

**Enhancing Access to Public Libraries through Inclusive Library Initiative Programmes in  
Kaduna State, Nigeria**

by

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## **Abstract**

Providing library services to the satisfaction of all users without discrimination is crucial to Public Libraries in this century. Inclusive Library Initiatives is aimed at enhancing access and increasing meeting the demands of all users. The aim of the study was to highlight some of the Inclusive Library Initiative Programmes and to determine if these Inclusive Library Initiatives Programmes enhance access to Public Libraries in Kaduna State. A lot of Inclusive Library Initiative Programmes were introduced by Librarians worldwide such as iPad lending, Mobile Workplace, Seat2meet, Table Tennis, Fab Lab, Chat and Chill, Tool Lending, Kitchen Equipment and many more. The methodology adopted was Quantitative Method while Survey Design was used for the study. Population of the study constituted all the 11 Public Libraries registered with Kaduna State Library Board and the whole population was used because it was manageable. From the total of 11 copies of questionnaire distributed, 10 copies, representing 91% were filled and returned. Data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed using simple frequency and percentages. The study revealed that majority of the Public Libraries in Kaduna State are not aware of Library Inclusive Initiative Programmes while the only one that is aware initiated a programme of extra NECO, WAEC, UTME and PUTME lesson for pupils trying to gain admission into institutions of higher learning. The study also shows great improvement in terms of patronage after the programme was initiated. The study concluded that the project of Inclusive Library Initiatives Programme if properly utilized will increase Public Libraries' capacity to serve members of the community. Finally the study recommended that awareness should be created among Public Libraries in Kaduna State and Public Libraries Librarians in Kaduna State should be encouraged to create more Library Inclusive Initiatives Programmes.

**Key Terms:** Access, Enhancing, Empirical study, Inclusive, Initiative, Libraries, Public Libraries, Kaduna State

## **Introduction**

To survive the latest trend and thrive high in the future, librarians and libraries must change and adapt the new rapidly evolving global external environment. In advocating for an urgent transformation of the library system, there are a lot of big challenges facing librarians. In a business environment, for instance, the risk of holding on to a traditional mode or means of doing business can quickly render the business or a product obsolete. Therefore, these same disruptive forces are present in the operation of libraries, especially Public Libraries. Although, a number of scholars have called for a quick transformation in the library system, there is a relatively minimal amount of attention given regarding what the transformation of library systems entails.

The importance of social inclusion and libraries as socially inclusive organizations has been reviewed by many authors such as Irwin and Silk (2019), Kulikauskienė (2019), Lloyd (2020), Koller, Pouesard and Rummens (2018) and Racelis (2018), who opined that socially inclusive libraries also focus on the needs of stakeholders and society at large. Therefore, libraries and library services must be accessible to all individuals, regardless of age, gender, race or disability. Public Library can be defined as an institution which provides priceless services to the society. It provides a wide range of benefits by bringing educational, recreational, inspirational and informational services to the community. The fundamental aim of libraries in general, is to provide timely, accurate, pertinent, and reliable information for their clientele.

A Public Library is seen, according to National Center for Education Statistics (1996), as an entity that is established under government enabling laws and regulations to serve the community, district, state, region or nation that provides at least the following:

- An organized collection of information resources, i.e. printed or non-printed materials, or a combination thereof;
- Paid staff; i.e. professionals and Para-professionals
- An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the general public;
- The facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, schedule and services; and
- Is supported in whole or in part with public funds.

## **Public Libraries in Nigeria and Kaduna State**

Development of public libraries in Nigeria started aggressively from its birth, and that effort gained the support of foreign agencies and organisations that provided grants at different periods, but the major impact was spearheaded by the regional leaders. A document that rightly

mirrored the use of books and libraries in pre-colonial Nigeria was one by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which was among the papers presented at the two-week regional seminar organized by same UNESCO between the 10<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1962 held at Enugu, Eastern region of Nigeria entitled, "Present Situation of Public Library Development in the English Speaking African Countries." On Nigeria, the document stressed that each region was responsible for the establishment and management of its public libraries and it compared their activities in the then three regions.

Kaduna State is the successor to the old Northern Region of Nigeria, which had its capital in Kaduna. In 1967 the region was split into six states, one was the north-central state whose name was changed to Kaduna state in 1976. The state is divided into twenty-three local government areas. Kaduna state Library Board was established in accordance with the library decree of 1970 which authorize the expansion of national library board to all states of the federation. It has a central library as the headquarters in Kaduna the state capital and 9 divisional branches across the state local government areas and wards.

### **Enhancing Access to Public Libraries**

The library community consists of the users who differ in their social status, education, mentality; therefore, Public Libraries' aspires to be accessible to every member of the community (Pečeliūnaitė, 2018) and the public pressure on libraries to increase the accessibility of their services affect libraries' activities and roles. Inclusion can mean different things to different people. An inclusive library is a vital community resource, addressing the diverse information needs of all members in the community (CLA in Moisey, 2007). According to Grassi (2013), inclusion is an approach to library service that involves patrons with disabilities in an equitable way. One of the target goals under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to "build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive, and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all (United Nations, 2015).

According to American Library Association (ALA) code of ethics, one of the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians is to provide "the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous response to all requests" (ALA, 2008). Access to basic information is essential for the empowerment of individuals in a community, the effectiveness of policies, and the accountability of governments. When every member of the

community can enjoy it, it is a driver of sustainable development across all of its dimensions. When it is absent, insufficient or unequal opportunities are missed, decisions are poorer, and progress of the entire community is stifled. Libraries are vital in ensuring that everyone can benefit from access to information, making stronger, fairer societies a reality for all.

### **Problem Statement**

Public Libraries are created as places to exercise the right of access to information, culture and reading. They are places that facilitate life-long learning for the community to guarantee future opportunities. They offer special services and materials for those users who cannot use ordinary services and materials. They offer programmes aimed at all members of the public, adapted to users' different needs along with supporting materials and documents to enable access to reading, information and culture under similar conditions for all library users.

However, since the first Public Libraries were opened, users' needs have changed as society has evolved. Despite the fact that Libraries are now immersed in modernity and an avalanche of technological advances that have modified access to information, culture and reading, there is frequently an imbalance between the needs of the most vulnerable citizens and the facilities, services, activities and collections provided for them in Public Libraries which create declining visitors and uncertainty. The changing roles of Public Library precondition the organizational change to become an inclusive organization that meets not only users' needs but also the growing needs of society.

### **Objectives of the paper**

1. To explore some of the inclusive library initiatives.
2. To determine if these Inclusive Library Initiatives enhances access to Public Libraries in Kaduna state.

### **Review of Related Literature**

A library is a collection of books and other forms of records and resources, housed, organized and interpreted to meet the broad varying needs of students, staff and others for information, recreation and inspiration (Adegoke in Sobalage & Ogunmodede, 2015). Recently, librarians are forced to focus on innovations in order to be more relevant in the era of globalization. Hamel (2000) defines management innovation as "a marked departure from traditional management principles, processes, and practices or a departure from customary organizational forms that significantly alter the way the work of management is performed". The assumption here

is that innovations can be a vital factor in the transformation of library systems. In the library, the bureaucratic traditions and the norms of the profession create limits in the librarian's ability to innovate. Libraries that are well established find it difficult to change easily, and there is always considerable emphasis on preserving the status quo, due to fear of losing relevancy and thus avoiding the risks that might lead to major innovations. The changing role of libraries is a relevant topic for research and has been studied by such authors as Stover (2019), Appleton, Hall, Duff and Raeside (2018), Mcquire and Butt (2018), Pečeliūnaitė (2017), Pressley (2017), Juchnevič (2016), Casselden, Pickard and McLeod (2015), Delaney and Bates (2015), Wyatt, Mcquire, and Butt (2018), Yılmaz, and Cevher, (2015), Subramaniam, Oxley, and Kodama (2013) and Johnson (2012). Changing requirements oblige libraries to meet the needs of the society and all stakeholders and to contribute to the inclusion of people within the immediate community without discrimination. The obvious challenge being faced is how to bring about these changes in a world where most of the major library organizational changes simply do not work easily according to plan. Martell (2000) eloquently task librarians "to create a range of services unthinkable in the twentieth century, but mandatory in the twenty-first century, if we are to provide society with the value added services it will need from its professionals."

The role libraries plays in the 21st century is changing from book lending to community services with a wide range of aims such as: teaching of digital literacy, organizing lifelong learning, conducting cultural, informational and educational activities, and reducing social exclusion (Appleton, Hall, Duff & Raeside, 2018; Johnson, 2012; Pečeliūnaitė, 2018; Yılmaz & Cevher 2015). Presently, there is a direct connection between the library and society, due to the inseparable nature of its social functions and meeting the needs of immediate society (Juchnevič, 2016). Furthermore, in his article about the 21st century library, Atkinson (2001) stated that "the new library must be mainly a social gathering place, somewhat noisy, with plenty of coffee. "Professional librarians require no formal training that will prepare them to create these truly innovative approaches. A focus on inclusive library will require reorientation in order to innovate in the critical dimensions of library practice. Among these innovation by professional librarians is inclusive library initiatives which focus on carrying along all the categories of library users without discrimination of any kind. In other to carry users along, there must be proper awareness as asserted by Rocio, Lotero and Rua (1987) cited in Namugera (2014) that If the library is to promote awareness of its services and activities, there must be continual interaction with its users, This

Interaction can be influenced both by factors directly related to the library, such as how efficiently and effectively it is run, the relevance of the information it provides and the communication channels it employs.

The changing demands and roles of Public Library expected by the society precondition of the organizational change to become an inclusive organization that meets not only users' needs but also the growing needs of society. In the African context, Aina (2014) reported that public library services in Africa include lending services, reference services, current awareness services, exhibition and displays, library publications, user education, information literacy program, inter-library loan services and document delivery, reservation service, provision of seating and study facilities, extension and outreach services, and rental of premises. Salman et al. (2014) described the information services rendered by public libraries in Nigeria as information services to support local business, economic and workforce development, reference materials on market trends and career development. Equally, Badawi (2009) believed that public libraries in Northern Nigeria are active in the Nigerian Library Association. They engage in social and professional activities such as children story telling competition, readership promotion campaign and hosting annual meeting of the association). In another study by Mohammed and Garaba (2018) stated that the services provided by public libraries in Northern Nigeria were predominantly traditional library services which include serial services, circulation services, lending services, children services and reference services. With reference to the library environment, inclusive library is looked at enhancing access to Public Libraries. Public Libraries Associations (2021) highlighted some of the steps taken by librarians towards Inclusive Library Initiatives which include the following: iPad Lending Scheme, Mobile Workplace, Software Lending, Repair Cafes, Seats 2 Meet, Make it yourself, Tool Lending, Kitchen Equipment, Extend opening access via self-service and card-only entry, Hijab Days, Credit Union Collection Points, Food for Fines, Movies Clubs for the Homeless, Chat and Chill' Sessions, Technoclubs, Alphabet Soup, Fab Lab, Job Clubs, Health Information and Advice, Senior Citizens Services, Table Tennis at the Library, Smart Scales, Dementia Information Service, Open Library 24/7 for Homeless, Community Skill Sharing, Silent Disco, Annual Party at the Library to make sure everyone feels welcome.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted quantitative research approach. In order to achieve the aim and objectives of the study, the researchers employed Survey design. Connaway (2010) stipulates that

survey research design collects data from all or part of a population to access the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of naturally occurring variables. Survey research is useful in determining the present status of given phenomenon and in this case to identify the type of inclusive library initiative programmes created by Public Libraries in Kaduna State to enhance access. The population of the study included 11 Heads of Public Libraries registered with Kaduna State Library Board, Kaduna. Census Sampling was used where the whole population was taken for the study. Okunlamiri (2002) in Uhegbu (2009) stated that there is no specified percentage of samples to a population as far as the sample will truly represent the population under study. Osuala (2013) pointed out that a sample is a portion of a population as the representation of it. In this study, the researcher selected all the Public Libraries Librarian registered with Kaduna State Library Board because it was manageable. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which were presented in frequency table.

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TOWN</b>	<b>LIBRARIAN (HEAD)</b>
1	Kaduna State Library Board	Kaduna	1
2	Kafanchan Library	Kafanchan	1
3	Zaria Library	Zaria	1
4	Kachia Library	Kachia	1
5	Saminaka Library	Saminaka	1
6	Zonkwa Library	Zonkwa	1
7	Giwa Library	Giwa	1
8	Kwoi Library	Kwoi	1
9	BirninGwari Library	BirninGwari	1
10	Ikara Library	Ikara	1
11	Abdullahi Muhammad Public Library (ABU)	Samaru	1
	Total		11

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

A total of 11 Questionnaire were distributed to respondents out which, 10 questionnaires were duly filled and returned making 91% response rate. The analysis was based on simple frequency and percentages.



**Table 2: Are you aware of Inclusive Library Initiative programme?**

S/N	Aware of Inclusive Initiatives	Responses	%
1	Yes	1	10
2	No	9	90
	Total	10	100

Table 2 shows that only one Public Library was aware of Inclusive Library Initiative Programme making 10% while 90% of the Public Libraries are not aware. This implies that majority of the public libraries are more concerned with the traditional services as stated by Mohammed and Garaba (2018) that the services provided by public libraries in Northern Nigeria were predominantly traditional library services which include serial services, circulation services, lending services, children services and reference services.

**Table 3: List of Inclusive Library programme initiated in the Library**

S/N	Inclusive Initiative Programme	KLB	KL	ZL	KL	SL	ZL	GL	KL	IL	AMPL
1	IPad Lending Scheme	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
2	Mobile Workplace	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
3	Software Lending	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
4	Repair Cafes	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
5	Seats 2 Meet	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
6	Make it yourself	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
7	Tool Lending	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
8	Kitchen Equipment	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
9	Hijab Days	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
10	Credit Union Collection Points	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
11	Food for Fines	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
12	Movies Clubs for the Homeless	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
13	Chat and Chill' Sessions	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
14	Technoclubs	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

15	Alphabet Soup	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
16	Fab Lab,	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
17	Job Clubs										
18	Health Information and Advice	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
19	Senior Citizens Services	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
20	Table Tennis at the Library	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
21	Smart Scales	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
22	Dementia Information Service	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
23	Open Library 24/7 for Homeless	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
24	Community Skill Sharing	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
25	Silent Disco	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
26	Annual Party at the Library	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
27	Others	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	NECO, WAEC, UTME and PUTME extra lessons classes

Table 3 indicated that only Abdullahi Mohammed Public Library initiated inclusive programme which is organising extra lessons for the pupils of the community who are aspiring to gain admission into Institutions of Higher learning. The implication is that Public Library are taking into consideration the needs of the immediate community as stated by Irwin and Silk (2019), Kulikauskienė (2019), Lloyd (2020), Koller, Pouesard and Rummens (2018) and Racelis (2018), who opined that socially inclusive libraries also focus on the needs of stakeholders and society at large.

**Table 4: Have you noticed any improvement with regards to patronage after initiating the programme?**

S/N	Improvement with regards to patronage after Initiating Programme	Responses
1	Yes	1
2	No	9
	Total	10

Table 4 reveals that after initiating the inclusive programme, Abdullahi Mohammed Public Library noticed a massive improvement with regards to Patronage as the number of users grows rapidly which align with Appleton, Hall, Duff and Raeside, (2018); Johnson, (2012); Pečeliūnaitė, (2018) and Yılmaz and Cevher, (2015) that the role libraries plays in the 21st century is changing from book lending to community services with a wide range of aims such as: teaching of digital literacy, organizing lifelong learning, conducting cultural, informational and educational activities, and reducing social exclusion.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The summary of the major findings are listed below;

1. The findings showed that majority of the Public libraries in Kaduna State are not aware of Library Initiative Programmes.
2. Abdullahi Mohammed Public Library was the only Public Library in Kaduna State that has introduced or initiated inclusive library programmes and it has noticed improvement after initiating the programmes.

### **Conclusion**

Inclusive Library Initiative programme has made, and will continue to make, significant improvement in attracting and serving Public Library patrons within the community it is located. Though, the programme is not well publicized amongst Public Libraries within Kaduna State, the programme if properly utilized will increasing Public Libraries' capacity to serve members of the community. Developing the capacity of Public Libraries to include and serve individuals within the community without discrimination no matter their status has tremendous potential. Through these inclusive library initiatives, members of the community can witness that Public Libraries are effective means of providing natural supports to individuals and promoting their inclusion in both their own communities and the "global community," through increased access to information resources and other recreational services. Investing in local Public Libraries is a sound strategy for developing community capacity, increasing access for patrons and enhancing the inclusion of individuals in their various communities.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Effort should be made to create strong awareness for Library Inclusive initiative Programmes.

2. Librarians in Public Libraries should be encouraged to create more libraries inclusive initiatives programmes.

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