ORGANIZING AND MANAGING LIBRARIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT) ABUJA, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

A lot of literatures on school librarianship have indicated the absence of library in our primary schools, and where it exist, is in most cases not functional. Management as defined by many scholars is maximizing scarce resources for the value of organization, whether small or big. In line with this definition, this paper discusses strategies, such as planning, budgeting, organizing and crating services, the school librarian needs to effectively manage the school library

Keywords: School Library, Education, Primary School, Organization, Management

1.0 Introduction

School library is the type of library that is established in primary and secondary schools. Like its counter part in the universities and other higher institutions, the school library is an integral part of the school curriculum. It is established to assist both teachers and pupils and therefore central to postering life-long learning. As noted by CILIP (2001) the school library is the heart of a school, which itself has learning at its core and good libraries can empower the learner

The place and role of school library in the attainment of national education goals is not contestable. The National Policy on Education (NPE) and Universal Basic Education (UBE) have not only highlighted the role and importance of school library but recommended strategies for the provision of a network of functional libraries in our primary and secondary schools. However despite this commitment there are still many primary and secondary schools that do not have libraries, those that have, the library is small and located in classroom. As reported by the Conference of Chief Executives of Library Boards in NERP (2004):

(i) that most primary and secondary school do not have a specific building earmarked for library development or even a temporary accommodation provided for library services;

(ii) that in instances where one exists, it is usually a classroom which has been stocked with textbooks in multiple copies, housed on improvised shelves and that are unsuitable and inadequate;

(iii) that the furniture and other facilities of these improvised libraries are unsuitable and inadequate;

(iv) that these circumstances rather than promote interest in the adequate use of libraries instead promotes a lack of interest and nonchalant attitude generally from both the authorities and the pupils.

The question to be asked at this juncture is if most primary schools in Nigeria do not have functional libraries, what then is there to manage? The answer to this question is provided by the simple definition of management by Appleby (1994:5). He defined management as a process by which scarce resources are combined to achieve given ends. From this definition it can be deduced that management is applicable to organization no matter how small it may be. It is based on this that this paper set out to discuss the strategies for organizing and managing school library in Nigerian primary schools with emphasis to primary schools located in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja

2.0 MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY

The four elements of management; planning, organizing, directing and controlling can be applied to even small library or resources in order to maximize their value. Therefore, to be a good manager the school librarian should be able to within the set up of the school library organize priorities, secure resources, create meaningful services, motivate his staff, teachers and pupils, and evaluate staff performance and services in order to obtain the optimum efficiency and benefit for the library

Planning as one of the keys of management function includes determination of the school library's vision, mission and objectives, as well as drawing procedures for achieving them. In this regards, the school librarian needs to create a broad base School Library Advisory Committee, which should include representatives from interested teachers, parents, headmaster, community and other important groups. The committee is to help the library work out and

implement plans and decisions, as well as serving as pressure group to ensure the school library is given due attention. It is therefore essential that the school librarian reviews and analyses the school programme and activities, and draw up strategies of meeting them. In planning constant attention should be given to changing circumstance

Another very important aspect of planning the school librarian should consider is identification of sources of funds for the school library. Without adequate funds no meaningful development can take place. The school librarian should base on the available funds make annual budget. Planning has to do with determining budget objectives and purposes, as well as finding ways of achieving them. Planning budgets need early preparation. This is because budget requires that a lot of wealth of data is gathered before it is done; the state of the School Library programme past and present and future changes, surveys of students and teachers will result in lists of resources needed for instruction in the school. Collection analyses and curriculum maps can portray an accurate picture of the state of the resource collection. Therefore budget is very important because it facilitates:

- Effective utilization of available funds
- Improves decision-making.
- Provides a benchmark to measure and control performance
- Increases general communication and analysis within the organization.
- Establishes understanding between managers about goals and objectives

Developing the school library collection is another very important managerial task that the school librarian needs to perform effectively. Apart from creating Information Development Policy that will ensure that only information resources in tune with the school curriculum are

acquired but that a balanced collection in terms of subject areas and formats is developed. In developing the collection the school librarian should ensure the acquisition of:

- Wide range of information resources reflective of the whole curriculum
- Information resources to support literacy and literary skills across the curriculum
- Information resources for topic teaching
- Use of library is included in curriculum and scheme of work
- Collaborative planning between teaching staff and the librarian

Therefore, the duties of the school librarian should include among others:

- Managing and operating learning environment used by the whole school community
- Making reading and learning relevant and interesting
- Making significant impact on teaching and learning

2.1 Organizing Information Resources

Information Resources in school library need to be properly organized because good organization will ensure accessibility and afford quick retrieval. In school library simple organization is always advocated because of the level of the users. Organization of information resources require that a catalogue or shelf list is created, which will help users find books by title, author or subject. Organization of information resources also requires that information resources are classified using any library classification system such as Library of Congress Classification Scheme (LCCS), Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). The use of abridged edition of classification schemes is always recommended for school libraries. An organized information resources will ensure that user:

- ✓ Find information resources quickly and easily
- ✓ Makes it easy to put books back in the right place

- ✓ Makes it possible to do inventories that check for theft and loss
- ✓ Reveals how many books there are in each subject
- ✓ Helps the school librarian take important decisions

2.2 Creating and Organizing Library and Information Services

To allow for the maximization of the value of the school library by both teachers and pupils, the school librarian should evolve, plan, organize library and information services that would have direct bearing on the school curriculum. Ibrahim (2000:8) notes that the value of the school library does not only lie on the collection alone but more on the unique services it provide. The school librarian should therefore create reading programme, plan and organize such library and information services as reading aloud, book talk, talk show guide to research, library week, excursion, story telling, etc. The provision of these services would cultivate reading habit and library skills and will make the pupils enjoy reading and make the best out of the library

2.3 Evaluation

Another key element in management is evaluation. The overall goal of the school library is to serve the entire school community. Therefore, evaluation here means finding out how well the library is serving the school community. The process can start by finding out some basic facts about the library such as how many categories of users are registered and using the library, how many books are loaned out, what kinds of books are popular. This calls for keeping records of different activities in the library which will be used to evaluate performance and services. Evaluation requires collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in such a way as to help:

- Identify ways of improving resources and services
- Develop new action plans

- Demonstrate to the school authority how useful the school library activities and services are
- Inform relevant authorities, such as, the School Library Advisory Committee, LEA, SUBEB, etc how the school library is helping in the realization of the overall education goals

3.0 CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that whatever the situation of libraries in primary schools, the school librarian needs to effectively manage it. Equipped with the above mention strategies, the school librarian can implement to repositioned the library and make it an indispensable tool for achieving basic education and education for life long learning

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