THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN THE BENUE-PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA

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ZARIA, NIGERIA,
1973

A Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Education of Ahmadu Bello
University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

in the Department of Library Science.

JUNE, 1977

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Miss Agnes 'Lola Adeleye who bore all the difficulties with me at the time I was preparing this book.

It is also dedicated to my father, Mr. John O. Agada who has been responsible for my education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people have assisted me in the preparation of this thesis, and I can name but a few of them. Among them is Professor R.C. Benge who is the pillar of my success. He has never failed in our countless discussions to make useful suggestion that jog me of my accustomed patterns of thought. To him I am greatly indebted. I should also like to thank Mr. Anthony Olden (Kashim Ibrahim Library) who took time to read the scripts and made useful comments which I found very valuable. My immediate debt also goes to Dr Abdullahi Mohammed, who made useful corrections, especially in chapter III.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following people: Mr. P.O. Unoogwu, State Librarian for Benue Plateau State who allowed me to utilize the result of his findings on public libraries in the former Benue Plateau State. His unpublished work formed the edifice of my work. Finally, my thanks go to Messrs Abu Yusufu, Emmanuel Mayaki and Boniface Dzer who typed the scripts with accuracy.

1977 Akatu Agada

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The planning and development of public libraries in Nigeria is relatively new just as in any other developing nation; many people hardly realise its significance because it is non-revenue yielding. However with the general economic, social and educational transformation, librarianship is beginning to attract the focus of many - especially governments. And with pressure on them most developing countries are inclined to effect systematic planning with greatest possible economy and efficiency. In Nigeria, governments as well as prominent scholars have realised the power of libraries as levers for development without which general development cannot effectively take off the ground as libraries provide the necessary information for development. The above needs have called for library development planning in the Benue-Plateau State of Nigeria. The work tends to concentrate on the problems of administration rather than on problems of structure.

One reason why library planning development is so much in the news today appears to be connected with the present stage of economic, social and educational progress

of Nigeria particularly in the defunct Benue-Plateau State. There is the dire need for elaborate planning and development of public libraries to correspond with the progress in other circles especially educational and industrial advancement without which other forms of growth would stagnate.

Public libraries in Benue-Plateau State must be conceived as agencies of public and popular education and secondarily as recreational facilities. There is no doubt that public libraries in the state would serve as sources of information and as weapons to further self-development of those who leave the secondary or primary school. The Benue-Plateau State was in no small measure confronted with the problem, for instance of school leavers who aspired to further their education through the use of public libraries. Furthermore, public libraries must provide follow-up reading materials for those new literates from primary school who are too young to be employed as most of them are under fourteen. In addition, provisions need be made for adult education programmes and the community development of the area in which the library is situated; it must provide information for the community's assistance in their projects.

> "The public library should be maintained wholly from public fund and no direct charge should be made to anyone for its services. To fulfil its purpose the public library must be readily accessible, and its door open for free and equal use by all members of the community regardless of race, colour, nationality, age, religion, status or educational attainment"[1]

Although the above summarises what a public library ought to be it will still be useful to show what a public library is. This raises the question of definition: what is a public library? A democratic institution for education, culture and information a public library has been defined as "Provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all."[2] While the above definition can be accepted as all embracing it fails to indicate precisely who provides a public library. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines public library

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1. UNESCO manifesto on the purpose of public libraries in Unesco Bull. for Libraries, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, (May - June) 1972. p. 130.

2. Leonard Montague Harrod. The Librarians' Glossary and Reference Book of Terms used in Librarianship and the Book Crafts, 3rd rev. ed. (London: Andre Deutsch, 1971). p. 524.

as "maintained by a municipality or other unit of local government and usually supported at least in part by local taxation that provides books and reference services free to all local residents."[1] There is however a general consensus among the two definitions; free of charge, accessible to all and supported by public funds. The two definitions therefore give us an insight into the meaning of a public library. In Benue-Plateau State there are therefore public libraries established and ineffectively maintained by the government with the support of the Native Authorities. The public libraries here embrace institutional libraries. Institutions in this context include all grades of schools from Primary through High School, to Teacher Training Colleges and departmental libraries. The library system has a central library at Jos which served as the administrative as well as the technical headquarters while the branch libraries are in the divisional headquarters.

PURPOSE

The study is not merely an addition to the existing volumes of literature on librarianship particularly those on library planning and development. It aims at focusing

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., 5v. "Public Library." p. 340.

attention on a neglected aspect of library development in the Benue-Plateau State. Since the state came into being on May 27, 1967 progress had been made in other fields such as the building of more schools, construction of more roads and hospitals to the detriment of libraries which should provide information for successful completion of the above.

It also seeks to reveal by means of intensive and critical analysis the most pressing problems facing the system development and to find alternative solutions. And finally to make recommendations for future consideration.

The concept of planning has been grounded in economics hence there is economic planning. In fact all social activities involve planning. And it is accepted that the objective of planning is to accelerate faster growth; hence the desire to plan libraries in the Benue-Plateau State to stimulate faster growth.

Penna, was, we know, engaged in the study of planning and documentation services. In his book he summed up planing as "studying the goals and objectives of library services, calculating the cost and determining the library need in relation to the economic and social development of the state."[1] Obviously, there is need for libraries in

1. C.V. Penna. Planning of Library and Documentation Services, 2nd rev. ed. (Paris: Unesco, 1970). p.20.

the development of any nation, even the Benue-Plateau State. For instance the state emphasises Educational Development, Road construction, Health, Electricity and Provision of pipe borne water to the people. Whereas the information for execution of the above might be obtained from other sources the library services need to provide books to educate the people on practical methods of hygiene, farming and even trading. Even within the library system certain services must be accorded priority because every thing cannot be achieved at one time. For instance, the books bought, the methods used as the rules imposed must, from the first, be related to clear aims. It will not be possible to do everything at once, and if anything is to be achieved, some other things will have to be excluded or given low priority. The priority poses questions such as whether the library should aim at providing services which will be within the reach of children at primary level of literacy or cater for general readers. Or does it include services to the children? Obviously, priority has to be given to children because they form the overwhelming majority of readers.

Library planning is not a short term process. It weighs the effect on the community with due consideration to the available limited resources, and the most

economic means to arriving at answers to problems. On this basis the preparation for library planning and development would include the following:

(a) Previous experience

This includes a grassroots knowledge of the Benue-Plateau State. A brief survey on Benue-Plateau would be called for to serve as guidelines for setting up of libraries.

(b) Present situation

Under the present situation existing library facilities would be studied to reveal their in-adequacies. The buildings, the stock, the quantity and the quality of staff, the readers would be examined. Coupled with the above is the aim of the government especially the Ministry of Education.

General Requirements and Finance

The general requirements and finance need be spelt out clearly. Including in the general requirements are purposes and policies of the library system. The library needs to cater for secondary schools, primary schools, adult education, literacy campaigns and special interest in the state. It includes also the general staffing, stock, building requirements within the library system.

The most important aspect without which the library services cannot take off is the funds required to pay staff salaries, put up building, and with which to purchase books and other library materials which must be considered within the context of the state needs. However, it must be mentioned here that the main problem with finances is not so much appropriation of funds as the proper use of it to forstall misappropriation.

Publicity

There is the need to give the plans wide publicity to enable the members of the community to acquaint themselves with the developments which would affect them and to enable them to make their own contributions towards it. The publicity campaign is intended to win financial support and to enlist political support from the influential men of the community. At least the development of public libraries in Ghana was achieved through publicity campaigns rather than the energetic objectives and policies of the library. Benue Plateau could have achieved the same if the publicity campaign was well organised stating the significance of the plans to the community through chiefs and men of worth.

In a study like this it is imperative to emphasise the identification of the problems. The work therefore

purports to investigate the retardation (slow growth) and the haphazard organisation of the public libraries in the state. It will also delve into the extent to which the libraries meet and satisfy the demands of the community and the individual readers. The paper will also seek to answer questions: how far do the libraries satisfy the needs of the users and what factors contributed to the slow growth and inadequate services despite the growth in education and the commencement of industries in the state?

In order to be able to advance to answer the questions assumptions will be formed.

That if the public libraries in Benue Plateau State are to serve the community adequately their objectives will be related to the needs of the community.

And that to fulfil the above objectives the public libraries would purchase in depth relevant materials, then organise and adequately disseminate them.

SCOPE AND NATURE OF DATA

The study involves a brief historical account of the early library development in the defunct Northern Nigeria until the creation of the Benue Plateau State and the subsequent setting up of the library with its branches in all the divisional headquarters. Reading

Rooms are examined, keeping in mind the historical and geographical background of the state. It concentrates on the planning and development of the library system in the Benue Plateau State with emphasis on the launching of Jos Central Library. Problems of financing, staffing and services are critically examined.

While the principal tool used in this research was interviewing of the State Librarian and the officials of the State Ministries of Education and Information, use was also made of questionnaires. There were two types of questionnaires; one was given to the librarian who filled and returned it to the writer. The others were despatched to the workers in the libraries. The questionnaire sent to the workers gives insight into the views they hold of the libraries in which they work. In the course of sifting the facts it was realised that there was a general lack of answers and data. Primary and secondary materials were utilized as long as they served the purpose.

ORGANISATION OF THE WORK

The work is divided into five chapters. In chapter two attempt is made to trace out the historical and geographical background of the state.

In chapter three emphasise is placed on the historical development of public libraries in Nigerian and in particular Benue-Plateau State.

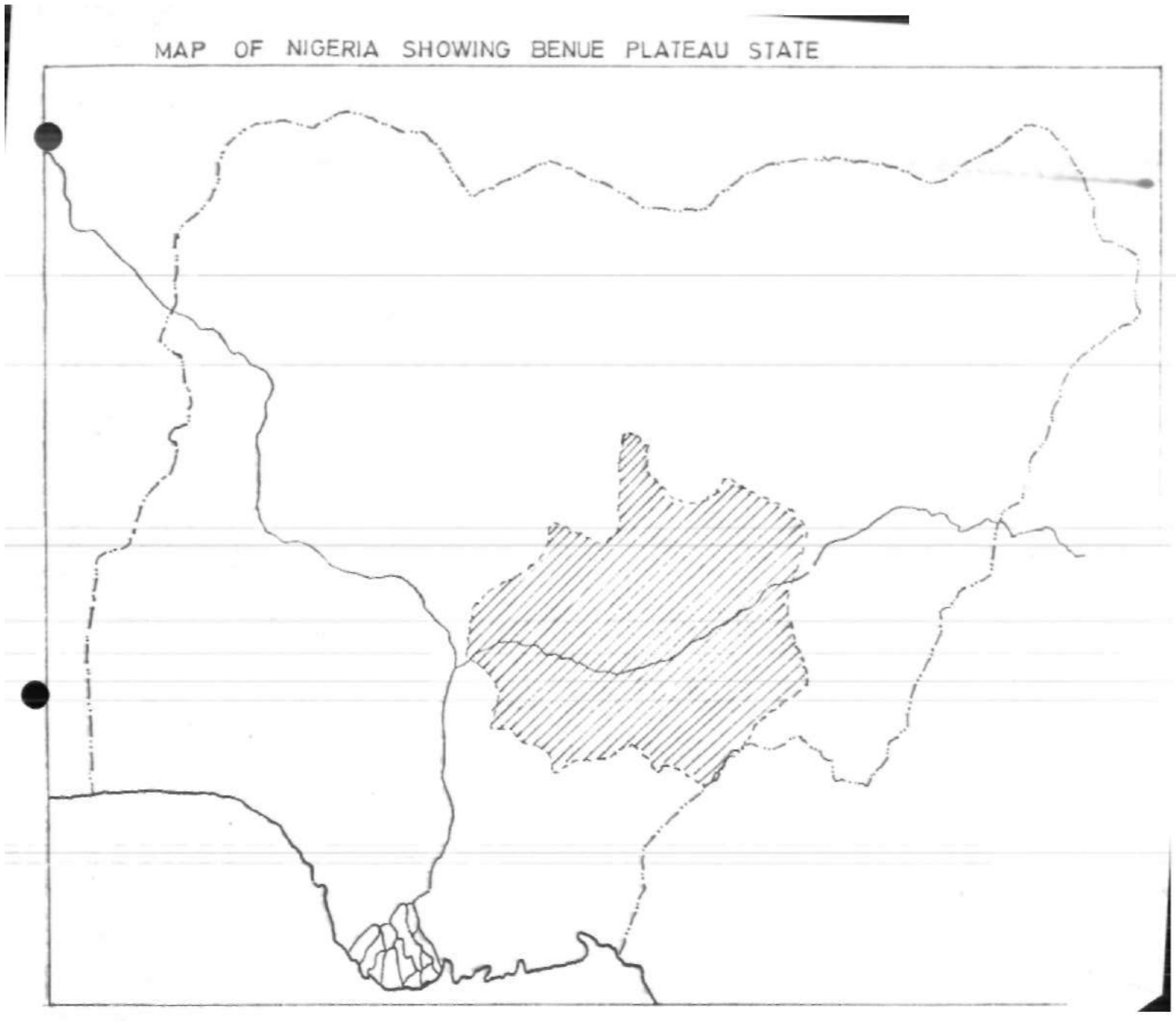
Chapter four critically analyses the objectives, policies and the present situation of public libraries in the state. The development of the library which includes staffing, financial implication, stock and services in relation to the community is treated in detail.

Chapter five analyses some of the selected libraries in the divisions in the efforts to determine their book resources, staffing and the users. The chapter also analyses some of the draw-backs of the system libraries. Conclusion and recommendations are provided.

There are however limitations on this paper. First and foremost the field work coincided with the creation of the new states and the subsequent deployment of staff from Jos to Makurdi and Yola in February 1976. Most of the officials who could have furnished me with the requisite information were either at Makurdi or Yola. Besides, adequate data was not available to lend meaning to the levels of educational developments. In addition, generally, little has been written on libraries and librarianship in Benue-Plateau State, which has only one

real library (Jos). The insufficient materials is most attributed to this fact. It must be stated here that there was no aid even in the form of allowances to assist the writer to travel from one library to another. It is however hoped that the study would be of great use to the three states which had emerged out of the former Benue Plateau State: Gongola (Wukari and Takum now part of Gongola State were components of the former Benue Plateau State), Benue and Plateau.

MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING BENUE PLATEAU STATE



CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO BENUE PLATEAU STATE

Benue Plateau State was the third largest in area and the eighth in population of the twelve states which the Military Administration carved out on May 27, 1967.

Historically, the state comprised two provinces of the defunct Northern Nigeria - Benue and Plateau. The State has a population of 4,009,408 spread over an area of 39,204 square miles.[1] The population density was 100 per square mile as compared with 28 per square mile in Norway and 48 per square mile in Sweden. Thus the population density of Benue Plateau is higher than those of the two countries but lower than what is obtained in Denmark with both population of over 4½ million people and the population density of 268 per square mile (area 16,619 square miles).[2] In Nigeria, Benue Plateau State has a larger area than the North Central State with an area of 27,108 square miles but the latter has a denser population (4,098,305).

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1. Facts and figures about Benue Plateau State of Nigeria (Jos: Ministry of Information, 1972). p.9.
2. K.C. Harrison. Libraries in Scandinavia (London: Andre Deutsch, 1961). p. 15.

The capital of Benue Plateau is Jos situated on the heartland of the Plateau and separated from the Southern Benue by the River Benue. The 1963 census gave the population of Jos as 457,760. At present Jos is a busy thriving town with a number of higher institutions of learning. Besides, Jos there are other important towns which have been the seats of the Divisional Administration - Otukpo, Makurdi, Gboko, Lafia, Pankshin and Langtan to mention a few. With the abandonment of provincial administration and the subsequent adoption of - the divisional system - the state was split into twelve administrative zones aimed at bringing the government closer to the ruled. Below is the list of the divisions in which the divisional (branch) libraries are located.[1]

Otukpo Division	497,953
Jos Division	457,758
Gboko Division	441,308
Katsina-Ala Division	430,770
Makurdi Division	371,943
Nasarawa Division	824,577
Lafia Division	276,459

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1. Taken from the 1963 census figures given in Facts and figures about Benue Plateau State of Nigeria.

Wukari Division	285,659
Pankshin Division	276,459
Langtan Division	241,092
Shendam Division	214,280
Akwanga Division	177,859

Geographically, there are two major physical features of the state - the River Benue and the Plateau highlands. The River Benue rises from the Adamawa highlands and flows through the state at Makurdi where a bridge is constructed across it. As the river is less interrupted by falls and rapids it is possible for navigation during the rainy season as far as Garoua. Its basin is undulating as it approaches Aliade and Otukpo respectively. Another remarkable aspect of the geography is the massive Plateau, with its luna-like surfaces. The plateau covers an area of 8,000 square miles and it consists of an undulating highland of an average height of 4,000ft above the sea level. The plateau peak attains the height of over 4,700ft. above the sea level. The plateau serves as hydrological centres for Jos and its environs.

THE PEOPLES

The Benue Plateau State is often described as a state of too many small tribes and too many languages.

The description, which effectively refers to the Plateau Province successfully portrays the heterogeneity of the state. Here, are to be found different ethnic groups which speak different languages. On the Plateau alone about ten different languages are spoken, but as one goes southwards to Benue the number of ethnic groups thins to very few: principally the Tiv and the Idoma. The major ethnic groups on the Plateau are the Angas, the Birom and Irigwe peoples. Inspite of the ethnic diversities and the absence of central authority, the influence of the Christian religion was and is strong.

Of the ethnic groups the Tiv numbering about one million (1,244,185) is the single dominant ethnic group in the state. They occupy an area equal to 9861 sq. miles in Tiv division which is the centre of their settlement. The North of Tivland lies in the basin of the Benue River and the Southern part lies within the guinea savanna belt of vegetation. The general pattern of population reveals high densities in the Southern part and less densities as one moves northwards. The Nigeria census (1963) shows roughly 126 persons per sq. mile characteristics of the whole Tiv land. The Southern and Central Tivland have densities of about 200 persons per sq. mile.

The precolonial Tivland was without any central authority. The political structure was bound up with family leadership. Even the Fulani Jihad of 1804 hardly filtered down into the Tivland with the consequence that the people embraced Christian religion. The comment by the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region, clearly corroborated this:

"It must never be forgotten that almost the whole region as it is today, and a great deal outside it, was ruled by my great-great grand father's family through their lieutenants or the great Shehus of Bornu; the only important exception is the Tiv area South of Benue."[1]

However, after the conquest of Tivland the British set out to establish central authority to enable them to collect taxes; a lynch-pin which held the traditional system and buttressed the authority of the emir. The central authority found answer in the Indirect Rule system, a microcosm of the emirate administration. The Tiv rejected the system as expressed through the Indirect Rule. Their rejection of the political system of the North lies in the Native Administration which had division; Muhammedan and Pagan in which the former discriminated against the

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1. Sir Ahmadu Bello, My Life (Cambridge University Press, 1962). p. 216.

latter. It was also based on the fears of the Tiv which Tseayo puts:

"The Tiv feared that if they continue to remain part of a Muslim state they would be dominated by Muslim ideology and administration."[1]

Consequently, they rejected the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) Government of Sir Ahmadu Bello in their efforts to preserve their land from the Muslim influence. The United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.), a Tiv party which represented what Tiv was, won all the seats in the parliamentary election of 1963. The victory widened the gap between the two opposing forces, the N.P.C. on one hand and the U.M.B.C. on the other hand and culminated in riots which engaged the entire Tivland between 1964-1966.

The rejection of the N.P.C. administration and the resultant riots had serious impact on the Tivland. Apart from loss of lives the entire land was neglected by the Government of the Northern Region. Pipe borne water, electricity, hospitals, and good roads which make up modern cities were denied them. The situation lingered until the military coup in 1966.

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1. Justin Iyorbee Tseayo, Aspects of National Integration in Nigeria: the Tiv Case (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1973). p. 262.

Tiv major towns include:

Gboko	27,101
Makurdi	53,967
Katsina-Ala	5,965

The Idoma speaking people, the second largest ethnic group in the Benue Plateau State occupy the entire Idoma division extending to Agatu in the North and to the South as far as Ubolo-Afor, the regional boundary between the Eastern and Northern Regions. The Idoma land is nearly all 'Orchard bush' changing to rather more open grassland in parts of Ogoja and into the beginnings of the rain forest along the southern fringes of the division. The pattern of settlement is segmentary, each village comprising large compounds. A compound (ole) is in turn made of large houses organised in a circular form. Idomaland and the pre-colonial Otukpo were not captured by the British until later 1910. And there was absence of central authority in Idomaland but the highest authority recognisable was the lineage head who was infact the oldest man.

Like the Tiv, the Idoma people did not come under any external influence. Early travellers along the Benue were unanimous in describing the settlement as being defended with walls and deep, wide ditches. Although the

Fulani raided south of the Benue on several occasions, they never established there and never reached Otukpo.[1]

The Idoma people are predominantly Christians; the growth of Christianity was attributed to the missionaries from the Eastern Region of Nigeria. The earliest of them was the Methodist Church whose headquarters in Northern Nigeria was and is still at Otukpo. The other church was the Roman Catholic church which set out to build a Teacher's College: St. Francis College, Otukpo.

The Idoma people did not outwordly oppose the N.P.C. administration led by the late Sir Ahmadu Bello. Generally, regarded as "passive resisters" the Idoma members of the AG/NCNC lost all the three seats to the NPC in the parliamentary elections of 1963. The NPC victory ushered in the provision of amenities - Hospital, electricity supply, pipe borne water and Staff Development Centre at Otukpo. Thus compared with the Tivland the Idomaland was not quite neglected.

On the Plateau the Angas and the Birom constitute the largest ethnic groups though there are other small ones such as Irigiwe, and the Rukuba tribes. The Angas numbering about 126,000 are concentrated in Pankshim and

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1. Robert G. Armstrong, The Idoma-Speaking People, in Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence, by Daryll Forde, Paula Brown and Robert G. Armstrong (London: International African Institute, 1955), p. 97.

Shendam Divisions of the Benue Plateau State. The Biroms are found in Jos and its environs. Prior to the advent of the British they remained culturally unaffected by the Hausa and Fulani empire. Their independence was credited to the mountains; they took refuge on the mountains and nobody knew where they were. When Christianity came to the Plateau the people were very receptive to it with the result that Jos is the headquarters of the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) in Nigeria.

The chief towns on the Plateau are:

Jos	172,647
Bukuru	15,909
Shendam	51,236
Pankshim	22,548
Wamba	39,906

Besides the forementioned ethnic groups the Jukuns of the Wukari was a force to be reckoned with. The Jukuns had built and maintained an empire, the Jukun empire before the arrival of the British Colonial regime in Nigeria. In Wukari, therefore, the concept of Central Authority was known and the Aku of Wukari embodied the traditional authority of the empire. Although the Fulani contributed in some ways to the crack and the eventual demise of Jukun empire, the majority of the Jukuns are

Christians and the Christians are found mainly in Takum while the Muslim concentration is at Wukari. The population of Lafia, Keffi and Nasarawa consists of Muslims in the main. These towns came under the direct influence of the Jihad and were part of the Emirate administration.

In sum, the majority of the peoples in the Benue Plateau State - the Tiv, Idoma, Angas, Birom, Jukuns are staunch Christians because they had not been subjugated by the Fulani Jihad led by the Usman Dan Fodio and his lieutenants. The Tiv, the Idoma, are predominantly Christians and this would explain rapid educational developments there though politically the Tiv had been neglected.

OCCUPATION

Agriculture is the main stay of the people in Benue Plateau State. It is known for certain that more than 80% of the entire population is engaged in agriculture, producing yams, millet, soyabeans, acha, cassava and guinea corns. The method of farming basically remains traditional; hoe and cutlass being the chief implements used by the majority of the farmers. In the recent years experimental farms have been established in Yandev and in Otukpo but these farms have made little impact on the

traditional methods. Other occupations include office jobs, trading largely done by women, and tailoring. Mining is carried out on a large scale but it is confined to the plateau. In Benue Plateau there are no large scale industries; but small scale industries producing biscuits, fibre, rice. Outside Jos there are no outstanding industries.

COMMUNICATION

After the British had conquered the area now known as Nigeria they set out to create an administrative machinery necessary for the exploitation of the area. In a vast land such as Nigeria communication system based on the use of roads, and rails was an important infrastructure which would accelerate British Rule. In Nigeria, the railways lines were given top priority; they were constructed from the coastal ports to open up the agricultural and mining areas of the rich hinterland. The rail-line constructed from Port Harcourt passes through Benue-Plateau State to Kaduna and Jos. At Kafanchan it branches to Jos, Plateau. Apart from opening up the agricultural hinterland the rails transport agricultural products to the port for export.

In respect of roads the state has a network of roads which are poorly maintained. Indeed, up to 1970s all the

roads were of laterite surface, full of pot-holes and too rugged to be effectively used by vehicles. With the poor condition of the roads, they could not serve adequately the purpose for which they were constructed, that of opening up rural areas so that people could travel long distances. However, the 1970s witnessed immense improvement of roads in the state. In the early 1970s an all weather federal trunk 'A' constructed from Port Harcourt runs through Otukpo, Makurdi, Lafia, Akwanga where it branches to Jos. The construction and the subsequent opening of this road ushered in easy movement of people from the southern part of the state to Jos. By 1972 Jos had been linked to Pankshim and Gindiri with an all weather road. The road from Makurdi to Katsina-Ala was awarded to Votenisk Company Ltd., but the contract had not been executed. However, the bituminous surface roads together with the laterite ones served useful purposes in moving people, goods and ideas between towns and kept the capital town in touch with the divisions.

So far, efforts have been made to show the general purpose of road communication in Benue Plateau State. But what is the relevance of roads to library planning and development? Roads are very essential to the library development in this state as library would serve its

potential users in the rural areas. The road becomes more and more important in the provision of reading materials to the rural areas through mobile libraries which requires smooth and all weather roads in order to reach the users, most of whom live in the rural areas.

Most parts of the Benue Plateau enjoy the Postal Service system. But like many towns in Nigeria the services rendered by the Post and Telecommunication Departments remains inefficient. There are large post offices in Jos, Makurdi, Otukpo, Gboko and Pankshim. Postal Agencies are located in bigger towns such as Jos, Makurdi and Otukpo though divisional headquarters operate local telephone services.

The use of radio sets is widespread in Benue Plateau State because radio sets are cheaper to purchase and maintain than television sets. Infact, almost every family residing in the urban towns as well as those in the rural areas possess radio sets. However, possession of radio sets in some rural areas is restricted to the affluent families. The use of radio set in the rural areas has certain advantages over television sets; radio sets utilize battery for operations and therefore can be used without power supply which the rural areas do not enjoy. The sets are easier and cheaper to maintain than

television sets which require sophiscated methods of repaires. Thus one sees the advantages of radio sets as medium for rural education over television set.

Writing on librarianship in Benue Plateau is incomplete without reference to the state of education since the inception of the state in 1967. In fact during the past years from 1967 to 1973 Benue Plateau State made huge strides at all levels of education.[1] There were about 234,249 students enrolled in 1080 schools taught by 7,437 teachers. The increase in the number of primary schools during the years was 4.6% with corresponding increase of 13% and 15% in enrolment and teaching staff respectively. For instance, the total number of primary school enrolment in 1973 was 179,348 as compared with 134,749 enrolment at the same level in the North Central State. Benue Plateau State is no doubt well ahead of North Central State in the primary school enrolment. In the same year its secondary schools registered the total number of 9,928. Again when this figure is compared with both North Central 7.655 and North West 5.926 Benue-Plateau State still leads them (see table 1). It is far from exaggeration to say that except Kwara State the

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1. Statistical review of education, 1973. (Jos, Planning and Administrative Division, Ministry of Education, 1973). p.1.

Benue Plateau State has registered the highest students enrolment, yet has the poorest libraries in the North. The development of public libraries has not been along side with the educational advancement in the state. However, of the post primary institutions Government College Keffi ranked first, followed by St. Michael's Secondary School Aliade and Gindiri Boys High School. Other schools of significance include Jesus College, Otukpo, Government Secondary School, Katsina-Ala, Wesley High School, Otukpo, St. Louis College, Jos and others. In recent years a University College, the University of Ibadan, Jos Campus had been opened at Jos. These schools, including the primary schools in the state require the services of the public libraries not only within the schools but outside the schools especially during holidays to supplement the formal teaching. The need for libraries is most felt when it is recognised that most of the secondary schools have no libraries and where they exist they are patchy. As libraries follow the educational trail there is need to develop public and school libraries in the state to back the educational needs.

Although educational facilities in the state have expanded in the 1970s the bulk of the population (about 85%) is illiterate. Of the illiterates there are those

who cannot read and write, the semi-illiterates who acquired some education through adult education, the primary school leavers who once were educated but slipped back into the rank of illiteracy for lack of "follow up" reading materials. These categories which constitute the bulk of illiterates also formed the most productive group - farmers, traders and unskilled workers found even in the urban towns of Benue Plateau State. Illiteracy impedes progress and the state with a high percentage of illiteracy cannot hope to develop to maximum capacity as the situation remains relatively unchanged.[1] Illiterates are hard to put to understand changes which are taking place or are in the offing; in other words the bulk of the population are still not receptive to modern ideas which will change their lives. However with effective education backed up by library facilities the illiterate will be ready to accept changes; they will utilize better public facilities and amenities. A literate, farmer, fisherman or trader is more likely to seek and find better methods of farming, fishing or trading.[2] In another words, illiterates must be taught to read, write and use modern methods of watering plants.

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1. Babs Fafunwa. New Perspectives in African Education. (Lagos: MacMillan, 1967). p. 156.
2. Ibid.

Further more, the situation in Benue Plateau State is compounded by the concentration of illiterate population in the rural areas which raises the fundamental question: how can the libraries be organised to reach them in the rural areas and what roles can the libraries play to generate their interest in reading and writing to ensure they can read prima and be able to use successfully modern planting and watering methods? If the state is to mobilize its human resources for its economic and social development these adults must be educated as the economy of the state largely depends on them.

There are also government establishments in the state. Although there are arms of ministries in the large towns of the state their headquarters are at Jos. These government ministries and departments employ a huge number of people including specialist such as veterinary doctors, accountants, economists and journalists. In addition to them, there are eighteen hospitals in the state. The largest one located at Jos is now capable of training nurses and midwives. Of recent, approval has been given by the Nigerian Medical Council for newly qualified doctors to carry out pre-registration

house officer's training at the same hospital. Other hsopitals of size include Otukpo, Makurdi, Keffi, Pankshin, Lafia, Gboko and are minimally staffed with doctors and para-medical staff.

The government establishments cannot be relegated to the background; they assumed unequalled role as their departmental needs must be catered for. This becomes much more important when one realises that public libraries are set up to aid the community solve their problems. On this plane public libraries within the state stand ready to supply answers to a technical problems holding up a development engineer and to assist the agricultural officer who intends to give verbal advice to illiterate farmers about the planting of maize or to produce illustrative facts required by a senior official for reports.

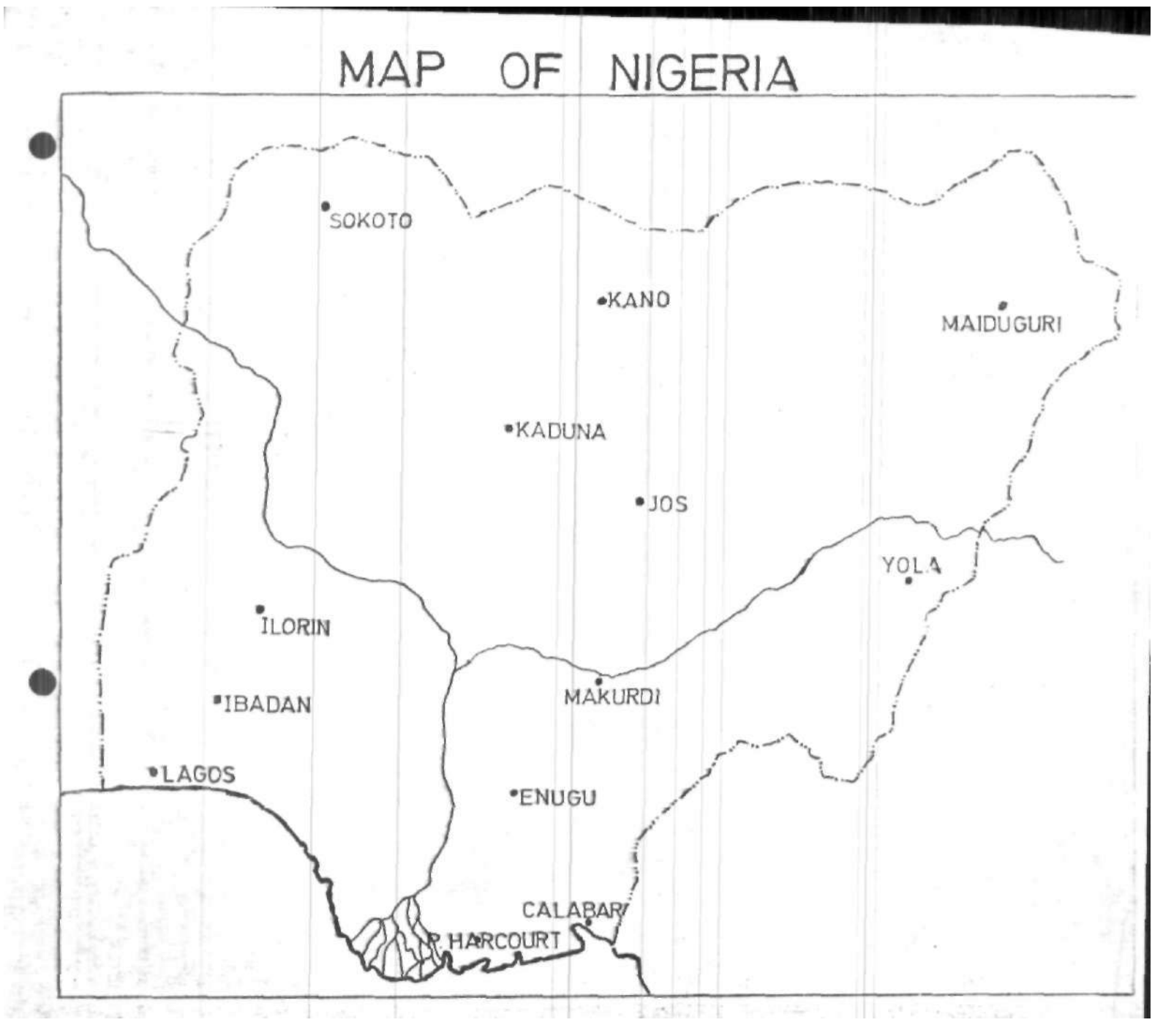
From the background studies it is quickly realised that Benue Plateau State has just taken off. It is noticed too, that the bulk of the majority population is entirely illiterate though there are enough educated citizens to utilize public libraries when established. The main point shown here is the background against which the public libraries were being implanted. Given

the moral and financial support no one would doubt the successful growth of the public libraries in a state which has fairly large number of educated citizens than her sister states in the North.

TABLE 1

SCHOOL POPULATION, 1973

State	Population	School Population			Total Budget ₦	Educational Budget ₦
		Primary	Secondary	Others		
Benue Plateau	4,099,408	179,348	9,928	616	498,984	45,000,000
Kano	5,775,000	81,464	4,213	594	560,227	45,000,000
Kwara	2,400,000	136,749	16,426	744	426,785	20,000,000
North-Central	4,098,305	134,092	7,655	-	431,471	47,000,000
North East	7,893,343	144,314	7,364	664	609,628	50,000,000
North West	5,734,000	92,018	5,926	-	517,058	39,141,000


MAP OF NIGERIA
SOKOTO
KANO
MAIDUGURI
KADUNA
JOS
YOLA
ILORIN
IBADAN
MAKURDI
LAGOS
ENUGU
CALABAR
P. HARCOURT

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

The development of public libraries in Nigeria had been comparatively recent in origin. At first what existed were a number of departmental libraries which catered for the needs of the government departments. The most important of these libraries was the central library housed in the former secretariat along the Marina. There was also the Law Library of the Legal Department and those of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and the High Court of Lagos. Their stock comprised mainly government documents and publications such as official gazettes, government reports and handbooks. The department relied on these libraries for their needs.

As for the growth of public libraries they had existed prior to 1950 and owed much to the activities of the British Council whose headquarters was in Lagos. Indeed, the first modern public library was provided by the British Council.[1] The British Council was an agency

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1. Simeon B. Aje. Background, Status and Plans for Library Development in Nigeria (M.A. thesis - University of Chicago, 1963). p. 30.

which stood for planting and giving wide publicity to the British way of life and civilization. The Council found the library very instrumental in the realisation of what it represented. Membership of the council was by subscription and carried a number of privileges including the use of the library.[1]

Besides the Lagos Office there were regional headquarters at Ibadan, Lagos and Enugu. The British Council also maintained offices in large urban towns such as Kano. The main library at Lagos was manned by a professional librarian but the branch ones were supervised by assistants responsible to Lagos.

However, the United States Information Services (USIS) play prominent role in library development in Nigeria. Established in Nigeria in 1951, the USIS inaugurated its library which was similar to the British Council in its operation. Like the British Council it had regional branches at Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu. But there was difference between the USIS and the British Council as the former offered free library services to the people whereas the latter charged fees. Basically, therefore, they provided services to the public and implanted the idea of modern library.

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1. Ibid: p. 31.

The earliest known public library in Nigeria was the Lagos Library which had existed prior to the eruption of the Second World War, 1939-45. It stocked inadequate collection of out worn and out dated novels. Although the public utilized this library it was not in the real sense a public library;[1] this concept was found more in the Lagos Municipal Library which was opened in 1946, by the British Council. Jointly, run by the Town Council and the British Council the library was supervised by Kate D. Ferguson. By 1950 however, the Town Council eventually took over the management of the library.

In 1946, there was a further development in the library scene when in 1946 on the advice of the British Council, the Federal Government bought the Henry Carr Library - a valuable 18,000 volume collection destined to form the nucleus of our future National Library.[2] So far what has been shown is restricted to Lagos but now library experience in each region would be briefly touched.

By 1952 there was a very important chapter of political development in Nigeria. The year witnessed the

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1. Lagos Library was a subscription Library.

2. Kalu Okorie. "Problems of Public Library Development in Nigeria." Library World LX, 705 (1959): p.161.

implement of the policy of "regionalization." By the "Regionalization" the country was split into three broad regions namely - North, West and East with capitals at Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu respectively. The pattern of library development followed this division though each region developed at different pace.

EASTERN REGION

Of Nigeria's three regions - North, East and West, the Eastern Region is considered to be the most library conscious and progressive.[1] The validity of the statement is beyond questioning when one looks at the efforts of the former Eastern Region Government in the development of libraries which led to the eventual inception of the Library Board. However, while the establishment of the Board significantly placed Eastern Region above all other regions, one realises that the Northern Region through the utilization of the 'book-box' service was the first Regional Library to serve its vast population sparsely distributed. In the Eastern Region library activities started out in 1939 with the establishment of Port Harcourt and Calabar libraries planted to spread

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1. Kalu Okorie. "Eastern Nigeria Library Services." Unesco Bulletin for Libraries, XIV (1960): p.260.

war news. To accelerate and coordinate library development the government created an agency, the Regional Library Board vested with the powers to develop library services in the Region. The Library Board Ordinance promulgated in 1955 gave birth to the Regional Library Services which attracted financial assistance from Unesco and became a Unesco Pilot project. The Board which came into existence was a direct result of the 1953 Unesco Ibadan Seminar on Development of Public Libraries in Africa. The Board was patterned after Ghana's Library Board. The first chairman of the Board was Mr. David Anderson who had been a Regional Director of the British Council.

In 1956, Mr. Kalu Okorie conducted a preliminary survey to determine the type of library services most suitable to the region. The details of the plan included:

(a) That a regional library headquarters be established at Enugu (regional capital) with a main regional Central Library to serve not only the needs of Enugu but to provide administrative headquarters for regional services.

(b) That divisional libraries be based in each of the five urban towns in the regional and, in addition, that a mobile or delivery service to

the smaller towns and villages within the division be provided.

(c) That mobile libraries be provided by means of vehicles especially designed to ride the prevailing unsurfaced roads in the rural areas.

(d) That a book-box scheme designed to serve rural areas not suitable for, or readily available, to the mobile library services be started as soon as practicable. Delivery of these book-boxes would be by means of rail, roads or canoe.

(e) That a postal service of books to individual readers - mainly those living in isolated areas - be considered.[1]

These plans were sanctioned by the government.

In 1957 Unesco Pilot project for public libraries in Africa was launched in Enugu. This was to lead to the establishment of pilot public library project in Enugu. The basic agreement between the government of Eastern Nigeria and Unesco on the project provided that the government should allocate a minimum sum of £12,500 annually for a period of five years (1957-61), and should provide suitable premises for the pilot library. Unesco

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1. Okorie. "Problems of Public Library Development in Nigeria." p. 162.

on the other hand undertook to provide the services of an expert on the organisation and operation of public libraries for about twelve months, financial aid during each of the five years while the agreement was in force, and award of fellowship in the field of public libraries to enable staff of the pilot library to gain some practical insight into overseas libraries.[1] The above agreement paved the way for the planning of the pilot library known as the Regional Central Library.

In 1957, the library service began with mobile library service unit, while its reference reading room was opened in 1956 in the Catering Rest House premises. The cost of the project was in the neighbourhood of between £38,000 and £40,000. The library had lending and reference sections for both adults, children and had a union catalogue for the entire region. By 9 March, 1959, the Regional Library building was officially declared open by the Premier, Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who made very important remarks on the need for libraries:

> "In this age the growth of the institution, which however small, add something to the human development and spread the democratic ideal, is almost as much as requirement for any community of people

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1. Ibid.

as the food they eat. A full opportunity for anyone person, of whatever faith or belief, to make contact with the wide world of ideas contained in books is as necessary for the proper growth of individual as it is for nations. And I cannot think of any institution more suited at this moment to help us achieve an objective than the library service."[1]

By May 1958 the Regional Mobile Library service started to operate and had the capacity of carrying between 1500-2,000 books.

In 1967 the East Regional Library service had effectively taken off the ground. With a Central Library at Enugu and divisional libraries at Port Harcourt, Ikot-Ekpene, Umuahia and Onitsha, one other library was planned for the town of Abakaliki. All divisional libraries had mobile library units as essential components of their service.

The Nigerian civil war of 1967-70 had catastrophic consequences on the libraries which the government had carefully built and maintained. At least, more than 50% of the library materials were either looted or destroyed. After the end of the war in 1970 the library services

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1. Ibid.

had to start from the grassroot. As the Region was split into three states - namely, East Central, Rivers and South Eastern States, each of the state had to develop its own services. The East Central Government promulgated a new edict establishing a Library Board in 1971. The Board was to reactivate the library services devastated by the war. By 1972 the Rivers State incepted its Library Board with Port Harcourt as its headquarters. The South Eastern State followed suit to inaugurate its Library Board in 1973. It has libraries at Calabar and a divisional library at Ikot-Ekpene. Thus the library which began as Eastern Regional Library witnessed many vissitudes, changes which had impact on the services.

MIDWEST REGION

Carved out from the Western Region in 1964 by the Tafawa Balewa Administration the Mid-Western Region became the Mid-Western State in 1967 during the political transition in Nigeria.

Originally, library development was absent until 1970 when a Library Board was incepted by a government edict entitled "The Mid-West Library Board." A survey, conducted by John and Priscillia Harris and called "A Library

Service for the Mid-Western State of Nigeria" was submitted to the government and approved.

The Board was vested with the powers to establish and maintain a state-wide library services, provide such services as provided by libraries of high standing, be responsible for existing local council libraries and encourage the establishment of libraries in the State. The Central Library was given legal deposit rights of all books and other materials printed in the state. The Board was also responsible for school library service. Mrs. Priscilla Harris was appointed the first Director.

Although the library began to function in 1972 the Harris Report recommended a three stage developments.

(a) erection of building, staff recruitment and acquisition of stock;

(b) opening of a reference library service and a pilot scheme for public and school library services;

(c) establishment of a regional library and the development of public and school library service.[1]

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1. Midwest State Library. Report of the Director 1st October 1970 - March, 1970. Benin City, Midwest Library Board, 1973. p. 15.

In the Mid-Western State the school libraries were given top priority. In 1970 the school had an enrolment of 35,000 secondary school students; it was agreed that the library fee of ₦2 per student (₦70,000) could be used to form the base of school libraries. The state library was to be purchasing agency and instructed that each school sent 75% of its annual library fund to the library. The schools were to draw books according to the value of their book amount. This gave rise to the creation of the Book Depot.

The depot started in 1972 with some 4,000 volumes for sale and within the period of nine months the stock grew to 19,000 volumes. The Depot became popular and was patronised from all the parts of Nigeria including Zaria.

In sum, the central library opened its reference and lending services to the public whilst branch libraries have opened in Orarokpe and Ogwash-Ukwu and a mobile was put into action in June, 1974.

WESTERN REGION

The attempt to provide library services in the Western Nigeria dated back to 1949 when one itinerent librarian was appointed. The librarian visited all

libraries and reading rooms in the region. But the inspection of the reading rooms had no significant result as no major libraries had since been established. In August, 1950 a course aimed at training local authorities staff was organized at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, which 30 Native Authority Library Attendants and junior staff attended from the College library.

There was no significant events in the library development until after the Unesco Seminar, Ibadan was held. After the seminar services began in the region - in 1954. Book boxes were despatched to reading rooms and a small lending library was established in Ibadan under the Ministry of Education.

By 1958 the government employed a professional librarian who though had technical know-how but could not work without outside interference from the ministries. That year the Central Library attained a depository status capable of acquiring all government publications. In 1959 the mobile library serving the school came into existence.

In 1962 a committee on Library Development was set up. The committee examined the problems of library development and recommended the following:

(a) the establishment of a regional headquarters,

(b) the establishment of divisional libraries;

(c) the development of local council libraries;

(d) mobile library service to the rural areas;

(e) and, library service to schools.

The approval to the recommendations led to planning of a new library building at the cost of £84,000. Of the amount the British Council donated ₦27,000.[1] The site of the library was to be at Dugbe, a main thoroughfare in Ibadan. The plan was never realised owing to the political crisis of 1962.

In 1967 another Committee was set up to consider the proposed library project, i.e. the building of a Central Library at Ibadan. The Committee, like the previous one recommended the building of a central library at Ibadan to serve the entire divisions in the state. It was to purchase books, plan and organise staff development scheme for both the central and divisional libraries. Each division should build according to her limited fund one of three libraries costing either ₦12,000, ₦18,000 or ₦30,000 while the central library was to be erected at the cost of ₦86,000. In 1972 it foundation stone was laid by the Commissioner of Education at Ibadan.

NORTHERN REGION

What existed in the North prior to 1952 were no more

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1. Aje, Library Development, p. 90.

than the reading rooms which dated back to 1939-45. Joan Parkes writing on public libraries and reading rooms in the North observed "Apart from Kaduna Lending Department the only town which has a Public Library worthy of the name is Kano. This means that the majority of adult readers in the North are dependent on reading rooms."[1] The statement summarises the dearth of libraries in the North. Even in other parts of Nigeria library development was not better than in the North. In the Western Region S.B. Aje vividly described the existing libraries as no more than reading rooms. "In Western Region of Nigeria nearly all towns of average size has what is called a Reading Room... of these the Ijebu-Ode public library is said to be the oldest".[2] And in the Eastern Region the situation was also similar to one in the North; Dorothy Obi gave a graphic picture of the library situation there when she wrote "Public libraries in the Region with the exception of that provided by British Council were no more than reading rooms with small collection of printed materials."[3]

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1. Joan Parkes. Books Mean Progress: the Public Library and N.A. Reading Rooms in Northern Nigeria, WALA News 4, no. 1 (1961). p.4.
2. S.B. Aje. "Public Libraries in Western Nigeria: a General Survey, WALA News 2, No.3, (1955). p.3.
3. Dorothy Obi. "Library Scene in Eastern Nigeria." Nigerian Libraries 1, 1(1964), p. 16.

The Northern Region was the first to maintain a region-wide library service in July 1952 under Miss Joan Parkes. The service was initially based in Lugard Hall, Kaduna, serving the Kaduna population. In 1952, with the growth of the library stock the library was moved to its new building - and by 1954 it came under the Ministry of Education. The establishment of the library represented the attempts of the Regional Government to cater for the needs and the interests of the civil service and for the growing technical sectors and those few reading for examinations. On its establishment the library pursued a policy of a completely free library policy as contained in one of the Annual Reports:

> "The policy of a completely free library was maintained and it is now known to be the only truly free public library in Nigeria, with no entrance fee, no charge for overdue books nor special service. To institute fees of this kind would deprive many of the younger and less fortunate of a valued service."[1]

On its establishment the library offered services to the N.A. reading rooms with the avowed objective of

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1. Annual Report of the Regional Library Division of Ministry of Information 1959-61 (Kaduna: Government Printer, 1961), p.2.

developing them into public libraries. To attain this objective the library gave loans of books to the various reading rooms for a period of three months after the expiration which the books were to be returned. The cost of transport was borne by the Government but the N.A. was expected to pay for the return transport to Kaduna.

The frequent loan service was initiated and called the book-box service. This kind of service was very important because of the sparse distribution of population in vast areas of Northern Region. In addition there were difficulties of poor condition of roads, enormous distance between towns all which intensified the problems of communication. Gunton, a one time Government Regional Librarian noted the difficulties:

> "Primitive servicing, punishing corrugated dirt-roads, long distance, a rain season that closes many roads, a dry season that sends up choking dust, all go to keep mobile libraries in abeyance until there are more roads of macadam."[1]

It was reckoned that the library provided loans to 54 Native Authority reading rooms, 74 schools and 30

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1. Grunton, D.H. A library in the Tropics: a History and a Blue Print, Library Association Record, lxiii, 5 (1961), p. 151.

organisations including extra-mural classes, trade centres and staff clubs. In Kaduna itself individual membership recorded was 5,047; the figure made up to adults and 490 young readers.

During the year 1957-58, 75,323 volumes were lent out. By the same year its stock numbered 45,000. In 1957 there was expansion of the library with the opening of the Lending Library which was designed to hold the stock volume of 100,000. The library also had a extra storage space and a workroom. In 1958 its branch library in Bida was opened with a stock of about 10,000 volumes. In opening and developing a branch library and the reading rooms, the library organised a training course in librarianship for the attendants and assistants in Kaduna.

However, the efforts of the Regional Library to transform the reading rooms into modern libraries ended in dismal failure. Much of the failing attributed to poor finance by the N.A.'s, poor staffing position. For most of the time the reading rooms were manned by attendants who lacked rudimentary knowledge of librarianship. The reading rooms were also ill-stocked; they stocked essentially magazines that would spread war news and were unsuited to the readers. However, services at both Kaduna

and Bida was effective than the one offered by the N.A. libraries.

In 1962, F.A. Sharr, the State Librarian in Western Australia was invited by the Regional Government to study the library needs of the Region and to make recommendations. Mr. Sharr in his submission recommended th following:

(a) the supplying of books to the N.A. reading rooms;

(b) that local authorities should provide library services in the thirteen provinces;

(c) that the government was to provide library materials while the N.A. to provide buildings.

He did not recommend any Library Board for the Region and lacked any understanding into the poor financial status of most of the N.A.'s which could not sus fully employ an attendant to run the reading rooms.

Inspite of the recommendation the N.A. reading room remained static. Although the N.A.'s provided buildings and furniture which formed parts of his recommendation most of the buildings were unsuited to library use. Sokoto and Kano provided better accommodation for their libraries than other provinces.

By January 15, 1966 Nigeria witnessed the first Military coup d'etat which shook the nation. During the impasse that followed the coup the Military Administration split the country into twelve states on the 27 May 1967. In this process the vast Northern Region was divided into six states - Benue-Plateau, Kano, Kwara, North-Central, North-Eastern and North-Western states. The demise of the Northern Region gave rise to many problems such as sharing the assets and liability of the former government. The Regional Library materials at Kaduna was one of such assets which the emergent states shared. Infact, this period concided with the invitation of Mr. Robert Pearce by the Federal Military Government to undertake the survey of library needs of the new states and to recommend. The Pearce Report was brief, articulate and strongly recommended a three-tiered library services (school, public and institutions') to the new states but emphasized the school library services. Pearce also recommended the development of the Regional Reference Library into a branch of National Library. The latter recommendation had not been implemented. To sum up the library situation in the Northern Region it can be concluded that the 1940s witnessed the proliferation of reading rooms not only in the North but throughout the

country. However, there was a landmark in the library development in the North with the opening in 1952 of Kaduna Regional Library and its branches at Bida.

LIBRARY EXPERIENCE OF BENUE PLATEAU STATE

In the two provinces which constituted the Benue Plateau State the concept of modern libraries was non-existent. As in other provinces of Nigeria what one could find were Reading Rooms called libraries which played active roles in the towns with emergent new literates. The state inherited these Reading Rooms which were established in each of the divisional head-quarters. The Reading Rooms as have been mentioned briefly were established during the Second World War by the Public Relations Office (now Ministry of Information) to serve as publicity purposes as agencies for the dissemination of war information and news. And in the Benue Plateau prominent Reading Rooms were located at Otukpo, Jos, Lafia, Keffi, Makurdi, Gboko, Pankshim and Shendam. In available works references were not made to any of these towns but existing records in the division however showed these towns had reading rooms provided by the N.A.'s and that they were quite small. Reading Rooms in other divisional headquarters were better

developed than the ones provided in the Benue and Plateau. For instance, Yagba Division of Kabba Province had a well constructed building for its reading room erected by communal labour. On Yagba, too, Joan Allen has this to say: "Greater enthusiasm for reading room existed than anywhere else in the region".[1] The statement obviously relegated the Reading Rooms in the two provinces to a position of unimportance.

Largely, the Reading Rooms were stocked with newspapers, posters, bulletin and periodicals. Prominent posters included the War in Pictures which gave accurate information about the wars. Supplied by the Public Relations Office, they consisted of leaflets with caricatures depicting German totalitarianism and militarism, Italian Fascism and brutality. They also bore slogans which stirred the sympathy of the people to join the army in order to fight against the Germans so as to secure independence and the right of man.

Since the N.A.'s controlled the Reading Rooms they also bore the costs. Obviously without funds the Reading Rooms could not operate successfully in organising whatever materials for the readers. In the two provinces Benue and Plateau the allocation of fund depended to a

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1. Joan Allen. "Books mean progress." p.6.

large extent on the attitude of the officials of the N.A.s to the library. The attitude was that since the Reading Rooms were non-revenue earning they should be given a small proportion of the fund. Most of the N.A.s voted an average sum of £150 - £200[1] annually for the Reading Rooms. This amount when compared with £50[2] voted in some divisions in the Western Region was reasonable. However it must not be forgotten that at that time of Nigerian development divisions with limited funds could not give priority to library or reading rooms, other things must be accorded priority. And as J. Allen poir ted out "the amount of money provided for the up-keep of Reading Rooms must necessarily be what is left over after what are now more important considerations have been met."[3] As reading rooms were given low priority there was no adequate fund to pay staff nor purchase library materials despite the need for books. As a result what could be found in most of the reading rooms at Otukpo, Lafia, Gboko, Makurdi, Jos and Pankshim were jumbles of

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1. Patrick Unoogwu. A Survey of Public Libraries in the Benue Plateau State, Ministry of Information. Jos. p. 90.
2. Aje, "Public Libraries in Western Nigeria," p. 13.
3. J. Allen. Ibid. p.7.

few books and newspapers with dust ridden tables and chairs. Yet despite the financial limitations the reading rooms gave services to people.

One of the major roles of the reading rooms besides their information role was adult education. They served useful purpose to enhance adult education and public enlightenment where they were situated. With their increased popularity in the Benue and Plateau provinces they became teaching and learning centres. This functio was in consonnance with the programmes of Adult Educatio that was wide-spread in Northern Nigeria with enlightenment as its purpose. Though the programme of Adult Education came under the Ministry of Education the reading rooms acted as catalyst in providing the vernacular newspapers as Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo and other vernacular pamphlets such as Ka Luwa popularly read in Otukpo. Statistics on Adult Education in Northern Nigeria existed; 1956 and 1957 were recorded. In the statistics Benue and Plateau (see table 2)[1] did not register significantly high number of enrolment in 1956 - Benue enrolled 25,261 men, 459 women whilst Plateau 23,929 men,

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1. Northern Region of Nigeria: Annual summary of the Education Department 1955-56, p. 56.

1,240 women and 1957 Benue enrolled 26,065 men, 1,745 women and Plateau 12,544 men and 1,031 women. The figures for 1956 and 1957 showed higher enrolment in Benue Province but in Plateau there was a fall in the men enrolment in 1957. The relevance of these figures is that despite the limitations of the reading rooms in the two provinces they served as centres for adult education.

Recreation was one of the purposes of the reading rooms. While they provided recreational equipment such as table-tennis, draughts they did not become community centres. The reading rooms in a number of towns notably Otukpo, Nasarawa, Pankshim and Jos became recreational centres. At Keffi the attendant estimated the number that attended the reading room per month at 500.[1] The analysis of the attendance revealed that the majority of the people turned up to play draughts, ping-pong and other traditional types of games housed there. In spite of the importance the reading room at Lafia became a 'market' for hawkers who occupied the periphery of the house selling and buying foodstuffs.[2]

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1. Patrick Unoogwu, Survey. p. 140.
2. Ibid. p. 141.

Table 2(a)

ADULT EDUCATION ENROLMENT IN LIBRARY CLASSES IN 1956

Province	Number of Classes	Enrolment		Certificates Awarded
		Men	Women	
Adamawa	537	26,206	669	7,333
Bauchi	1,148	56,900	500	5,208
Benue	556	26,065	1,745	5,077
Borno	722	18,969	710	2,015
Ilorin	461	19,962	3,093	1,910
Kabba	5,549	11,356	1,519	1,434
Kano	805	10,879	-	5,132
Katsina	887	42,359	2,034	9,129
Niger	841	39,622	2,432	4,712
Plateau	543	12,544	1,031	2,585
Sokoto	961	47,262	778	7,818
Zaria	642	30,071	2,092	4,346
Total	8,702	351,195	16,603	56,699

Table 2(b)

ADULT EDUCATION ENROLMENT IN LIBRARY CLASSES IN 1957

Province	Number of Classes	Enrolment		Certificates Awarded
		Men	Women	
Adamawa	849	41,089	1,359	10,865
Bauchi	837	41,500	325	6,491
Benue	514	25,261	459	5,272
Borno	851	41,967	601	7,361
Ilorin	592	28,324	1,651	3,183
Kabba	360	16,576	1,388	3,973
Kano	903	45,125	1	8,549
Katsina	744	35,575	1,600	12,892
Niger	750	35,644	1,846	7,919
Plateau	503	23,929	1,240	6,345
Sokoto	849	41,945	481	12,322
Zaria	525	24,922	1,540	5,919
Total	8,277	401,857	12,490	91,082

Despite the roles of the reading rooms analysed they lacked purpose and direction. They were not dynamically and clearly devoted to the public enlightenment for which they stood. Their bookstock was inadequate. Indeed, there were difficulties in purchasing books, periodicals and newspapers even when the fund was made available. To add to the problems it was not easy to know what to buy. It was easy to convince the N.A.s that the most certain way of purchasing newspapers, and magazines was by subscription (subscription means payment in advance) but it would not be acceptable to the N.A. - since no N.A. could make advance payment for materials that had not been received. The reading rooms in the various divisions in the two provinces could not serve the interest of the few educated minority as it was uneconomical to purchase books purely for the use of the few persons.

Despite the popularity of the reading room in the Benue and Plateau Provinces in the midst of educated citizens they were short of professionally trained staff. The library staff were attendants who had completed primary school education or teachers who did the work in the evenings to earn some renumeration. They lacked any technical know-how about acquiring books. Assuming

that funds could be come by they could not possibly order books as they had no contact with the wide world. In addition the organisation of books and periodicals were entirely left to the attendants who had no rudimentary knowledge of accessioning, cataloguing and classification. This failing was attributable to the fact that N.A.s could not understand the requirements of the reading rooms in terms of finance, staffing, organisation and services hence reading rooms were not accorded top priority as were hospitals and schools. And as one attendant put it "the N.A. realise that something must be done but does not know what to do for the best."[1] This statement summed up the several problems confronting the N.A.s such as the presence of experts to advise them on what to do and how to do them efficiently. Furthermore owing to the problems mentioned above the reading rooms could not attain library status despite the efforts of the Regional Library which supplied books and trained their staff. Their organisation was haphazard lacking any definite objectives and policies aimed at satisfying readers. What they succeeded to achieve

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1. F.A. Sharr, Library needs of Northern Nigeria (Kaduna: Ministry of Information, 1963), p.110.

stimulating hunger for books in the divisions of Benue and Plateau Provinces. Joan Allen observed 'the failure of the reading rooms and concluded' the attempt over ten years to develop them into public libraries has failed. It is time to try another approach.[1] This infact marked the exist of the reading rooms though the need for them was felt.

Despite the failure of the reading rooms in the Benue Plateau State it is however shown from the background study that at present the Benue-Plateau has sufficient number of literates and enlightened citizens to sustain library development in the state. Even the existing little provision was effectively utilized by the citizens which infact revealed a growing consciousness of the needs of library services.

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1. Allen, "Books Mean Progress", p.7.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT STATE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The development of public library in the Benue Plateau State of Nigeria is still in its infantile stage. Prior to 1967 the two provinces which constituted the state, Benue and Plateau, could aptly be described as a library "wilderness". However, 1968 brought an important milestone in the development of public libraries when the state central library was established at Jos. The poor library situation could only compare with the patchy library development in the Northwestern and Northeastern States of Nigeria. With its Library Board in 1955 the East Central Library at Enugu was better ahead of the Benue-Plateau State library services which can be described as haphazard and ineffective.

The attempts of the state to develop the existing services stemmed from the state's desire to meet its various requirements that would aid the development programmes. In the Benue Plateau State there is dearth of skilled manpower who are required not only to execute government policies but to work in the private economy as

well. Because of the acute shortage of skilled manpower the states' natural resources remained half exploited and development plans could hardly be effectively implemented. The government found that the solution could be to boost education. For instance, in its development plans, 1970-74, the government gave education top priority because through education the diversified manpower needs of the state would be gradually met. Therefore library service would back up the education by the provision of reading materials to school and institutions. The emphasis on the provision for institutions is fundamental because education provides the skilled labour that matches the needs of the state. C.V. Penna succintly wrote "An effective educational system required books and if they are to be at the disposal of the population libraries are needed."[1] An important but peculiar problem with which the state contended has been the problems of school leavers who congregate in the major cities in the state. Most of them who came to the town in pursuit of studies have in their homes problems of privacy, use of bush lamps and above all difficulties of having to obtain the appropriate textbooks which the library might stock.

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1. C.V. Penna. Planning Library Service. In Unesco Bull. for Libraries Vol. 21, No.2 1967. p. 61.

They need libraries; Sharr in his report to the former Northern Region stressed this need when he said "Public libraries main concern is with those whose formal education is over but who wishes to build upon the foundation laid by further studies".[1] Besides the forementioned needs the illiterate adults who formed the majority of the population need to be given functional education to enable them to read and write and to put the skill so acquired into good use for the benefit of the society. This would no doubt break their silence and make them happier as they would be able to communicate modern ideas. But the public libraries would also supply information to assist the community in their development projects especially farm work.

In a state like Benue-Plateau where the library service is patchy the first step towards the development of any effective library service is the promulgation of an edict establishing a central authority in the form of a Library Board. The UNESCO manifesto on the purpose of public library service hammered this point. "The public library should be established under the clear mandate of law, so framed as to ensure (nation wide) provision of

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1. Sharr, Library Needs, p. 102.

public libraries."[1] The enactment of an ordinance establishing the Board is vital because the Board shall administer and expand the library services. Effective library services would not be realised without the legislation as the library would be run at the whims and caprices of the individual officer entrusted to run them. Clearly, and without hesitation, the Benue Plateau State library service was beset at its take off by the lack of any Library Advisory Committee as Ghana had prior to the constitution of its Library Board but relied on the services of the State Librarian who tried as much as possible to grapple with the problems inherent in the development of the libraries. Although the librarian pressurised the government for the enactment of an ordinance forming the Board the Government summed up such demand as "premature".[2] As have been analysed above there were difficulties of having to provide for the diversified interests in the Benue Plateau particularly those whose needs were out of the ordinary and which the reading rooms could not meet. Generally,

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1. Unesco Public Library manifesto, XXVI, 3 (1972), p. 120.

2. P.O. Unoogwu explained to me during an interview held in the Central Library at Jos, 1976.

apart from the special interests the need for the libraries to back up education loomed large. The state public libraries cannot provide for all these interests because of financial, material and personnel limitations. Indeed, all things cannot be achieved at one time; the most important services relevant to propel educational development of the state must be accorded priorities. It is therefore imperative to spell out the purpose of the library services in the Benue Plateau State. However, during the British Council's 1972 Ibadan Seminar on Library Management for Heads of Libraries in Nigeria, the Committee of State Librarians submitted the following as the objectives of all the state libraries:

To establish, provide, equip and maintain public libraries for the reading communities.

.) To cater for the unemployed to continue their education.

.i) To provide materials for those with primary school education to avoid lapsing into illiteracy.

(iv) To assist professional people to keep abreast of developments in their fields.

(v) To promote the arts and culture of the community.

These were the recommendations of the Committee of State Librarians. However, objectives of libraries vary from one state to another according to the specific problems confronting a particular state. For instance, acute shortage of skilled labour undermines development efforts of the Benue Plateau State so the objectives of the library are relevant to the production of manpower. But, when the above objectives are critically examined it would be found that the 1972 recommendations are general enough to apply anywhere, even Benue Plateau State. The librarian wished to add the contributions of public libraries to training of manpower. Here, the purpose of the library services will be defined.

To make available to all primary, secondary school children and private students in general books, periodicals and other library materials which will promote an all round education in the Benue Plateau State.

"The Benue Plateau State is reputed for its bold and ambitious educational programmes. It is realised that learning and teaching cannot proceed far without the use and influence of books and libraries. The development of public libraries here is in the very interest of the educational needs of the state since public libraries

back up the educational development. The mere accumulation of books does not satisfy the needs for their application. There, it cannot be excluded from educational plans and projects. To this must be added that public libraries besides generating public interest in adult education and public enlightenment programmes reinforces and stimulates school lessons and gives the teachers the background knowledge for day to day teaching. Public libraries in Benue Plateau State are resources for education, community development and for scientific discovery".[1]

To provide information on agriculture, health and industries as to raise the quality of life and to provide books which will assist the community to undertake their development projects: "The Benue State will depend on the application of its natural resources for development. There is need therefore for providing adequate library services to assist technicians and professionals in their preparation of illustrative facts".[2]

Generally, the objective of the library service are broad but here the librarian made too big a claim for the

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1. Unoogwu, Survey, pp. 126-127.
2. Ibid. p. 121.

public libraries to the detriment of school libraries which should form the priority of the library services. In his plans the librarian entirely separated public libraries from the school libraries which relegated to the background the educational function of public libraries. On this issue R.C. Benge has this to say:

"It may well be that as far as public libraries are concerned the British model which tends to separate libraries from formal education, is a most unsuitable one. The educational function of all types of libraries is paramount, and Unesco's policies have always recognised this. For example, in some countries the most suitable public library policy might be to set up libraries in schools rather than to develop a wholly separate library system."[1]

This issue is fundamental because it determines how library service can reach schools which directly contribute to the state's need for manpower. The issue traces back to the quality of the planner who though has the technical knowledge to organising the library but who at the same time failed to convene meeting of experts on library planning. There was no doubt that the early

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1. R.C. Benge, *Libraries and cultural change*. London, Bingley, 1970. p. 191.

period of library development was a period of stop-gaps and make-shift of management.

Furthermore, one would wonder about the role public libraries could play in scientific discovery. This is not feasible in Nigeria as the libraries are not research organisation. Public libraries are known from ancient times to provide information to those who need and use them. It is possible for libraries to furnish information on recent scientific researches and the Unesco manifesto on the purpose of public libraries unequivocally accepts this:

> "The public library is concerned... with assistance to students and with provision of up to date technical, scientific and sociological information."[1]

It is therefore inaccurate to assume that the function of public library is one of scientific discovery; a misrepresentation of the role for which the library stands. The objectives are vague, inaccurate and therefore were unacceptable to the government which regarded the demand for the Library Board as premature.

If these are the purposes for providing library services in the state there must be means through which

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1. Unesco Library manifesto. p. 130.

the objectives would be realised. These policies include:

(a) The library services in the state shall be free to all persons in the sense that no one person shall pay for the services he receives.

(b) That there would be a Central Library established at Jos to serve as administrative as well as technical headquarters for the library services in the state.

(c) That divisional library services shall be provided in each of the divisions and they shall be called branch libraries.

(d) The state library service shall operate mobile library service to cover the entire remote areas of the state.

The policies are clearer and more specific than the objectives. As before no mention was made of book-box services from which schools could benefit. The neglect of schools in the plans for library development detracts in no small ways the entire library services in the Benue Plateau State.

These objective and policies were made and submitted to the Ministry of Information by the State Librarian. This was permitted as there had not been a Library Board

nor Library Advisory Board. In Western Australia the policies were decided by the Board because there was already one. Sharr hammered this point. "I would perhaps emphasize that these policy decisions were made by the Board. They were not made by the staff. Major policy should never be determined by officers.".[1]

The execution of the objectives and policies call for the establishment of a modern library. The library established at Jos to fulfil the state needs grew out of the assets of the defunct Northern Region shared among the six emergent states in the North, Kwara, Kano, North Central, Benue-Plateau, North-East and North-West. At the process of sharing the assets the issue of the Regional Library at Kaduna cropped up. In the distribution of the property of the Regional Library, Benue-Plateau State acquired 10,000 volumes of books. Furniture such as shelves, tables and allied furniture which always go with books were brought to Jos for the successful take off of the library. In addition to the physical property each state was given the sum of ₦3,000 to start the library. It was this background which inspired and gave birth to the Benue-Plateau State Library services.

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1. A.F. Sharr. The Development of a new library service. In Nigerian Library, vol.1, No.1 (Feb., 1964). p.10.

However, when the books and furniture had been brought there was the initial problem of accommodation: where would the library be housed? There was no library Advisory Committee to advise the government on what to do. In Ghana, for example, every development of the public libraries was part of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. Apparently, the lack of Advisory Committee devolved on the librarian every bit of work. The government had commissioned him to search for appropriate quarters. The N.A. reading room at Jos could not have been repaired to meet the requirements of a modern library building. At last, his recommendation to the government to acquire the Ibo Union Hall Building along the Tafawa Balewa Street was unanimously accepted by the government which ordered the immediate occupation of the Hall. The Hall was to remain the tentative site of the Central Library until a more convenient and suitable building was acquired. In Denmark, Odense Library was housed in an old church building which was not designed for it.[1] The building with its limitation imposed on it by old age had several advantages; it was located within the thoroughfare or the hub of the town and so was

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1. Harrison, Libraries in Scandinavia, p. 55.

accessible to all types of vehicles particularly taxis and buses which ply the streets. The central location is necessary in the planning because "allowance must be made for the fact that most people travel inwards to the centre.[1] Likewise it was located within the shopping area of the town; the Ahmadu Bello Way along which the shops and supermarkets are concentrated is less than half a mile from the building while the Ministries are about one mile. With the arrangements concluded the 10,000 volumes were moved into it to start the library from the scratch. Thus, Jos library was to remain the central library of the State Library Services. This makes the library as administrative headquarters of the services where books will be accessioned, catalogued, classified and sent to the branch libraries in the divisions. Here, also will be the concentration of professional staff to train junior staff.

The set up of the library services at Jos consequent on the creation of the state was an important landmark in the provision of books to the people. However, the emergent library services remained haphazard. In some of the states of Nigeria there exist integrated library

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1. Benge. (London: Bingley, 1970). p. 94.

systems backed up by legislation; the East-Central, the Mid-Western State and the South-Eastern State enjoyed these provisions. At present, no state in the North is enjoying this legislative status. Pearce in his report to the Federal Government insisted that state library services should have 3-tiered services; public library services, school and institution library services and state library reference services...[1] This was recommended as long term plans for the state libraries but de-emphasized the reference library owing to financial reasons. Oderinde also echoed a similar note on the concept of public libraries: library services should be understood in a broader sense as embracing all types of library services, excluding university and special libraries.[2] In the Benue-Plateau State Library the 3-tiered system has not been in existence because the school libraries have not been in existence as the plan did not incorporate them. The term single integrated library service used by the librarian is misleading as

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1. R. Pearce, Library Services in the New States of Nigeria; Report prepared for the Ministry of Information, Federal Government of Nigeria, 1968. p. 19.

2. N.O. Oderinde, "Problems of Public Library Services in Educationally Backward Areas, with Special Reference to Nigeria", Nigerian Libraries 6,3, (1970), p. 157.

it is non-existent in Benue-Plateau State. Also the state library services is attached to the Ministry of Information as in the North-Central State where the library comes under the control of the Information Ministry. In Kano, North-Eastern State where different arrangements prevail the state libraries are controlled by the Ministries of Education of each of the state. In Ghana the Library Board controls the affairs of the library but its financial arrangement are submitted to the Ministry of Education prior to its approval; the reason being that the education which the library backs up is supervised by the Ministry of Education.[1] Thus consideration will be accorded to the stock, staffing finances and services which form a library.

STOCK

> "The public library is concerned with the communication of information and ideas, whatever the form in which these may be expressed. Since the printed word has been centuries the medium for the communication of knowledge, ideas and information, books, periodicals, newspapers remain the most important resources of public libraries."[2]

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1. E.J.A. Evans. A Tropical Library Service: the Story of Ghana's Libraries (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964). p. 58.
2. Unesco Manifesto. p. 130.

As enunciated in the Public Library Manifesto a public library to fully meet the goals of the community must stock books, periodicals and newspapers to disseminate information, ideas to the users. It is generally accepted that the library should increase the number of books to increase the number of individuals who use the books and to increase the amount of professional services.

As the public libraries provide books and non-book materials for educational purpose designed to meet development programmes the emphasis is on the purchase of books which would accelerate progress. In the former Eastern Regional Library (East Central Library) at Enugu, the purcahse of books was given top priority. Horrocks, a Unesco library expert, who led the development observed that textbooks were in biggest demand, that failure to provide was an obstacle to development; work on economics, politics, local government and allied subjects were provided.[1] The demand for textbooks in Enugu showed that the people there were reading for "self improvement" and "knowledge". The provision of such non-fiction books representing all subjects would no doubt assist the educational needs of the state.

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1. S.H. Horrocks, "Eastern Region and Unesco Public Library", WALA News 3, (1958), p. 13.

The Jos library is the headquarters of the State library services; it was expected to recruit staffs and to train them for the divisional branch libraries. On top of that, it purchases, catalogues and classifies books for distribution to the branch libraries in the divisions. This means that when a new library is opened, Jos will stock it with books and other library materials. This practice was known in Western Australia under Sharr. "We... set up a strong centrally organised book-stock from which every library would be supplied with books".[1] The Benue-Plateau State library services provides books to any person anywhere in the state. If a reader asks for a book which is not stocked by the branch library the request is passed to the central library. If the book is available it is sent to the reader through any possible means. This type of loan is organised much as in the British County Libraries and the state libraries (Central bibliotek) in Denmark where it has worked out successfully.

At the initial set up of the library at Jos, it started from the grassroots except for the 10,000 volumes acquired from the assets of the defunct Northern Nigeria between the six states.

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1. F.A. Sharr. The Development of a new library. p.10.

Table 3

COMPARATIVE STATE LIBRARY BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

State Library	No. of books	Perio-dicals	Total
Benue-Plateau	25,000	35	25,035
Kano	46,000	178	46,198
Kwara	15,000	14	15,066
North-Central	72,792	317	72,809
North-East	45,000	80	45,080
North-West	14,000	15	14,015

The next batch of books were purchased from external aid and donations. In the year 1973 the British Council in Nigeria donated ₦20,000 for the purchase of books mainly in the technology field. Also an indigenous company aimed at improving the position of the library, the Makere Smelting Company, donated 2,000 books to the library. Other donations emanated from the Institute for African Studies of Ibadan University, Ibadan. By the end of the 1973 the accession number attained 25,000. But the estimated stock for the headquarters was 100,000 while the divisional branch put at 45,000 volumes.

Table 3 gives a summary of the total book stock in each of the state library in the Northern States of Nigeria. A point to remember was the fact that when all the libraries began in 1968, all of them had a stock of 7,000 to 10,000 volumes. The table reveals that North-Central State library has the largest volume of stock because it got 30,000 volumes of books when the assets had been shared out. However, Kano and the North-Eastern States developed their collections at a more accelerated rate than Benue Plateau State with 25,035 as against 46,080 respectively. On the other hand the stock of the Benue Plateau State Library was larger than those of Kwara and North-West as shown in the table. Outside Nigeria, the Jos Library cannot successfully compare with other state libraries. For example, the state library of Aarhus in Denmark had a stock of 315,000 while the library of Silkeborg had a collection of 96,000.[1] The two libraries were better off than Jos in developing their stocks.

Despite the numerical inferiority of the stock at Jos, it was widely diversified to cater for several interests. It was observed however that childrens'

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1. Harrison, Libraries in Scandinavia, p. 54.

collection outstripped the rest. By the end of 1973 it had 25,000 volumes. The small volume was not difficult to explain, the government assistance was not forthcoming as one would expect from a government willing to raise the educational standard of the people and the general economy. To add to that, while public libraries in Britain benefitted heavily from individual support, apathy to reading amongst the top people kept down any support.

In Jos, from the analysis of the questionnaire certain criticisms had been levelled against the library administration. The readers most of whom were school leavers cried out against the unsuitable number of books and particularly childrens' books. Indeed, suitability is relative but here one might ask what governs it? Although the basic criteria for selection of books are the same throughout the world the nature of people's lives might influence their needs. A well stocked library will contribute to the development of its users and the community. As well as encouraging self-reliant study habits the stock will stimulate imaginative and creative faculties which are needed to develop to the full people in any society. In Nigeria people want text-books and if a particular book is not a text book few

readers would want it. Readers who criticised the collection as being unsuitable probably wanted textbooks but there is no doubt that children's collection occupied more shelves.

FINANCE

The State Government usually plays critical roles in the development projects. Apart from decreeing its inception it also provides funds without which no organisation whether public or private can carry out its objectives successfully. The aid may be through grant-in-aid, material grant, library extension resources of the library collection or provision of direct services as reference. The role of the government is significant, and is called for when it is realised that public libraries are maintained wholly from public funds.

In fact, most developing countries when embarking upon development projects rely on external aids. Such aid comes from either USIS, Unesco, or, the British Council. For example, the finance of the East Regional Library was a joint effort of the Unesco and Eastern Regional Government (during the period 1957-1962). In Ghana however, the library services depended on the self-help and grant-in-aid from the central government.[1]

1. Evans, Tropical Library Services, p. 56.

Benue-Plateau State Library scarcely enjoyed any external aid; the library was directly funded through individual efforts and aid from the state government. Indeed, money is the pillar for any library services. If the lack of funds does not preclude the idea of library services coming into existence it might impede its successful implement. The purchase of books equipment, building of quarters, salaries all require money. And if money and materials are inadequate limitations might have to be placed on services which would undermine the objectives of library services.

TABLE IV

COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR BOOKS: PERIODICALS AND OTHER SUPPLIES

State Library	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	Total
	₦	₦	₦	₦
Benue Plateau	6,000	16,000	20,000	42,000
Kano	24,000	24,000	70,000	118,000
Kwara	4,500	8,000	8,000	20,500
North-Central	122,728	283,320	473,640	879,688
North East	19,000	2,000	33,000	54,000
North West	9,200	10,000	10,000	29,200

From the onset of the take-off of the library it lacked any effective financing although the first two years the need for money was not so urgent.[1] In the four years Development Plan 1970-1974, the sum of ₦98,000 was allocated to the library for its capital projects such as building of all the twelve divisional libraries. This amount was meagre and the State Librarian attributed it to certain factors in the state. The developments of the libraries coincided with the expansion of the Information Division of the Ministry of Information to which the libraries were attached. Out of the sum voted to the library ₦20,000 was extracted to expand and develop the information division at Jos and Otukpo. The launching of the State Television Services and Nigeria Standard diverted the fund intended for the library services in the state.

The television service was considered a more important service to the state whose majority of population live in rural areas and in abject poverty. The inauguration of the television service was to the advantages of the urban dwellers. The role of television as a medium for education is highly significant at this stage of Nigeria's development but when it is realised that there

1. Unoogwu, Survey, p. 160.

are hardly any television sets in the rural communities the use of the medium becomes questionable. In Nigeria, Kano, Kaduna and Bendel States have tried to use it as a medium for education by installing sets in public viewing centres in villages. The existing sets have raised a number of problems: they are badly handled and there is the problem of continued maintenance to ensure constant service to the viewers. But the larger problem continues to plague the states; the problem of finding money to provide television sets to go round all the villages. Both television and libraries are complementary. But in spite of the former's advantages of audio and its ability to involve the 'total' person, television as medium for education cannot be possible at this state of development in Benue Plateau State. Until the rural communities have electricity supply and money to buy television sets, libraries offer a more useful medium of education for the state. The government failed to balance this amount of money to carry out the library development.

The financing of the libraries was also attributed to the nature of corruption which prevailed in the civil service of Benue Plateau State. In the ministries of works and education contracts were awarded to enable the

officials concerned to share certain percentages of the contracts. In the library contracts were seldom awarded because books, periodicals and other publications which the library regularly acquired were bought through orders; sometimes payments were made by the Crown Agents in overseas. And since no officials profited from this enterprise, library development was not treated with seriousness which it deserved. In other words attitudes of the top officials in the government contributed a great deal to the failure to develop the library services. The statement by Lester Asheim aptly applied to Benue Plateau State: "most societies do not develop even when they seem to have sufficient resources".[1] The assertion fitted the state which enjoyed financial assistance from Lagos and yet no development could be effected. The explanation is therefore rooted in the attitudes of officials who were reluctant to relinguish their previleges for the general welfare of the state.

Another explanation given to clarify the issue which is unrelated to the above reason is the lack of any legal provision for the finances of the libraries. If there was any legal provision establishing a board specifically

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1. Lester, Asheim, Librarianship in the developing countries. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966. p.50.

designed to run the libraries with financial provisions the library system would have been fully developed. Instead, it was left to the whims and caprices of the individuals in the Ministry of Information and the Military Governor's Office with the Librarian as a mere stooge.

No organisation can successfully thrive without adequate financial arrangements. Likewise no library can provide effective library services without funds because money will be required to purchase library materials. In Benue Plateau State the responsibility of financing the library falls on the government just as in any of the five states. Table IV successfully compares the financial provisions for Benue Plateau services with the rest of the five states in the North from 1972. One feature common to all the states is the continual increases in the allocation of fund to the library services. For example, the funds for Benue-Plateau library started with ₦6,000 and rose to ₦20,000 while North Central allocation initially started with ₦122,728 and jumped to ₦473,640. However, the table reveals much more than this; there is great disparity in the allocation for the various states. It will be

observed that North Central State voted the largest amount for its library development than the rest of the five states. What North Central State spent within the period 1973-1976 outstripped the total allocation of the five states put together. North Central State enjoyed ₦879,688 against ₦263,500 of the five states despite the fact that the former inherited some library facilities from the defunct Northern Region while the rest of the five had to struggle to take off. At least this is time the Benue Plateau State started from the scratch. Kano State Library Services enjoyed financial provision second only to North Central State whilst Benue Plateau State Services only surpassed Kwara State. Benue Plateau and Kwara State Services have a larger student enrolment than most of the states yet have least money allocated to the libraries. The total allocation for Benue Plateau Library Services (₦42,000) is less than half of the total allocation for Kano Library Services. Clearly, the growth and quality of library services on the ground in each of the state would also reflect the financial allocation to the various libraries. For Benue Plateau State the poor development of services bears direct relationship to the financial inadequacy.

STAFFING

For any public library to meet the needs of its readers it required staff of the right calibre to give professional services. There is need for qualified staff to select and organise the materials, to assist and direct readers especially readers who request for reference material because questions asked at the reference desk require some degree of proficiency and accuracy with minimum waste of time on the part of the staff. Besides, the staff at the reference desk need to exhibit approachable characters while circulation work also calls for cordial relationships.

The question of staffing of the Benue Plateau State library was grave at the time of the launching of the library. There was shortage of staff in Benue Plateau State as else where in Nigeria. There was no library board nor Advisory Committee charged with the responsibilities of recruiting staff. However the immediate problem was one of the state librarian which the state had from Kaduna. In effect there was only a qualified librarian who assumed the status of the state librarian. There were three assistants to help him, three clerical officers and a cleaner. By 1968-1969, the staffing position significantly improved when one senior library

attendant was recruited together with two junior library attendants and two security guards. By 1970 the staff strength expanded with the services of three graduates of Library Science from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.[1] Their services were however shortlived when the State Public Service Commission placed them on the salary scale, C_2 (£741-942) which was not what their counterparts elsewhere in the Federation received (graduates in other disciplines received scale A, (£840 - 1764).

Table V compares the staffing position of the Benue-Plateau Library Service with those of other states in Nigeria.

TABLE V

COMPERATIVE PERSONNEL - 1975

State Library	Professional/ sub-prof. staff	Assistant/ Attendants	App. Ratio
Benue-Plateau	4	7	1:2
Kano	3	18	1:6
Kwara	9	25	1:3
North-Central	27	49	1:2
North East	9	26	1:3
North West	3	16	1:5

1. Unoogwu, Survey, p. 160

The table V shows that North Central State Library Service had better staffing position numerically than the five other states put together. On the otherhand Kwara and North East states enjoyed a better staffing over all ratio of 1:3. The ratio compares favourably with the A.L.A. Standard which states: professional and sub-professional staff should be approximately one-third of the total staff. However, in the revised 1960 standard it was clearly stipulated for every 6,000 population served there should be one professional and two clericals. This in itself represents a ratio of 1:2, thus only North Central State Library Service meets this minimum standard. The Benue Plateau State Library has the lowest number of staff, both junior and senior. The North West appears better off than Benue Plateau State in terms of staffing. The conclusion here means that such comparison makes more sense if the various libraries have a reasonable number of staff; if there are about two staff the comparison makes little or no sense. And the understaffing no doubt impedes the realisation of the objectives of the library and the kind of quality of the services it offers to readers. Explanations for the low staffing position will be given later in this chapter.

Compared with staff of state libraries outside Nigeria the Benue Plateau Library Services shrinks. Although most of these state libraries in Denmark opened between 1958-59 they exhibited better staffing position than Benue Plateau State. Vejle which is regarded as one of the prototypes of Danish libraries is better staffed than all the libraries in the table (see table VI). Generally, the two libraries Aarhus and Vijle are better in terms of staffing than Benue Plateau whose professional staff numbered 1/8 of Aarhus and ½ of Vijle. The reasons for disparity are easy to lay hands on; firstly Denmark is far more advanced in general development than Benue Plateau State which has just taken off and therefore must have developed specialized manpower.

TABLE VI

COMPARATIVE PERSONNEL

Library	Professional staff	Others
Benue Plateau	4	7
Aarhus	35	50
Silkborg	-	-
Vejle	11	16
Odense	-	-

Secondly, the library profession hardly is a lucrative profession which attracts many people so Nigerians prefer areas where they can make money quickly.

However, the state librarian took a number of measures to improve the quality of staff especially with regard to the quality of junior staff. What he did was to train all the junior staff both at the branch and headquarters libraries at the central library as the professionally qualified senior staff were concentrated in Jos. Initially, the Western Australian library under Sharr experimented with this practice and it succeeded. "We adopted the principle of specialization of function. We concentrated the professional staff in headquarters... arranged the system so that the unqualified local libraries can call on the service of the professional staff when they need it to meet their readers' requirements".[1] By the scheme assistants and attendants from branch libraries were given training in basic cataloguing, acquisition and reference services while those at the Central Library learn from them since all the cataloguing, acquisition are centralized. The scheme no doubt improved the situation since the services which started had to continue.

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1. Sharr, The development of a new library. p. 10.

Furthermore, with increasing volume of work in the central library there was the need to employ more qualified staff of various cadres. In consequence the librarian recommended to the government through the Ministry of Information the following number of staff at the central library:

1 Principal Librarian
1 Senior Librarian
1 Librarian I & II
3 Library Officers
6 Library Assistants
12 Messengers and Cleaners.

The recommendation failed to include assistant librarians whose services are valuable to any library. In Nigeria it is also easier to recruit assistant librarians than any other grade of librarians as the turn-out from universities is fairly high. The recommendation was never implemented and the library remained understaffed until the state split in 1976.

Up to date no satisfactory explanations have been advanced for the mass resignations from the State library at Jos. The explanations ranged from low salary scale to poor staff relations. Of the various reasons low salary

scale contributed greatly to the resignation for the graduates employed were placed on scale C_2 (£741-942) a salary scale normally offered to holders of Diploma in Library Science while salary scale 'A' (£840-1760) was offered to graduates. This was tantamount to non-recognition of the degree held by the graduates. On top of the poor salary the librarian was authoritarian and uncooperative in the main. For example, the questionnaire revealed that staff meetings were seldom convened to discuss matters affecting staff and the library services nor did the librarian delegate authority to any of the staff to act in his capacity when he toured the branch libraries. Here, the concept of team work was deficient; what existed was grinding competition among the individual staff. Graduates who were recruited hardly spent three months before resigning for fear of victimization and sometimes for lack of duty as the librarian refused to assign them routine work. One views the basic problem as one of fear of insecurity that prevails in all developing countries. Though Asheim refers to competition among librarians in different libraries his statement suitably applied to competition in one establishment or set-up because when a more qualified librarian is recruited the top least qualified

librarian sees the former as threats to his security. Parts of Asheim's view read: "Where opportunities are few, every other person with similar qualification and interest is much more urgently a potential rival. Each accomplishment by someone else spells a danger to one's own position in the scramble in the few good job that existed."[1] It would seem that more graduates would have taken up appointment in the library if the fear of this attitude was allayed. In effect, therefore, effective library services could not be provided without staff with the right expertise.

Besides, staff were not promoted to high positions. From the questionnaire, it was discovered that a library officer spent eight years in the library without being promoted. Obviously, there was nothing to encourage persons who would like to work hard. And when staff were frustrated resignation was the next course. Failure to promote staff accounted also for the poor staffing in the library, for since growth requires inducement workers must move to higher occupations.[2] When they resigned from the state library the workers took

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1. Lester, Asheim, Librarianship in the Developing Countries. p.55

2. Ibid. p. 57.

appointment with university library services or with organisations which offered more attractive conditions of services.

SERVICES

From the start the state library committed itself by giving services to public under the skeletal staff and from the constraints imposed by the lack of funds. It was realised that the stock and staff must have a bearing on the need of the readers. The stock and staff must combine to serve the readers or the community that uses the library because a good library is identified by the kind of services it renders to the public.

In the Jos Central Library the service was based on the issue of books to readers. Books were issued out free of charge in consonance with the policies of the library. There is no doubt that this system of service appears to be the most acceptable one since it attracted more readers as no fee was paid. In Ghana, at the take-off of the public libraries, because of limited funds adult readers paid 4s. (four shillings) for using the libraries.[1] In the former Regional Library at Enugu,

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1. Evans, Tropical Library Service, p. 57.

no subscription was paid but readers produced the signature of a gurantor so that borrowing could be controlled.[2] While the non-payment of fees in Enugu was intended to encourage the use of the library, the payment in Ghana was attributable to the large expatriate readership. Benue Plateau State rendered free services to readers. The type of services in the first two years were based on limited expenses that would not interrupt the services. Moreover, the government was allowed to spend as little money as possible until the third year. The services commenced with the loan services to readers within Jos but later on it was extended to people outside Jos. The readers were given 'extended loan facilities' so that instead of having to return the books borrowed within the normal fortnight they were permitted to retain them for a period of three months subject to recall by the State Librarian or his deputy. A second category of services which the library rendered (unsuccessfully for most of the time) was reference. The absence of the necessary requirements to carry out the services owing to financial reasons undermined the library Reference Services. There were children's services up to the

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1. Horrocks, "Eastern Region", p. 22.

middle of 1969 when the Nigerian Army requisitioned the building used to accommodate the children's library. In addition to the above services, there was a programme designed specially for students known as 'Student Vacation Programme'. Thus the purpose of the programme embraced...

> "To have a carefully selected list of books considered in the best general interest of students to be made available to them while they are on vacation within our areas of service. In addition to the special list under consideration students are free to make use of our general stock. This encourages the formation of students library club with varieties of programmes such as discussion group, debating and recreational activities."[1]

Students were enrolled as members of the library using different registration forms. The registration forms contained questionnaires which when answered correctly would reveal subjects they take in their various institutions and their trade interests. By the use of the questionnaire the library was also able to observe not only students habit of reading but students'

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1. Unoogwu, Survey, p. 127.

pursuits in the various disciplines. Below is an example of the registration form.

The library issued four tickets to the student after the approval of the registration while a non-student member of the library is given only two readers tickets.

STUDENTS' VACATION LIBRARY PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

Name .....

Institution .....

Class/Form .....

Check-out .....

G.C.E.; W.A.S.C.; H.S.C.; or G.C.E. 'O' Level;
G.C.E. 'A' Level; B.A.; B.Sc.; M.A.; Ph.D.;
or Certificate Course, Diploma Course.

Subject .....

SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST

GROUP A: ACADEMIC (List them)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

GROUP B: RECREATIONAL (List them)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GROUP C: Subject being taken in School

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

STUDENTS' LIBRARY CLUB

Are you interested in joining the Students' Library Club?

Comments: _____

_____

Can you give names of friends you know may join the Students' Library Club? If so write their names and addresses:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At the submission of the application the student subject to the approval of the State Librarian is issued with four reader's tickets. The non-student member of the library however is issued with only two readers tickets. At this point, the application form for the non-student member is reproduced for comparison.

TABLE VII

THE ADULT LENDING & REFERENCE LIBRARY

Day of Opening	Time	
	Morning	Evening
Monday - Friday	9.00 a.m.	5.30 p.m.
Saturday	9.00 a.m.	5.00 p.m.
Sunday & Public Holidays	-	5.00 p.m.

Days closed	Time
Monday - Friday -	1 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday -	1 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Sunday & Public Holidays -	8 p.m.

OPENING HOURS

There was a strong obligation to make the central library more accessible to readers; this involved giving the public ample time to use the library. From the beginning the library worked out the opening hours to give readers enough hours during the day and in the evening. Most of the readers were either in the employment of the public service commission and or the various commercial and trading companies. But the working hours in every respect were incompatible with the opening hours of the library. The solution was to determine the needs of the public to enable employees of the various organisations to use the library to the full. The opening hours therefore represented the attempt of the library to give opportunities to the public to use the library.

The above opening hours were in use before February 1976 and were found satisfactory to the public. On the part of the public it was flexible allowing those who work during mornings and afternoons to come when most convenient. Those who did work could use the library for twelve hours but those interrupted by their obligations had up to six hours to make use of the library.

The hours shows a discrepancy, that is the gap between the closing hour (1 p.m.) and the opening hour (5 p.m.) in the evening session appeared so long and wasteful. There was no doubt that some readers would have preferred to use the library at that time. Besides, it is usual for a library to remain open throughout the day till the closing hours (8 p.m.). The situation in the Jos library was explained in terms of acute shortage of staff.

Two characteristics of the opening hours - generosity and flexibility explained the rate of successful attendance. The following tables of attendance indicated the success of the library. The Daily Record of Attendance, 1968-1971, indicated the number of readers in the reading room but how the attendance was registered was not indicated. Probably the librarian kept a register of daily attendance.

The rise in attendance can be seen from table VIII below. The evidence from the tables showed an increasing rate of progress as indicated in the figures. The year 1968-1969 revealed a total attendance of 7,808 readers despite the non use in the early months up to August. The 1969-1970 recorded 1,854 which is an

TABLE VIII

ATTENDANCE 1968-71

MONTH	ATTENDANCE		
	1968-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971
January	-	1,451	2,374
February	-	1,783	1,490
March	-	1,059	1,724
April	-	1,250	1,680
May	-	1,126	1,514
June	-	1,100	2,093
July	- -	1,043	2,257
August	-	1,450	2,135
September	1,689	1,335	1,901
October	1,181	2,230	1,853
November	2,432	2,476	2,591
December	2,504	2,249	2,711
Total	7,808	18,540	24,711

increase of 11,000 over the previous years. The 1970-71 on the other hand registered 24,000 which represented an increase of 14,000 attendance above the 1969-1970.

There is one acceptable feature common to all the years, that is high number of readers in April, June to September, and November to December. These months coincided with the school holidays when most students normally return to Jos to visit their relatives and friends and therefore took advantage of the library facilities. In fact, this reason explains the unusual high figures during the months listed above. November to January witness another important period when the G.C.E. is normally taken, hence candidates used the library to prepare for the examinations. Outside these periods the number of readers fell. One however must take into account days when the library would be affected by power failure.

ANALYSIS OF BOOKS LOANED OUT BY SUBJECT AND BY PERCENTAGE, 1969-1971

The table IX demonstrated several aspects of the library showing concentration of borrowing between subjects which fall between the classes 300 (the social sciences) and 600. It can be reasoned out that there

TABLE IX

AN ANALYSIS OF BOOKS LOANED OUT BY SUBJECT AND BY PERCENTAGE
BETWEEN 1969 - 1971

Subject	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
No. of Bks	5	6	6	2	2	-	10	8	10	10	9	6	89
000 % of Bks	1	1	1	0.4	1	-	2.1	1.7	3	3	3	1.7	1.7
No. of Bks	16	18	25	46	18	22	23	23	23	23	10	9	240
100 % of Bks	3	3	4	9	5.4	3	5.9	2.3	6	4	3	3	4.4%
No. of Bks	156	186	202	134	81	121	139	171	145	94	107	127	1.663
300 % of Bks	30	30	13.4	26.6	27	22	23.9	36	25	31	28	36.3	44%
No. of Bks	78	112	70	76	32	70	60	182	68	48	31	42	769
500 % of Bks	15	15	12	15	11	15	13	18	13	14	10	12	13.9%
No. of Bks	62	71	64	58	28	79	67	67	67.13	47	48	64	704
600 % of Bks	12	12	10	11	9.4	18	14	10	4	14	15	18	12.8%
No. of Bks	10	12	14	17	10	32	4	9	18	11	14	9	160
700 % of Bks	2	2	4	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	2.9%
No. of Bks	104	121	110	80	62	83	68	50	75	44	52	45	894
800 % of Bks	20	20	18	16	20	18	14	10.6	14	13	16	13	16.2%
No. of Bks	68	76	77	70	34.10	66	76	68.14	90	46	43	31	747
900 % of Bks	13	13	15	13	2	13	17	4	16	14	14	9	13.6%

is less use of stock in the general class (General knowledge) and classes 400 (Languages), 800 (Literature), 200 and 900 (History and Geography). The statistics scarcely gives one insight into the actual total number of volumes in each of the section or subject divisions. What is shown is the number of books borrowed in each of the subject areas. But the percentage was worked against the total number of books which is not shown here. At any rate borrowing is concentrated in the social sciences.

Geography and History which are useful to the secondary school children and to those reading at home for examinations are heavily used. The statistics also reveal that the use of Literature group is not as high as the use in the art and social sciences. However, the overall impression is that despite the limitations placed on the library services people are aware of its importance through the books loaned out.

In the statistics analysed above, no one can exactly tell the role of the library in the cultural recreation of the community in the state. When the librarian drafted the purposes of the library service, he included:

"Libraries are needed to assist the growth of culture by assembling and preserving vital

> information for various social development in the state. It is necessary to make available through books past and present knowledge to all generations of mankind."[1]

The use of culture above by the librarian is special; he imagined the role the Benue Plateau State Library Service could play in the current wave of cultural revival in Nigeria. How much the libraries could assist in the cultural revival in Nigeria remains difficult to determine as the different Nigerian cultures are yet to be documented for both present and future generations. However, culture, as employed here embraces recreational activities and reading, hence 'serious' and 'light' reading. Some scholars hardly see any demarcation line between 'light' and 'serious' reading since one who is reading a textbook seriously might also read works of cultural interest. Despite the cultural role of the library service Benue Plateau State at this stage of its development would not give priority to cultural role of the library because more urgent needs such as education of the state must be backed up by textbooks. Even in his recommendations to the governments of the new states

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1. Unoogwu, Survey, p. 125.

Pearce stressed the fact that the cultural role of the library is not as urgent as educational one. "At this stage, fund for books of purely recreational cannot be spared and must be left to the commercial interest to provide."[1] The recommendation therefore pointed out the secondary importance of the cultural roles in a state which lacks skilled manpower to exploit its natural resources. While people read for culture or recreation in advanced countries like England, in developing nations the emphasis is on achievement reading, that is reading for practical clearly defined purposes as for examinations. However, there is no doubt that far more people engage in recreational reading in advanced countries than in the new states which are just taking off. People who went to Jos library did so because they needed textbooks for most of the time. During holidays students flooded the library to read and borrow novels. Tables of attendance revealed staggering number of readers during the holidays periods, June, to September, December to January and March to April when most schools vacate.

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1. Pearce, R. Library Services. p. 20.

S.G. Ikoku, an exponent of the above view asserted "our libraries should stock novels, cartoons and pictures that help us to understand ourselves and our new order."[1] To attain the cultural role the library must stock African authors such as Achebe, Amos Tutola, Cyprian Ekwensi, Christopher Okigbo, Kola Omotosho, James Ngugi in addition to foreign authors. The cultural aspect also emphasises textbooks of African history that preserve our past and bring the past to our present generation.

The books written by Africans enable Africans to understand themselves without condemning the role and the contributions of science to their lives. On the other hand Frank Gardner believes that the cultural role of libraries in African states at this time is uncertain because libraries are built to fulfil educational role. He upholds:

> "At present time, and it is well this fact should be faced, the users of public libraries in Africa looks on them as a source of non-fiction textbook

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1. S.G. Ikoku. Libraries in the de-colonizing process. In Nigeria Libraries, Vol.7 No. 1 & 2 (April - August 1971). p. 17.

type, for study as formal education. Their cultural role is secondary."[1]

He viewed the cultural role as a long term plan which with the passage of time and by the stocking of African books by Africans, cultural role of the libraries would be recreated. However, the libraries must here stock novels and textbooks written by Africans. The truth which must be squarely faced is that with our present stage of development emphasis is on reading for material gains and when Africans States attain the level of development of advanced countries people will begin to read for pleasure. Thus, in Benue Plateau State people went to the library mainly to read for examinations. Above all the state gives the educational development priority and insisted that library material must be purely educational in nature.

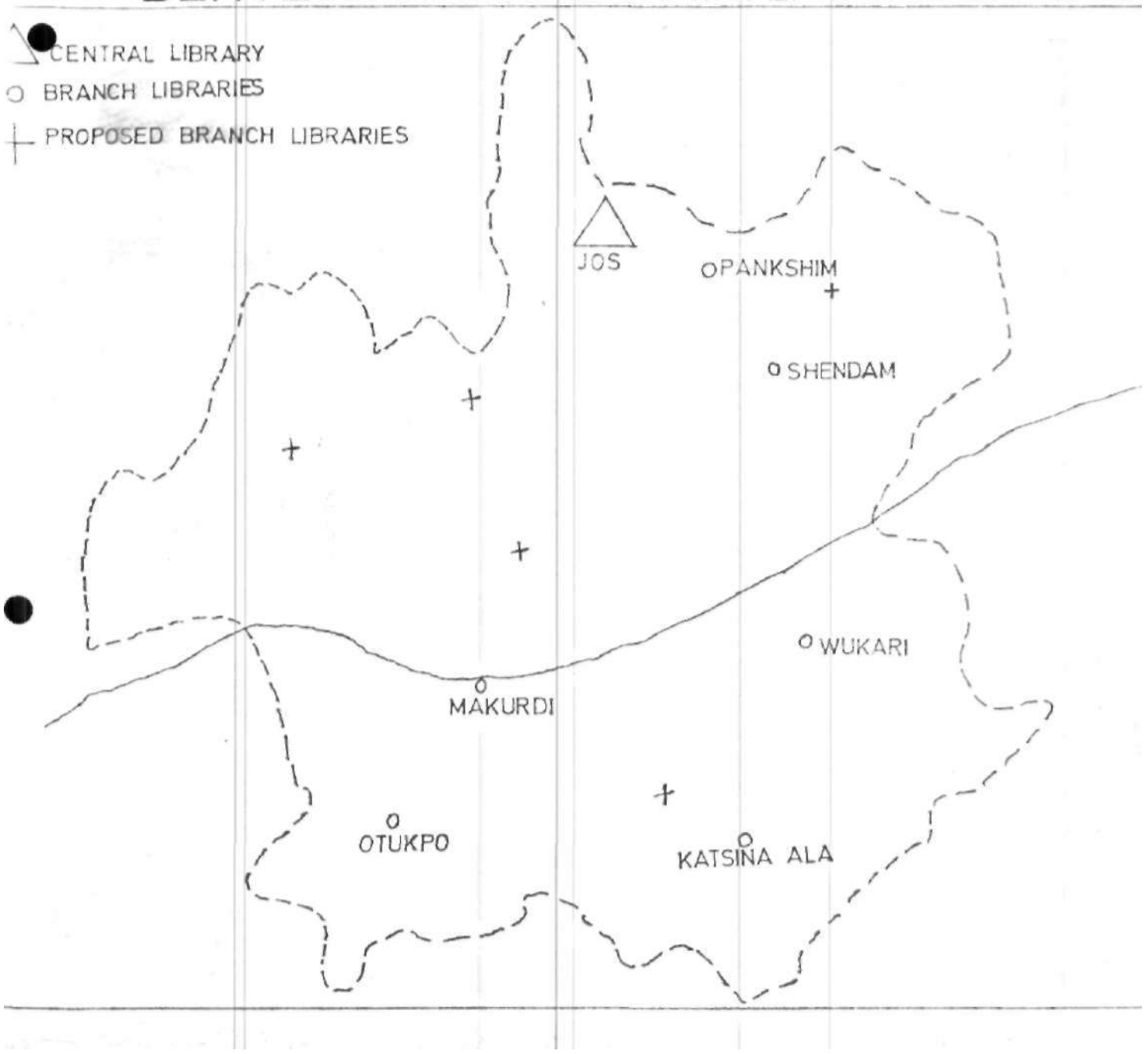
In the area of recreation the Jos library carried out extension activities. The library organised lectures, concerts, dramatic productions and other cultural activities which in a broad sense are recreational. For example, several exhibitions were mounted by book

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1. Frank Gardner. Unesco and Library and related Services in Africa. Unesco Bulletin for Libraries, XX, 5, (1966). p. 218.

publishers: Oxford and Cambridge University Presses. Between 1969 and 1972 a number of public lectures were held; topics ranged from Unesco International Week to the Adebo Commission on Wages and Salaries. However, inadequate stock resulting from the want of funds made less room for the realisation of these objectives.

BENUE PLATEAU STATE



CHAPTER 5

BRANCH LIBRARIES

The establishment of divisional (branch) libraries in Benue-Plateau State was a fresh venture as elaborated in the Five Year Development Plan, 1970-1975. The decision to establish branch libraries grew out of the launching in 1968 of the State Central Library at Jos. With the creation of the state and the consequent inception of the Central Library it was considered necessary to bring social and educational facilities nearer the ruled to ensure effective and even development. For example, schools, hospitals and health centres were built in the rural areas to elevate and improve the life of the community which they serve. In the provision of these essential amenities library services were either forgotten or discarded despite their information role in development. The establishment of libraries in the divisions would bring the government closer to the people by making them official tools of literacy and communication.[1] From the divisional headquarters the services would

1. Rhodesian Libraries. Vol.5, No. 1, January 1976. p.6.

radiate to the remote towns and districts of the state. Indeed, one of the privileges and advantages which the workers in Jos enjoyed over their fellow workers in the rural towns is the library services. Through the utilization of the central library facilities workers read to qualify for better jobs, qualify for university admission and generally become informed people. Improvement in these areas would no doubt make for better output, production and development at large. The libraries would be opened to those who need them and would stimulate not only the interest of the people but of the local authority. Through the effective use of the library facilities illiterates and semi-literates would be able to participate fully in the economic development of the state by putting into practice the functional education so acquired. And as have been pointed out earlier on better ways of farming, fishing and trading would improve the quality of the life of the community and above all would make available to the community reading materials to semi-literates whose education would be indispensable if there is to be social, economic and political transformation of the rural society both in urban and the rural towns. The Daily Times of Nigeria shares this

view when it advocated the establishment of libraries in the rural towns and villages. Parts of the comment read:

> "The communication is a vital part of development unquestionable... Hitherto, most African States have been vigorously trying to develop the urban masses which are largely left out and completely forgotten. But the fact of developing an agrarian society is the closing of the gap between the rural and urban communities. Unless the rural masses are mobilized in the development process, there cannot be true development. And if they (masses) are to be expected to share in the burdens of development like contributing taxes, they should at least have access to the facilities obtainable in the urban towns. Extending library services as indicated by the Commissioner for Information and Cultural Affairs for Southeastern State, Chief J.D. Esema is just a step in bridging the gap of alienation. It is also a solution to the problem of lack and accessibility to suitable literature for rural semi-literates who are in need of some educative stimulus. Having acquired elementary or adult education they need such

stimulus or else they lapse to illiteracy again. Their education however elementary, has to be nurtured again the way as the urbanities are being murtured by the availability of mass communication."[1]

Al Although the state was aware of the transformational roles of the library it attempted first to consolidate the Central Library at Jos so as to enable technical processes, administration of services and the training of staff to be established before the commencement and subsequent opening of the branch libraries. The authority in Jos comprehended and took practical steps to establish the Central Library. This of course provided services for few people initially but there are precedents of such library development; the former Regional Library at Enugu had emphasized development from the centre. In Uganda for instance attempts to develop branch libraries first failed.[2] While the principle behind opening the branch libraries first gave opportunity to more people to use library facilities it was against the principle that expansion for most of the time should depend upon

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1. Daily Times of Nigeria. "Daily Time Opinion". 14 November, 1972, p. 3.

2. Wallenius. Libraries in East Africa. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies. Uppsalla, 1971. p. 102.

available resources. As the Central Library developed it went on to plan for successful expansion of library services to the divisions within the Five Year Development Plan, 1970-75. The extent to which they plans have been implemented is difficult to assess but initially only six branch libraries were taken over and developed by the State Government during the Development Plan period. Below is the proposals for the systematic and smooth extension of state library services to the divisions.

The establishment of standard and modern librariesin each of the administrative headquarters.[1] That consultation be made with the N.A.s with a view to converting the present local reading rooms into divisional libraries. On the strength of the approval given by the state Executive Council arrangements were concluded to ensure the take-over of the reading rooms from the various N.A.s. Infact, the plan revolved round the training of the N.A. library staff to acquaint them with the rudiments of librarianship. There were altogether four stages during which the take-over was to be accomplished; the target date for the completion of the take-over being June 1973 as stipulated in the Development Plan of the State.

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1. Unoogwu, Survey. p. 130.

PHASE 1

The State Government was to take-over all the N.A. reading rooms and to change their names from the Benue-Plateau reading rooms to state divisional libraries. They were to be administered by the N.A.s until the final take-over. The staff would be converted into the staff of the state library after the successful completion of courses which they would attend at Jos and Ibadan. The staff would be paid by the N.A.s until June 1973, when they should have completed the library Assistant Course.

PHASE II

The State Librarian would tour all the divisions to arrange for sites, buildings and other facts necessary for establishing library services in the divisions. Where there were available buildings they should be remodelled, renovated suitable for temporary use.

PHASE III & IV

These stages made rooms for more staff of all cadres in the divisional libraries. The government would strengthen direct divisional services as enumerated below:

(a) Expansion of rural programmes.

(b) Staff development and training.

(c) Increased services to the community.

(d) Books for all branch libraries would be purchased, processed centrally and distributed to all libraries. The State Librarian visited each N.A.s for the purpose of the hand-over processes after which all library responsibilities shall come under the full control of the government through the state librarian by June, 1973.

BUILDING

Building forms an integral component of library services because it must accommodate the equipment, the stock, the staff and the readers. From the onset the Benue-Plateau Library Services was beset by the difficulties of accommodation. Initially, the library project was one for which the state government did not plan adequately because the services took off only with sharing of the assets of the Regional library of Kaduna following the split of the former Northern Region. For example, to provide accommodation for the Central Library at Jos the government acquired the Ibo Union Hall along the Tafawa Balewa Street. The library was housed here until the building collapsed in 1975. Even while the

temporary building the government scarcely took initiatives to erect a modern building designed to accommodate the Central Library. In establishing the branch libraries the government had no concrete and specific policy in respect of the buildings. As noted in stage II of the take-over of proposals the government directed the state librarian to tour all the divisional headquarters and instructed him thus:

> "Where there were available buildings they should be remodelled, re-novated suitable for temporary use."[1]

It was thought that with the implement of the proposal the accommodation problem would be eased. However, buildings inherited from the N.A.s were in bad conditions. In fact at the time of their take-over almost everywhere, the buildings lacked all conveniences. They were inadequate reading rooms, badly equipped, with too little storage room and no administrative quarters. The take-over of the old building added little to solve the existing accommodation problems.

However, arrangements elsewhere for building provide better comparisons to what was obtainable in the Benue Plateau State. In the former Eastern Region of Nigeria,

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1. Unoogwu. Survey. p. 130.

for instance, the plan to take-over all the reading rooms presented an entirely different picture. Here, the N.A.s provided buildings while the regional government stocked them with books - a system known as cooperative running of libraries. Under the system the local authorities would provide the buildings, its equipment and maintenance while the regional library would provide a librarian and would select the book stock. But in the North of Nigeria such arrangements did not exist either because the N.A.s were too weak or were too illiterate to see the need for arrangements that would help them to maintain libraries. In the attempts to evolve a definite policy on buildings there came into existence what was dubbed a site Board for each of the divisions in the State. The responsibility of the site Board included selecting the site of the divisional library buildings and the Site Board of each division comprised the District Officer (the D.O.), the District Engineer, the Medical Officer of Division, the Local Government Secretary and the State Librarian who represented the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information under whose ministry the library operated. The Site Board convened each time there was going to be decisions on the choice of the site. In one of the meetings held at Otukpo the Board took a

number of decisions regarding the site. The librarian pointed out in the meeting that "The most convenient site for the erection of the library block should be situated somewhat in the centre of the town to avoid long distances on the part of the general public who may use the library bookstock."[1] The Board also considered other sites.

Throughout its deliberations the Site Board failed to mention the fact that protection must be made against ants and heavy rainfall. It is worth mentioning them as factors which merit serious attention when erecting library building. For instance, termites deserve attention because of their destructive tendencies. There are two types of termites: the dry wood and the sub-terranean types. It is held that about 95% of damages caused to building materials are done by the sub-sterranean. The latter attack timber in or on the ground, make tunnels of earth across unpalatable materials to reach timber in building and can build in cracks in badly laid concrete. For protection purposes it is essential to find out the type of termites which might exist on the chosen site. Also other natural phenomena such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, must be taken

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1. Unoogwu, Survey. p. 140.

into account as the state experiences heavy rainfalls. Foundations have to be deep and solid while roofing must be firmly fixed to resist heavy rains and winds.

By 1973 when the take-over of the N.A. reading rooms had been achieved the government was to fully develop six divisional libraries during the later part of the 1970-75 Development Plan. The development of the divisional libraries involved erection of buildings whose chosen sites measures 300 x 300'. The buildings were designed to have the stock capacity of 35,000 at the cost of ₦15,000 without the equipment.

Building for branch libraries appear modelled on the Eastern Nigerian Library Boards branch library building especially that of Port Harcourt Divisional library whose building could hold the volume of 35,000.[1] The six libraries opened are at Wukari, Akwanga, Makurdi, Shendan, Pankshin and Otukpo. By December, 1975 the stock of the various six libraries varied as shown below:[2]

Makurdi	10,000
Pankshin	10,000
Shendan	8,000

1. Obi. "Library Scene" p. 17.
2. Figures were supplied by the State Librarian on March 2, 1976 at Jos.

Akwanga	8,000
Otukpo	8,000
Wukari	6,000

And with its present status the Benue Plateau system could successfully compare with the Midwestern Library Board whose branch libraries are located at Agbor, Bomadi, Ogwashi-Uku, Ole Orereokpe and Warri. It will also be necessary to compare the number of branch libraries with those of the Northern State. Compared with the six northern states, Benue Plateau library services and the North Central Library services have equal number of branch libraries as shown below. The North Eastern library services has three branch libraries and the number is exactly half of the branch libraries in the Benue Plateau State and North Central State library services. However, the rest of the three states - Kano, Kwara, North-West, have not established any branch libraries. Thus one sees the determination of the Benue Plateau State to eradicate illiteracy through the provision of library services to the divisional headquarters.

Comparative branch libraries by December 1975

Benue Plateau	6
Kano	-
Kwara	-

North-Central	6
North East	3
North West	-

Having compared the branch libraries with other branch libraries of other library services it will be pertinent here to treat in detail some of the branch libraries. The information available is rather scanty but it shows the brief geography of the town, its education and library services.

WUKARI

By September 1, 1974, a new library building was declared open in the town of Wukari which is the headquarters of Wukari Division. The division itself had a total population of 136,000 and it covers an area of 6,223 square miles, and had three large districts namely: Takum, Ibi and Donga which constituted the Federation of Wukari Division.

In Wukari there were by 1974 thirty-six primary schools with an enrolment of 6,984 pupils and a teaching staff of about two hundred teachers. Besides the number of primary schools there was one secondary school, the combined secondary school at Takum. Even with these institutions, Wukari from the start had never enjoyed

effective library services owing to poor staffing, financing and accommodation. It was not until 1962 that any library services began in the division. When the library services started in 1962 the government voted £228 which tripled the following year. The money was not broken down into the uses into which it was put but largely the funds were spent on books and staff salaries. When the library services commenced in 1962 the Wukari library stocked only 42 books and took subscriptions to three periodicals: The Nigerian children's own papers published by the Sunray's Club, the American Outlook and the Magazine Today.[1] However, with the passage of time the subscriptions were discontinued either due to lack of funds or negligence as library services was not organised.

When the government assumed the control of the library in 1973 there were changes which were introduced to transform the library services. The first step was the erection of a modern library at the cost of ₦15,000 with the stock capacity of 35,000 books. The government also was aware that the building alone does not make up a library; it increased its bookstock from 42 to about

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1. Unoogwu. Survey. p. 157.

6,000 by January, 1976.[1] With the changes introduced, the government of the state officially opened the new library on the 1st September, 1974. The occasion which pulled a large crowd was chaired by the Honourable Commissioner for Information, Mr. Chia Surma. The Commissioner in his speech failed to spell out to the crowd the importance and need for the library services. However, the establishment of the library was a step towards the awakening of the people to library consciousness.

With the library declared open there was also the attempts to organise the opening hours. In the past there had been no organised schedule time-table for the opening. From the onset of the official launching a new time-table for the opening emerged as indicated below:

Monday - Thursday	8.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon
Fridays - Saturdays	8.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

All these represented improvement in the library services at Wukari.

MAKURDI BRANCH LIBRARY

The Makurdi Division was one of the newest divisions carved out of the need and the necessity to bring the government close to the people. It has according to the

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1. Ibid.

basis on which the Tiv Divisions was split into three derived from the 1963 census population of 372,742 and area of 3,287 square miles. The three principal districts are Iharev, Masev and Mongove.

Formerly the provincial headquarters of the Benue Province, Makurdi had lost its glory with the abolition of the provincial administrative system. At the time of its emergence the division had a number of post primary institutions - St. Gabriel, Government Technical College, Government College and Fadapos Secondary School and ten primary schools spread out in the division. Besides these institutions, Makurdi was a boat building centre. All these institutions would require library services. Makurdi as provincial headquarters failed to benefit from the proposed provincial library which did not materialise. However, the existence of libraries was not unknown and libraries dated back to the colonial days when there had been the Makurdi Club Library and the Makurdi Town Library. The Makurdi Club library was a private library which was restricted to members. It was organised and maintained by expatriates residing at Otukpo, Gboko, Lafia, Keffi and Katsina-Ala. The main source of their collection was donations from club members, mainly novels and science textbooks.

The second library is a public library maintained by the former Tiv N.A. of which Makurdi was a subordinate. Until its take-over the library was administered by a library committee of three members. Its responsibility was not specified and as the committee became inefficient in its routine work, its power therefore transferred to the Makurdi Town Council which had special session for library matters. It was this library which the state took over.

The Makurdi library even up to 1973 was inadequately organised. It was initially understaffed; there was only one staff member prior to the out break of the 1967 crisis. The crisis compelled him to abandon his employment. However, by 1969, two new assistants had been recruited; both of whom received training at Jos Central Library.

At the take-off of the library it stocked 1,000 books excluding some periodicals of international repute. This figure was as a result of the book-box system which operated in the former defunct Northern Region; Makurdi benefitted immensely from it. Furthermore by 1973 when the government finally controlled the branch libraries the Makurdi stock rose to 10,000. Many of the books consisted accumulated deadwood often found in public libraries. The public library offered services to readers,

most of whom were civil servants, teachers and students. With the take-over a new life was injected into the library.

In 1973 as a temporary measure the library has been moved from its original site to the Wadata area while a new lay-out has been chosen for the £12,000 proposed Divisional Library. The land measured 300' x 300' in the neighbourhood of the Makurdi Stadium and in the vicinity of Government Craft School. The building was however completed in 1975 ending and the library now has a total collection of 10,000 books.

OTUKPO

Otukpo Division whose population totalled 497,993 people living in an area of 3,722 square miles had been enjoying library services from 1947. Otukpo town, the administrative headquarters of the division, is situated on a plateau on the left side of the Federal Road from Makurdi. Prior to the 1940's the town was sparsely populated but within the past decades the town has grown in population. From less than 3,000 in 1935 Otukpo town increased to 5,237 (1952) and 11,738 (1963) census).

There are a number of institutions in the divisions. By 1975 there were two large Teacher Training Colleges

at Otukpo and Adoka respectively. The same year also witnessed an increase in the number of secondary schools in the division - about eight of them. These include Wesley High School Otukpo, St. Francis College Otukpo, Government College Otukpo, St. Anne's Secondary School Otukpo, Igumale High School Igumale, St. Joseph College Igede and Methodist High School Igede. These institutions coupled with government establishments in the division called for the establishment of modern libraries. Indeed, the library services which started out in 1947 were attributed to the activities of the misssionaries and to the efforts of the local government (N.A.). The Otukpo Reading Room now converted to the divisional library is located on the left side of the Federal Road running from Port Harcourt to Makurdi, near the N.A. Mechanical Works Division and close to the market. It is therefore accessible to all types of passenger vehicles from all the parts of the town.

The activities of the N.A. represented the interest which the officials had shown in the library development. Even with its limited resources the N.A. voted enough funds to keep up the library running. For example, the N.A. voted the sum of £150 for the library service, in

1955 and 1958 respectively.[1] In 1960 the fund voted rose to £202. The amount embraced the purchase of books, equipment and salaries. From the efforts above the N.A. did not discard or neglect the need for library services but did not know how to improve the services.

By 1968 the development of the library services became an important concern for the N.A. The concern stemmed from the increased number of the students using the library especially during holidays. This increased number of readers compelled the N.A. to vote additional £300 to increase the bookstock and to purchase table tennis equipment. In addition, the Association of the Idoma Students which addressed itself to the well being and general literacy of the division donated over one hundred books to the library.

In 1973 a new library was erected close to the then Reading Room. The building has all the furnishings of a modern library and the capacity for 35,000 volumes of books; with a spacious reading room. Although its materials remained unorganised, it had by January 1976 8,000 books. The same year the library made efforts to

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1. Ibid. p. 168.

satisfy its clients by opening as follows:

Monday - Thursday 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Friday - Saturday 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

There is a break period between 12 noon - 2 p.m. during which the library is closed to the public.

KATSINA-ALA BRANCH LIBRARY

Katsina-Ala Division which now enjoys public library services is the fourth largest division in the Benue Plateau State and has a total population of 430,770 people with a land area of 3,287 square miles according to Benue-Plateau Government estimate. It has two major districts; the district of Kwande which comprised the Kwande proper and the Ujim-Shittire.

Besides the numerous primary schools in Katsina-Ala, there is a large secondary school which offered the Higher School Certificates in Art subjects. This secondary school grew out of the former Benue Middle School which had turned out eminent men. Katsina-Ala has a fishery industry and produces soya beans. It has been the sources for the supply of Soya beans and Beni-seed for the U.A.C. which maintained a warehouse there. These products are produced on a large scale for export.

The history of library services dated back to the period where the Katsina-Ala was district under the

jurisdiction of the defunct Tiv N.A. Prior to its demise the Tiv N.A. maintained a high standard of library services which had branches in four centres. A major centre which served Katsina-Ala was at Ukum-Shittire[1] and it maintained a reading room at Katsina-Ala. However, Katsina-Ala, a new division carved out of the defunct Tiv division benefitted immensely from the assets of the Tiv N.A. Central Library at Gboko. Assets were shared and two staff members deployed to the new division. The new library occupied the old U.A.C. warehouse facing the Katsina-Ala river. Altogether there were about 5,000 volumes with about 200 books supplied from the State Library at Jos.[2] By 1971 the reference library was being put into effective use.

In consonance with the proposal to develop the branch library in the division the Site Board approved in 1971 of land which measured 300' x 300' for the erection of the library building at the cost of £15,000. By February 1976 the building was still in progress and when the construction work is completed the library, now housed in the old warehouse, will be moved to the new building.

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1. Ibid. p. 80
2. Ibid. p. 122.

PANKSHIN AND SHENDAN AKWANGA BRANCH LIBRARIES

Record of history of library development in the two divisions is scanty. There was the record that in 1937-1958 Pankshin spent £54 on the library services.[1] In 1962-63 it spent another £198 and by 1964 Pankshin N.A. spent £396.[2] The amount continued to increase until the division was split into Pankshin, Shendam and Langtan respectively. However, with the take-over of the library services in 1973 modern libraries have been built at Pankshin, Shendan and Akwanga.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES

Available records in the Central Library at Jos hardly showed the development or the administration of school library services by the State Library. On top of that the State Library did not offer services to the schools in the form of book-box services which operated in the former Northern Regional library until its demise in 1968. For example, "in 1959 book-box services went to over seventy four schools. These books were sent to augment the textbooks and to provide them with background knowledge."[3] With the split up of the Region and the

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1. Ibid. p. 122
2. Ibid.
3. Gunton, "Library in the Tropics", p. 151.

consequent sharing of the assets (Regional Library) the emergent library such as the Benue Plateau State Library became oblivious to school library services. The only library services maintained was at Jos Township (elementary) school where the collection totalled 1,000 books - organised and supervised by Mrs. Ochefu who holds the Ahmadu Bello University Diploma in Library Science. In other schools the service is at the discretion of the principals/headmasters and they are inadequate, poor and uncoordinated.

In developing states and countries priority should be given to the school library services since the services boost educational development. In Nigeria the Midwestern Library Board maintains school library services and Book Depot from which books are supplied to schools. During the upsurge of library movement in Jamaica the schools library service was in the picture:

> "The school library service, in Jamaica, is administered by the Jamaican Library Service on behalf of the Ministry of Education and is responsible for the organisation of libraries in 760 infant, primary and senior schools throughout the Island. The Ministry of Education provided a sum of £3,000 per annum for purchase of books but

no provision was made for the payment of staff or for the transportation of books to the schools. Schools were required to contribute a sum of £2. 0. 0d. to participate in the scheme and the books they received were intended to form the nucleus of their school libraries."[1]

In order to encourage the successful take-off and growth of school library services in the Benue Plateau State the relationship between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information with regard to Library Service should be clarified and their respective responsibilities defined. Until the relationship and the responsibilities are defined and clarified there cannot be hope for school library service within the forseable future.

ADULT EDUCATION

In the plans for the library development no mention was made of adult education. The omission only revealed the library service as intended for the benefits of the new urban dwellers and neglected the rural population. But the majority of the population in Benue Plateau State

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1. E.L.V. Ifill. Public Library Movement in Barbados and Jamaica from the Middle of the 19th century to the present day. (F.L.A. thesis, The Library Association, 1958), p. 139.

are illiterates who inhabit the rural areas of the state into which access is difficult because of poor roads and settlement patterns. Their mode of life is traditional; they have become set in their ways of life as dictated by the environment. Worst still, oral communication is known to them as the main method of communication. Likewise, their method of farming, hygiene remains traditional. The illiterate adults must be enlightened through adult education to realise the need for change through the modern methods of communication, reading books. They should be taught to read and write. Adults should not only acquire the ability to read and write but should be equipped with intellectual training that will be useful to them. In Benue-Plateau, adult education should be accepted as reading and writing for the following:

(a) to eradicate illiteracy among our adults;

(b) to learn to improve their method of hygiene;

(c) to strive to increase farm yields;

(d) to improve themselves, villages and to learn to work together in community development projects.

If the objectives of adult education are geared to rural development what roles should the library play to

assist in the realisation of the objectives? Or, should the libraries in Benue Plateau State be linked with adult education? Quite often, people refute the use of books at the initial stage to start off adult education classes. Such people emphasise verbal teaching rather than dependence on books and other printed materials. But books and any other printed materials have effective and lasting impact on the learner than verbal teaching which can be easily forgotten. The illiterate adult no doubt knows what pictures in books represent. It is for this reason that books assume undisputed place in teaching adults. Indeed, literacy will be useless until people have books to continue their reading. Benge succintly writes on what type of books that will be suitable to the adults at the initial stage when he says:

> "At least half the literacy problems is therefore what to provide for new literates to read in the transition period while they are building up a vocabulary to the level when they can easily read and enjoy standard literature."[1]

The task ahead of public libraries is enormous: they would have to collect, house and produce simple

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1. R.C. Benge. Libraries and Cultural Change. p. 194.

educational materials of many kinds. Such materials should include primers both in vernacular and in English languages. Thus, there should be a section of the library which deals with adult education matters which would handle adult education, methods and techniques for teaching adults and visual aids. The latter is important as it includes film shows from which the adults would immensely benefit. For instance, if a film deals with agricultural techniques the adults would learn much from it. All these would keep the adults functionally literate provided they are made available. As Baregu says:

> "The most difficult part of literacy campaign is the task of keeping the new literates not only literate but functionally literate. They must gradually be led into the habit of looking into books and the written words as a source of new ideas and information. People should learn to accept in addition to their local agricultural extension work for example, books pamphlets that can be read to find answers to agricultural problems for instance, of the kinds of fertilizers

to be applied and when to apply them"[1]

Libraries should be actively engaged through branch or divisional libraries not only to provide for new literates but to help at least, create an environment of literacy so that more adults can be stimulated into attempting to read. The libraries will also organise writing and reading workshops for adults with occasional periods for discussions. The attainment of the above would in time transform the adults of the state.

PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN BENUE PLATEAU STATE

What has been studied so far includes the background to Benue Plateau State, the present state and the branch libraries. Here, therefore, attempts would be made briefly to analyse some of the major factors which accounted for the poor library situations in Benue-Plateau. Some of the problems are not peculiar to Benue-Plateau but they are more pronounced there than in other states of Nigeria.

A fundamental factor which accounted for the poor library service had been the failure of the society to identify the demand for public libraries. The society

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1. M.L.M. Baregu. "Rural libraries in functional literary campaign". Unesco Bulletin for Libraries, XXVI, 1, (1972), p. 319.

at large had not created any local demand for the service nor had the government identified it as an integral part of the social provisions. Whether one can afford and provide something depends to some extent on how much one wants it. The assumption often made is that people who do not know public libraries cannot be expected to want them. The novelty of public libraries in a developing country such as Nigeria can hardly be disputed but the provision of the public libraries would depend more on the high standards of literacy. Conversely, because of low standard of literacy in Benue Plateau State there was no effective demand for public libraries. It was realised that there was no enthusiasm in library matters by the government as the service commenced only with the sharing of the library materials at Kaduna following the split of the former Northern Region. If the library had come into being through both government and state cooperation its development would have been accorded fair treatment. The factor explained government lethargy in giving adequate financial assistance. However the task then remains with the librarian to create a desire for libraries among the people and the government. When the desire is aroused,

funds would be provided. The librarian at Jos failed to achieve this.

Another cardinal issue that merits consideration is the management. The point in question is the capability and the status of the librarian who administers the libraries. The librarian on the establishment had technical knowledge of librarianship but lacked the status that was necessary for getting things done without undue interference and harassement from the ministries and in particular from the Military Governor's Office to which the library was attached. In the East Central State where there was a Director of the Library Board, the status of the Director being equivalent to that of the Permanent Secretaries there could have been no interference. For these reasons the librarian could take few or no initiatives to develop the libraries.

There were severe financial limitations on the library development in Benue Plateau State. Financial assistance did not adequately flow from the government to the library to enable it execute its development programmes. In order to build and maintain libraries, funds must be made available by the government. Apart from the maintenance of library buildings there were requirements for tools, equipment, staff salaries and

staff development scheme. All these require money. The government of Benue Plateau was reluctant to offer regular and adequate financial assistance to the libraries to meet their needs. For example, in 1973, the amount of ₦98,000 allocated to the libraries for both capital and recurrent expenditures was small; therefore few of the problems that confronted the libraries were solved. Besides, it was discovered that parts of the money was diverted to construct the Information Division Buildings in Jos and Otukpo. The situation was complicated when allocations for public libraries were to be included in the Development Plans without which no money could be spent. But if the masses pay taxes to the government then the government should provide them with services commensurate with the taxes which they contribute. The government had not been convinced that the library service would prove profitable either in the near or more distant future. Money is scarce and normally inadequate for traditional investment whose values have been recognised by the society. The government should be persuaded to see the importance of the library as an agency of development.

Library legislation plays a crucial role in the development of public libraries. Such legislation may

not involve a library board but may require a ministry to provide a library service. It can provide for financing, staff recruitment and conditions of service that enable libraries to successfully execute its objectives. The need for legislation is clearly shown by the fact that the growth of public libraries in the Eastern Region followed closely the promulgation of a library edict.

In the Benue Plateau State library legislation was unknown and the demand for its was dubbed 'premature' by the government. Consequently, there was no library board to administer the libraries. The same factor also explained the poor financing, staffing and ill management of the entire set up. Furthermore, as there was no legal biddings on the N.A.s they deliverately refused to fund their reading rooms effectively. And for the same reason the position of the libraries were ill-defined, at times they came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and at other times they were under the purview of the Military Governor's Office. The absence of legal provision inhibited the growth of the libraries in the state and until the Library Board comes into being there would be no hope for efficient library services.

Library development has also been hampered by lack of qualified personnel. This was revealed from the establishment which had only one qualified librarian who is the State Librarian. Often, graduates in librarianship resigned their appointments or turned down the offer either on account of meagre salaries or strained staff relations. Graduates in other disciplines on the other hand preferred other professions that are more lucrative and less exacting than librarianship with its slow promotion. Furthermore, people tend to look down on librarianship which brings workers in contact with the public unlike the administration which 'hides' the officers from the public. The lack of professional staff no doubt affected and undermined the quality of services which the library rendered to the people.

To minimise the shortage of staff a library board empowered to recruit, work out better conditions of service would have to be established. However, there are two Library Science Schools in Nigeria which train librarians. These schools include the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Ibadan, Ibadan respectively. Despite the efforts of these institutions to meet the manpower requirement of libraries in Nigeria the Benue Plateau public libraries failed to attract

graduate librarians because of the poor conditions of service which prevailed prior to 1976. The cadre of qualified staff is cardinal as an efficient highly qualified staff properly deployed would reflect the needs of the readers.

Together with the above factors are to be mentioned the apathy of the officials who refused to sacrifice privileges for general welfare. Other factors included the lack of a sound professional association to bring pressure to bear on the government to allocate funds to libraries and also a poor network of roads. Generally, what needs to be done is to persuade the authority concerned of the need and importance of public libraries as an integral part of social amenities. These considerations lead to the following recommendations with a view to improving the services offered by the library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having analysed the problems which constituted obstacles against the development of public libraries in the Benue Plateau State recommendations would be suggested with a view to remedying the problems. The recommendations when carefully implemented would transform the library situations in the states which had emerged from

the demise of the Benue Plateau State.

For successful growth of any public libraries the first need is for library legislation. And for the Benue Plateau State libraries to effectively take off library legislation is strongly recommended. The legislation may not necessarily require the inception of a Library Board but may empower a Ministry, for example, the Ministry of Information to provide the library service. It may on the other hand stipulate for the establishment of a board that would administer the libraries in the state. The legislation would clearly state the powers of the library authority, the aim and the funds and would govern the operation of the libraries. Johnson recognised these needs for library legislation when he wrote:

> "The powers of the library authority need be defined, its objectives stated, its funds ensured, so that there can be that overall guidance necessary for the implementation of library development project"[1]

However for Nigerian library experiences such legislations enacted Library Boards. And Benue Plateau State

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1. A.F. Johnson. Public library legislation, a model for African Countries. Unesco Regional Seminar of Libraries in Africa, held in Enugu from 10-22 September, 1962.

is not an exception. Such legislation in Benue Plateau State would therefore enact a Library Board charged with the responsibilities of running all the libraries and implementing development projects. For example, after the Ibadan Unesco Seminar in 1953, the Eastern Region legislated for the establishment of a Library Board which administered the entire public libraries in the former Eastern Region. The growth of the public libraries in that region was as a result of that legislation. Other states in Nigeria had since promulgated library legislation forming boards; this is true of the Midwestern State, the South-Eastern State and the Rivers State all which have library boards. If the board is eventually established it would have a director who would oversee its performances.

The Director shall be called the Director of Library Service and he shall be a highly educated and experienced man. His educational qualification and expertise would be of paramount importance as such a large organisation would demand not only his professional, theoritical knowledge but his practical experience in personnel management.

The board also shall be made up of men of worth from all shades of life to represent various interests and to

include clergymen, civil servants, businessmen, educationists and scientists.

The board shall be empowered to recruit staff, to fix salaries, of librarians with a view to promotion. It is observed that library development in the state had been immensely hampered by the lack of qualified personnel and poor salaries. Because of the above the board would also fashion out other conditions of services which would be better and more attractive than the ones which the Public Service Commission offers so that graduates of other disciplines can be recruited. Nigeria is a developing nation where the individual seeks to improve his lot and where emphasis is on money. When salaries and conditions of service are poor graduates would certainly avoid taking up appointment with such organisation. But if highly qualified experienced indigenous librarians are not available for recruitment there is no option than to recruit librarians (all grades of librarians) from abroad.

The board shall also maintain its independent funds so as to be able to run the libraries in the state. The need for adequate funding has already been stressed. The funds should be clearly planned as estimates. And the estimates should be divided into broad sections as

maintained by the Ghana Library Board.[1]

(a) Annually recurrent expenditure which is met from the consolidated fund; and,

(b) development project met from the development fund.

From instance, books would be bought from the recurrent or the consolidated funds whilst extension of building or building a branch library should be financed through the development funds.

The establishment of Book Mobile Library is here strongly recommended. The Mobile Library Service when incepted would serve people who cannot benefit directly from the library services rendered in the main urban towns. Ideally, each divisional library should have a Book Mobile Library to serve its remote districts. This arrangement had successfully worked out in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria where Mobile Libraries were components of divisional libraries.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Benue Plateau State Library Services which started off in 1968 had not made a bad beginning in the services which it provided to the people. Starting from

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1. E.J.A. Evans. A tropical Library Service. p. 58.

the development of the Central Library at Jos inspired by sharing assets of the Kaduna Regional Library the library services had been incorporated in the state development plan with a view to developing during its phase, 1970-74 six branch libraries at Katsina-Ala, Otukpo, Shendan, Makurdi, Pankshin and Wukari. Although Akwanga, Shendan and Katsina-Ala have not yet moved to the new library buildings these will be completed within a short space of time. During its second phase of development, 1975-80 six other branch libraries will fully come into existence. It is fully anticipated that by the close of 1980 libraries at Keffi, Akwanga, Gboko, Langtang, Jos (at Bukuru) and Lafia would come into full operation. The inclusion of library services in the Development Plan revealed in the main the determination of the government to provide the library services for the citizens.

Furthermore, in the overall development plan of the state education was accorded top priority. There is the need to boost education at all levels to produce the required manpower needs of the state. Skilled manpower when available would execute the state's development plans and assist in the exploitation of the human and natural resources. Although children receive lectures

in the schools and colleges the work of schools cannot be completed without libraries to back it. Besides formal education, emphasis needs be placed on adult education. Presently, about 80% of the entire adult population remain in stark illiteracy and it is upon these adults that the economy of the state depends. If the economy is to take-off effectively these adults must be fully mobilized and to be mobilized they need to utilize library sources so as to be able to acquire functional education. These considerations, therefore, have called for effective library planning development in the Benue Plateau State with a view to solving the manpower problems.

But whatever services the library systems offers to the people there is still the need for thorough planning. Currently, services to the readers is inadequate because of lack of funds, shortage of the right cadre of staff, lack of accommodation and above all insufficient stock which is resultant of inadequate funds. Something must be done to alleviate these problems in the form of concrete legislation, the library legislation. The legislation should establish the library service, in the Benue-Plateau State. It may require the Ministry of Education or the Information Ministry to provide library services

to the people. The legislation should also spell out clearly the objectives, policies and the finance of the library services.

Up to December 1975 no legislation had been promulgated to establish the library services. But in states where library services had successfully grown they were backed up by legislation. The government had earlier on dubbed the demand for legislation as premature. If the library services is to take-off and to expand, the government must be persuaded by organisations to see the need for libraries. To start with, the demand for libraries must be created by the organisation such as Nigerian Library Association, Benue Plateau State branch. If the demand is not identified proper development cannot be effected. Likewise, the Nigerian Library Association, Benue-Plateau State has to persuade the government to establish the library legislation. This can be achieved by pressurizing the officials to recognise library services as integral part of social provisions. However, the Benue-Plateau branch of Nigerian Library Association is incoherent, ineffectual and unable to convince the government to legislate the library services. Furthermore, under favourable political atmosphere political parties could assist to persuade the government to decree

the establishment of public library services in the state. With the ban on politics and political parties no party wishing to enlist the support of the masses could come out openly to bring pressure to bear on the government to decree the library services.

In spite of the failure of the Benue Plateau State Branch of Nigerian Library Association to persuade the state government (Benue-Plateau Government) to promulgate the library edict establishing a board, the Federal Government (or National Library) could have effectively coerced the Benue Plateau State to legislate for the inception of a Library Board. By 1971 the Federal Government had decreed that no branches of the National Library could be built in any of the states except such a state agreed to establish a Library Board. However, the Federal Military Government set out to build a branch of the National Library at Jos contrary to the above. But if the Federal Government had been consistent in the implementation of the decree one would have expected the National Reference Library not to have been built there as the State Government had not fulfilled the condition - that of legislating for the establishment of a Library Board. If the decree had been consistently implemented one would have expected the Federal

Government to have built branches of National Libraries at Benin or Port Harcourt capitals of states which have met the basic requirements. Here, one sees the set up of the library at Jos as political for the Benue Plateau state failed to establish a Library Board. With the subsequent set up of the Library at Jos the only strong weapon which could have successfully coerced the state to promulgate the library edict had been flouted.

In conclusion, therefore, one views that a partial library services was more or less imposed on the Benue Plateau State. The service was not one which neither the citizens nor the state government demanded but grew out of the assets of the former Northern Nigeria. But it is realised that for effective planning and development of any library services the need must be identified by either the government or the citizens. This was not the case in the Benue-Plateau State where there was general aparthy to reading. This factor also explained why the government was not particularly interested in the development of the service which started from the grassroots. Furthermore, the unusual neglect was not unconnected with the government belief that library service generally is one which hardly has any direct impact upon the society.

However, if the effects of the services must be recognised by the government, the government must incorporate library service in the long-term plan as other services. For instance, if the library service offers similar service as National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) or the Water Board, the government must have given it adequate attention.

Whatever might have been the degree of library service in the Benue Plateau State there was the need to set up an agency in the form of a Library Board to assume the responsibilities of planning library service throughout the state, of controlling, directing the service and reviewing the plans from time to time. It is through the Library Board that the libraries can be effectively organised to serve the citizens in order to realise their aspirations.

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