recommendation (1968) suggests that in primary school, resources should be a wide variety of materials to meet the demands of the curriculum and the varying interests and needs of pupils and teachers. Resources should include a wide range of content, of different levels of reading difficulty, style, and type. They should include even materials for pupils that are just learning how to read. A basic book collection should be rich and varied and should cover all subject areas of the school curriculum. You should provide materials that include both factual books and stories. In other words there should be a balanced book collection of which in each subject area there are books of various levels of difficulty. A book collection should include beginners books, for initial learning to read, fiction books for light reading, textbooks to supplement prescribe textbooks, reference materials, magazines and newspapers.

The increasing emphasis on audio-visual materials and e-resources in teaching and learning makes it important for the library to provide some materials in this area and to have information available about many others. The average individual school does not own a collection of motion picture films, but will depend on borrowing or renting them from a central source. The library, therefore, should have information on what is available in this regard, and where it can be procured.

The use of school libraries

According to the Primary School Library Guidelines (2008), the school library is the cornerstone to the process of empowering pupils to become independent and life-long learners. Provision of the right resources is key to this process; therefore, the teacher librarian needs to be familiar with the school activities so that his/her resources selection can be done properly. The types of resources brought to the school library determines the patronage of the library. Pupils and teachers who find what they want will return to use the library and will trust the library to meet their needs. With adequate resources, the library can take its users beyond the known into new worlds because library resources should inspire and challenge its users. Proper selection, acquisition and management of resources gives the teacher librarian the new status of resource centre manager. Resources that should be in the school library should include everything that promotes learning.

According to William, Wavell and Coles (2001), Libraries have a positive impact on academic achievement particularly at primary and early secondary level. In discussing the factors which determine the school library's impact on children's learning and achievement they itemized three key areas as being instrumental:-

- a skilled librarian
- collaboration with teachers
- good resources

School Libraries are expected to identify the top ten steps to success in terms of schools libraries and learning: in order to induce usage.

- Range of stock to reflect the whole curriculum
- Collaborative planning between teaching staff and the librarian
- Use of the library included in curriculum planning and schemes of work
- Collections of resources for topic teaching
- Fiction to support literacy across the curriculum
- Identified and book marked websites
- Celebrating success by displaying pupils work.
- Links to outside agencies e.g. schools library service such as School Library Associations
- Regular current awareness bulletins for teaching staff-detailing how the school librarians resources and skills can support new curriculum initiatives.
- Give individualized service, making sure that every library user gets information that meets his or her particular need

School libraries should also serve as a laboratory for its users to practice the skills of using resources. It is through these that pupils and teachers will utilize the school libraries.

Methodology

Survey research method which is also known as descriptive study was the method used for this study. Survey method uses the sample of a population to describe and explain what is in existent or non-existent, on the present status of a phenomenon. The method is appropriate for this study because the study described the availability of primary school libraries and its place in education using Zaria Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) schools. The population of this research was the LGEA primary schools in Zaria numbering 116 schools with 27 libraries. Since the population was not large, they were all used for the study. For ease of data collection, the schools were distributed according to districts and types of schools as presented on table 1. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire, interview and assessment of records in the education office. Descriptive statistics (table, frequencies and percentages) (table 2, 3 & 4) and decision rule on mean scores (table 5) were employed for analysis. The mean score greater or equal to 2.5 is significant, but when the mean is less than 2.5, it is insignificant and therefore, it is rejected. The choice of the two methods

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employed for analysis and presentation guarantees the coherence and explicitly interpretation in line with the objectives of the paper.

Table 1: Population of the study showing Distribution of Primary School in Zaria LGEA

S/No	Districts	Number of schools				
		Model School	Special School	Science School	Ordinary School	T
1	Fada	1	-	-	13	14
2	Tudun Wada	1	1	1	10	13
3	Kaura	1	-	-	21	22
4	Rafin Albasa	-	1	-	33	34
5	Anguwan Dankali	-	-	-	14	14
6	Dambo	-	-	1	18	19
	Total	3	2	2	99	11

Source: Desk Officer Zaria Local Government Education Authority (2014).

Analysis of Findings and Discussion

The first objective of this study was to identify the schools that have libraries in Zaria Local Government Education Authority. In finding out this, a research assistant assisted in going through the records in the education office. The records showed the number of libraries available in the schools in all the districts. The finding is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of schools with libraries

S/No.	Districts	No of schools	Libraries available	%
1	Fada	14	5	35.7
2	Tudun Wada	13	5	30.8
3	Kaura	22	6	27.3
4	Rafin Albasa	34	5	14.7
5	Anguwan Dankali	14	3	21.1
	Total	116	27	23.3

According to table 2 the district that has the highest number of libraries is Kaura with 6 (27.3%) libraries from 27 schools. Though the number of libraries in this district are more than the other districts, the percentage is lower than Fada district that has only 5 (35.7%) libraries because the total number of schools (19 schools) is lower than the previous district. The analysis shows that the least number of libraries is 3 (21.4%) from Anguwan Dankali though Rafin Albasa has 5 (14.7%), the percentage is the lowest of them all because the number of libraries is low compared to the number schools (34 schools) in that district. The overall number of libraries in the Local Education Area (LEA) of Zaria Local Government 27 (23.3%) is low. This is contrary to the suggestion put across by National policy on Education (2004). The policy directed that proprietors of schools should provide libraries in schools.

Most of the schools that have libraries are selected schools. They are either Model schools, Science schools or Special schools. Other general schools seem to be neglected. Some of the schools that claim to have libraries; they are available just by name. They lack the facilities that qualify them to be called libraries.

The second research objective was to identify the qualifications of staff in charge of the libraries. In finding out this, the researcher discovered that there were various levels of staff working in the libraries through it was not all the libraries that have staff running them. The number of staff per library and their qualifications are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Qualification of staff in school Libraries qualification of staff

S/No.	District	No. of Libraries	DLS	BLS	NCE	SSCE	To
1	Fada	5	-	-	2	1	3
2	Tudun Wada	4	1	1	1	1	4
3	Kaura	6	-	-	4	2	6
4	Rafin Albasa	5	-	-	3	1	4
5	Anguwan Dankali	3	-	-	2	1	3
6	Dambo	4	-	-	2	2	4
	Total		1	1	14	8	22

From table 3 the bulk of the staff who are said to be library staff were SSCE holders. This category of staff cannot really provide satisfactory service to children and teachers in the schools. The role they play is just to open the library and sit at the entrance. They don't have the expertise of providing library service such as teaching how to handle books, motivating children to develop interest in reading through story hour and other professional services. The highest professional qualification was one (1) staff with a Bachelor degree in Library Science out of all the 27 libraries. In some of the schools, 8 NCE holders were given the responsibility of taking care of the libraries. Though this is not the same as professional staff, this category of staff can function better than SSCE holders because some of them offered library studies as minor subject during their NCE programme. The most appropriate staff are diploma holders. In this study, only one (1) school has a diploma holder as the person in charge of the library. One would have thought that there will be several schools that would have qualified staff running school libraries in Zaria by virtue of the fact that Zaria is a seat of knowledge and there is a library school there that they can easily send staff for training. The third objective was to find out the types of resources available in the school libraries. A list of types of resources was drawn; this list was used to examine the types of resources made available to libraries. Table 4 presents the types of resources available.

Table 4. Types of resources available in the Libraries (N=27)

S/No	Types of resources	Frequency	%
1	Beginners books	2	7.4
2	Fiction books	12	44.4
3	Text books	10	37.0
4	Reference books	5	18.5
5	Magazines/Newspapers	5	18.5
6	Television sets	2	7.4
7	D.V.D Players	2	7.4
8	Flash cards	5	18.5
9	Posters	5	18.5
10	Filmstrips	2	7.5

Beginner Books are large print books that should be used in pre-primary and lower primary classes. These resources are not well known so it is only 2 (7.4%) schools out of the 27 with libraries that have few of those books. The highest resources available were fiction books, though the amount was not satisfactory, only 12 (44.4%) libraries have those types of resources. The rest of the schools only made use of empty class rooms and labeled them. "Library" with no furniture and resources. Important resources that should be available to supplement pupils prescribed texts are textbooks. There were 10 (37.0%) libraries that have them. The least resources available were television sets 2 (7.4%). These resources should be available because they assist children to acquire lifelong education (Usoro 2007).

The fourth objective was to find out how functional the libraries were. Any functional school library should be able to show the level of its use to assist pupils and teachers to become independent and life-long learners and effective teachers respectively. This was examined using some indices that are acceptable internationally. Table 5 have some of these indices that were used to test the functionality of the libraries in this research.

Table 5: Functionality of the available Libraries

S/No	Items	Mean score	Decision
1	Availability of Resources	2.25	Not Significant
2	The availability of Professional Librarian	1.75	Not Significant
3	Opening hours of the Library	2.50	Significant
4	Library hour per class	2.25	Not Significant
5	Availability of Borrowing facilities	1.75	Not Significant
6	Availability of sitting space	1.75	Not Significant
7	Availability of furniture	1.75	Not Significant
8	Conducive atmosphere	1.75	Not Significant
9	Circulation system	1.50	Not Significant
10	Funding for library service	1.75	Not Significant

Based on the decision rule applied to the indices that can make school library functional, the result in table 5 revealed that only opening hours of the library with a mean score of 2.50 was a significant. Respondents were of the opinion that they were satisfied with the opening hours of the libraries. All other indices were below the bench mark. This indicates that libraries in Zaria did not comply with the recommendation of UNESCO (1968) on resource provision nor did they follow what Australian School Library Association (2012) said in relation to professional librarians. In this regard the libraries have fallen short of the expectation of William, Wavel and Coles (2001) who saw school libraries to have positive impact in academic achievement in primary schools.

Conclusion

Due to lack of availability of standard libraries in most primary schools in Zaria, the study revealed that there are no recent types of resources such as e-resources, even the conventional types of resources that are available are not adequate in number and type. Very negligible number of qualified staff found in the schools. Most staff were secondary school leavers. The use of the library was not satisfactory so the presence of the library was not felt in relation to teaching and learning. The pupils did not really know the importance of library in

their learning process; also teachers did not really use the library in preparation for their teaching or lesson notes.

Recommendations

1. Through the sponsorship of the parent bodies, school should provide libraries in all the schools and not selecting only special, model or science schools. With the knowledge that primary schools are where foundation of education is laid, Nigerian Education Authorities should make it mandatory for primary schools to establish libraries.

2. For effective service to be made available, and for pupils to benefit from the library, professional staff should be provided in all the libraries. Teacher Librarians are hereby recommended for every school. The teacher librarian will provide professional service that will attract children to make use of the libraries. In the absence of qualified staff to run school libraries the education office can send their teachers to train as teacher librarians in the Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria where such a programme is available for school teachers.

3. More current types of resources should be provided to meet up with the current development. E-resources should be provided as children are very versatile in those areas. This will enhance their learning and encourage resource sharing among primary school teachers and pupils.

4. Services to encourage the use of the library should be introduced. There should be library hour included on the school time table where the use of library will be tauught. Loan service should be made available to enable users have enough time of using the resources outside the library hour.

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