Availability and Utilization of Information Resources for Prison Inmates in North Central States of Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigates the "Availability and Utilization of Information Resources for Prison Inmates in North Central States of Nigeria". Literatures have been reviewed based on the objectives of the study. The findings of the study would be used to improve the availability and utilization of information resources in prisons at large. The study use the Survey research design,the population of the study consists of two thousand two hundred and eighty eight (2288) which was derived from four prisons which are medium security prison Abuja, Ilorin, Jos and Lafia. 10% of the population were used as sample size which was 229 and the response rate was 185(80.8%) Questionnaire was used to collect data. The data collected have been analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequency table and percentage.The study revealed that the information resources available to inmates were books, newspapers and dictionaries. Recommendations made is that there is a need to make current and important information resources availableto prison inmates to enhance rehabilitation and reformation, which is the main objective for establishing libraries in prisons.*

I. Introduction

Prison libraries provide an important means of self-improvement for inmates. They act as a supplement to educational programs which in turn creates more stable and productive citizens.Rehabilitation in prisons are means by which inmates are helped back to normal life during imprisonment. Education in prison is necessary because its provision will make the prisons become places of continuous and informal learning rather than schools of crimes (Oreh, 2006). Libraries house collected information brought together for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and utilization (Ibegwam, 2003).Libraries are engine room and power house where information is collected, stored, processed and retrieved for use (Anafulu, 1998). Libraries are places established for the gathering, processing, organizing, storing, retrieving, dissemination and use of information and information resources for public use. The prison libraries are designed to house materials which reflect and support training, recreational, vocational and educational activities of the prisoners it serves which include materials in support of basic education, history, art, literature of each ethnic group and to all members of a multicultural population, recreational materials, periodicals, reference materials, non- book media (Library Association Guidelines, 1981). Libraries from all ages have been indispensable agents of information gathering, organization, storing, retrieval, dissemination and use. Special libraries are those libraries that are not meant for every member of the public but exclusively for users operating within or working for the specialized organization (Ogunleye, 2000). Prison libraries plays a positive role in the lives of the prisoners through the provision of resources which assist and enhance them in the skills acquired as well as help to address psychological problems and attitude behavior. Society have shifted their focus from punishment of prisoners to education, rehabilitation and the use of their time while serving in prison (Lehman and Locke, 2005).Prison library becomes an important environment in its support for educational, recreational and rehabilitative programs.

Statement of the Problem: The major objective of the prison is reformation and rehabilitation which is the key element in prison to ensure that inmates are reformed and recovered from a life of crime (Akpe, 2004). Similarly, prisons were established to exploit devices and programs such as Adult and Remedial education for inmates, skills and vocational training, religious instructions, recreational and attitude change towards the achievement of reformation and rehabilitation of inmates to facilitate their social integration into the society after jail (Daramola, 2004).Information is essential in prisons due to the vital role it plays in reformation and rehabilitation of inmates. Prisoners as members of the larger society desire and deserve information (Omagbemi 2007). No doubt, the Nigerian prisons are perceived to be more of custodian than rehabilitation because little and scant attention is given to the need for library in prisons (Enuku, 2000)

However the prison inmates are cut-off from access to education, recreational and social facilities available in their local communities and thus the library becomes the only source of learning. Hence this research examine the availability and utilization of information resources for prison inmates in North Central States of Nigeria.

Research Objectives
The main objective of this study is to examine the availability and utilization of information resources for prison inmates in North Central States of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:
1. Identify the types of information resources available to prison inmates in North Central States of Nigeria.
2. To find out the retrieval devices that facilitate inmates access toinformation resources.
3. To determine how regular the information resources are utilized by inmates in North Central States of Nigeria

Research Methodology
The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 4 prison library in the North Central States of Nigeria and a population of 2288 as shown in Table 1. The sample size consisted of 10% inmate library users to make a total of 229 respondents as shown in Table 2. Questionnaire were the instrument for data collection. Data was analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages.

II. Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented and discussed under the following headings:
1. Information resources available in prison library
2. Inmates access to information resources
3. Utilization of information resources by prison inmates

Information Resources Available in Prison Libraries.
The result on the information resources available in prison library is presented in Table 3

Table 1 Population of the Study

Name of Prisons	Population
Maximum Security Prison Kuje, FCT Abuja	789
Medium Security Prison Ilorin, Kwara State	360
Medium Security Prison Lafia, Nasarawa State	480
Medium Security Prison Jos, Plateau State	659
Total	**2288**

Table 2 Sample Size

Location	Population	Sample
Medium Security Prison Kuje, Abuja	789	79
Medium Security Prison Ilorin, Kwara State	360	36
Medium Security Prison Lafia, Nasarawa State	480	48
Medium Security Prison Jos, Plateau State	659	66
Total	**2288**	**229**

Table 3 Information Resources Available in Prison Libraries

Information Resources	Frequencies	%
Books	156	84.3
Newspapers	124	67
Pamphlets	59	31
Dictionaries	89	61.4
Illustrated books	33	17.8
Journals	28	15.1
Government Publications	28	15.1
Graphics	13	7.02
Maps, Atlases	33	17.8

Table 3 revealed that156 (84.3%) of the inmates were of the opinion that books were available in their libraries. Newspapers, 124 (67.0%) were also available as indicated in the Table. Respondents who indicated dictionaries as resources available in their prison libraries were 89 (61.4%). The high response on the availability of books, newspapers and dictionaries were assumed to be associated to the library standards on the types of information resources that need to be available in prison libraries. This finding can also be supported with Glenor (2012) who indicated in her survey that the collections of the prison libraries are similar to that of the public libraries which include dictionaries, books, newspapers and magazines, fiction, non-fiction and science fiction.The implication of the finding is that inmates who do not make use of the information resources cannot improve in reading skills while those who read books, newspapers and dictionaries would have an improvement in reading skills and this would help them direct their thought from the prison environment because books serve as means of rehabilitation through bibliotheraphy which is to help inmates solve problems and make change in their personal lives.

Table 4 Retrieval Devices which Facilitate Access to Information Resources

Retrieval Devices	Frequency	%
Library Catalogue	96	51.9
Shelf List	50	27.0
Reading List	27	14.6
Indexes	-	-

Table 4 indicates that the most available retrieval devices that facilitate access to information resources were the library catalogues indicated by 96 (51.9%), while the shelf list was indicated by 50 (27.0%). This could be attributed to the fact that the production of library catalogue and shelf list is cheaper and easy to produce, as well as considering the nature of the patrons the library serve. This means that the retrieval device that can facilitates access to information resources in the prison libraries were the library catalogue and shelf list.

This observation is in agreement with Pandy (2000) who observed that library catalogue is the primary finding list in a library, as well as Nweke (1991) who was of the opinion that special libraries access resources through card catalogue which could be author/title, subject and shelf list and of which prison libraries are not exempted.

Table 5 Information Resources Utilized by Inmates.

Information Resources Utilized	Frequency	%
Books	142	76.8
Newspapers	115	62.2
Pamphlets	44	23.8
Dictionaries	107	57.8
Illustrated Books	25	13.5
Encyclopedias	74	40
Government Publications	38	20.5
Journals	29	15.7
Maps, Globes & Atlas	24	13
Graphics	18	9.7

Table 5 revealed that books were the information resources utilized by inmates as indicated by 142 (76.8%). The use of newspapers was also reported to have a very high utilization by 115 (62.2%), while dictionaries were 107 (57.8%). While other information resources were less utilized such as graphics, Maps, globes and atlas and CD-ROMS. It can be inferred that the most utilized information resources were books, newspapers and dictionaries. This finding is in line with (Glenor, 2011 and Burt 1977) of all whom observed that information resources available and utilized in prison libraries are books, newspapers, dictionaries, almanacs, monographs, directories to mention a few.

This finding indicate that information resources were made available to inmates but some resources were less utilized. This could be that the information resources are irrelevant, outdated and of less importance to inmates, which indicates that prison in the North Central States of Nigeria has not fully met the standard for prison libraries. The utilization of information resources could be an effective tool to ensure the restoration of inmates into a socially acceptable life.

To further buttress on the utilization of information resources in prison libraries questions were raised on the frequency of utilization of the information resources using the Four(4) point Likert scale. This is indicated in Table 6

Table 6 Frequency on Utilization of Information Resources

Information Resources	Very Frequently Utilized	Utilized	Not Utilized	Undecided
Books	31(16.8)	103 (55.7)	24(13.0)	8 (4.32)
Newspapers	8(4.32)	92 (49.7)	25(13.5)	5 (2.70)
Pamphlets	17 (9.2)	30 (16.2)	30(16.2)	5 (2.70)
Dictionaries	25 (13.5)	87 (47.0)	17(9.12)	6 (3.24)
Illustrated books		14 (7.57)	11(5.95)	
Encyclopedias	12 (6.5)	74 (40)	20(10.8)	
Journals		26 (14.0)	16(8.64)	
Graphics		14(7.57)		2 (1.08)
Maps, globes, Atlas		31 (16.8)	9(4.90)	

Data collected from respondents' revealed that books were the most utilized information resources by 134 (72.4%). This is because books were among resources that were specified to be among prison library resources and are to be made available in all prison libraries. The use of dictionaries was indicated by 112 (60.5%) and inmates who use the newspapers were 100 (54.0%). Other information resources were less utilized by most of the prison inmates even where they were available as indicated in Table 6.

The implication of this finding is that despite the availability of some of the information resources in the prison libraries it indicate that information resources were made available to inmates but some resources were less utilized. This could be tied to the fact that majority of the resources were not of relevant to the inmates and as well it is evident that inmates do not even avail themselves for the use of the library as expected which can cause majority of them to remain the same as the came into the prison even after their jail term since the information resources that can make them better individuals upon release were not fully utilized.

III.   Conclusion

Arising from the findings of the study, it could be concluded that Nigerian prisons are more of custodian than rehabilitation and reformation because scant attention is paid to the need for library services to inmates. Thus the prison objective of rehabilitation and reformation through the provision of information resources is yet to be fully achieved. This, therefore, indicates that the aim of establishing the prison library has not been fully achieved, from all observation majority of the information resources available in the prison studied were old and could neither meet the information needs of the inmates making them unsatisfied.It was also discovered that inmates utilize few of the information resources to enhance their rehabilitation and reformation during their jail term.

IV.   Recommendation

Provision of information resources in prison sector is to enhance inmates' rehabilitation and reformation and to make them better citizens upon release after jail term. However, all these cannot be achieved without adequate provision access, and utilization of information resources. To improve on the situation, the following recommendations are offered.

1. There is need to make currentand relevant information resources available in the library and this would as well lead to optimum utilization through this the objective behind the establishment of prison libraries in the North Central States of Nigeria would be achieved. The information resources should also be in disciplines such as religion, art and craft, history, geography, languages, poetry, and fiction.
2. The prison libraries should ensure that available access points to information resources are in good condition and updated.
3. In order to ensure adequate utilization of the information resources in the prison, the information needs of inmates must be known and put into consideration this will help in providing information resources which can cater for different information needs on education, religion, sports, culture, health and political issues to mention but a few.

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