



ASSESSING INFORMATION NEEDS AND DISSEMINATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES TO HAUSA RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

Gali Aminu

Legal Studies Ringim Library
Jigawa State College of Education And,
e-mail galiaminu123@gmail.com

Prof D A Ugah

Department of Library and Information Science
Josep Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi
ugaahad@yahoo.com

A E Annuwne

Department of Library and Information Science
Josep Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi
ashiverliz@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the information needs and dissemination of public library information resources to Hausa rural communities in selected local government areas of Jigawa State, Nigeria. The paper evaluates the mode of dissemination of public libraries information resources to meet the information need of Hausa rural communities'. Three (3) research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was employed. A mixed research methodology approaches was adopted to gather data from 300 rural Hausa dwellers and 20 library staff. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while interview was granted collect qualitative data Content analysis via the Vivo software Data was analyzed using descriptive statistic. And inferential statistic. For the descriptive statistics frequency distributions, percentages, and tabulations were used to summarize the findings. For the inferential statistic chi-square was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. While for the quantitative data content analysis was used to analyses the data collected from the interview using interview using vivo. The findings revealed that agriculture, health, education, religion, politics and livelihood improvement were the primary information needs of the Hausa rural communities. The findings identified challenges that faced public libraries in the dissemination of information resources such as as lack of motivations, lack of rural libraries, inadequate library staff, lack of information dissemination skills among others. This study concluded that, Hausa rural communities have enormous information needs and public libraries disseminate different types of information resources to Hausa rural communities. The

study recommended that, public libraries should tailor information resources to align with the specific needs and cultural contexts of Hausa rural communities.

Keywords: Hausa rural communities, Information dissemination, information need, public libraries and information resources.

Introduction

Information as a vital resource can liberate man in all works of human endeavor. Every rational being needs some information, whether they are rural or urban dwellers, old or young, literate or illiterate, for day-to-day existence, well-being and societal development. No society can grow beyond its level of information awareness due to its relevance in society. Apata and Ogunrewo (2010) viewed information as a powerful and important working tool for the advancement of humans and society. Rural communities that are well informed developed their society better due to advancements in knowledge. In today's knowledge-driven world, access to accurate and relevant information is crucial for socio-economic development of the rural communities where resources are often limited. Annune (2012) pointed out that, with access to information rural communities may perhaps, be lifted from the state of ignorance, illiteracy and poverty to a state of enlightenment, prosperity, literacy and high productivity. The accessibility of the right information by Hausa rural communities will make them more knowledgeable and easier in handling their needs for the betterment of their societal development.

Rural communities according to Adewale as cited in Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2019) are “people with low income and lack of social amenities such as good road network, pipe borne water and absence of electricity. The author observed that “the rural community population are mostly illiterate, and they consist about 70% of the Nigerian population and the backbone of Nigerian Agricultural economy. As a result, they need information to improve and sustain societal development of the rural communities as well as reduces the level of uncertainty in any decision making. Emmanuel (2012) points out that, rural dwellers need information on multiplicity of issues

that border around: Agricultural related information like supply of fertilizer, supply of other farm inputs, modern methods of farming, income generation, good roads and health information. Libraries including public libraries have been identified as the key players in information dissemination to meet information needs of the rural communities as well as for overall national development.

The public library is established to provide information resources, which communicate human experiences and ideas and make them easily available to even the rural communities. It is established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organizations. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. Public libraries are set up basically to satisfy information needs of users. They are the hub of knowledge information resources and services which forms the integral parts of the rural communities by providing materials for personal development. The primary objective of any library is to disseminate the right information to the right user at the right time.

Public libraries contain information resources that are manned by library staff /information professionals in order to achieve the purpose of information dissemination. One of the tenets of the libraries is to disseminate relevant information to the rural communities. Annune (2018) maintain that public libraries serve as catalysts for rural community activities as they aid the development and transmission of knowledge within communities. Ochogwu (1993) confirm that “the central public library established in Dutse, headquarters of the state supplied information resources to the seventeen branch libraries located in the different local government areas of the Jigawa State” with the aim that the Hausa rural communities utilized these information resources and services for better livelihood Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2019) opine that, public library is

established to provide materials, which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people. Annune (2018) advanced that, relevant information disseminated and utilized by the rural communities will not only meet their information needs but also increase their perception, expand their horizons, enhance competence, enlarge their sense of perspective and above all, increase their production rate for the betterment of their society. Onyeronke (2011) states that, public library services provide information resources in variety of media such as books, journals, newspapers, films, slides, video, video cassettes, recorders, cassettes, cameras and computers. These information resources are arranged and made accessible for utilization in the communities their served. The Library Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (2015) agreed that information resources comprised formal, informal, human, printed or electronic resources which contain information that can be accessed to meet a need.

Despite the significance of public libraries in the dissemination of relevance information to meet the information needs of rural communities these libraries faced a lot of challenges, challenges. Aina (2018), Oduwole and Afolabi (2020) affirmed that, rural communities especially in developing countries like Nigeria, are faced with significant challenges of accessing essential information related to agriculture, health, education, and livelihood improvement. The researchers further pointed out that, these challenges are exacerbated by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, low literacy levels, and limited availability of culturally appropriate resources. Just like their counterpart, Hausa rural communities in Jigawa State may have the same experiences. Public libraries have the potential for disseminating information resources that meet information needs of not only the Hausa rural communities in Jigawa state but entire rural communities in Nigeria. Many researches were carried out related to assessment of information needs and

dissemination of public library information resources to Hausa rural communities but this is unique as it is carried out in selected Local Government Areas of Jigawa State, Nigeria.

Jigawa State, located in northern Nigeria, is predominantly inhabited by Hausa-speaking communities whose livelihoods depend largely on agriculture and small-scale trading. Hausa rural communities in Jigawa State have vast availability of natural resources that calls for vibrant economic activities. The people living in the rural areas make up a greater percentage of the total population of Hausa communities in the state and their main occupations include farming, fishing, blacksmithing, pottery, artisan leather producer, dyeing of clothes, cattle rearing, weaving of mats, fans and other house decorated objects. For centuries, branches of public libraries that were established in various local government areas of the state seem to have been disseminating the available information resources to the Hausa rural communities. It is on this background that research of this nature is carried out to assess information needs and dissemination of public library information resources to Hausa rural communities in the study area.

Statement of the problem

Public libraries play a pivotal role in supporting rural development through the provision of access to relevant and timely information. In Nigeria, rural communities, especially those dominated by the Hausa ethnic group in Jigawa State, face numerous developmental challenges such as low literacy levels, agricultural inefficiencies, health issues, and limited access to government opportunities. Public libraries are expected to bridge these gaps by assessing the information needs of the people and disseminating appropriate resources. However, studies have shown that public libraries in Nigeria often struggle to meet these goals due to poor infrastructure, insufficient funding, and lack of community engagement (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002; Issa, 2011).

Specifically, in Jigawa State, rural communities remain underserved by public libraries, and little is known about how well the information needs of Hausa-speaking rural dwellers are being assessed or met. These communities depend on information for farming, market prices, healthcare, and education, yet the channels through which libraries disseminate this information are often ineffective or absent (Eze, 2012). Moreover, cultural and linguistic factors affect how information is received and utilized in these communities, raising concerns about the relevance and accessibility of available library resources (Salihu & Adetimirin, 2015).

Despite policy efforts to enhance library services in Northern Nigeria, including the establishment of local government libraries, the practical impact of these institutions on Hausa rural communities remains unclear. The mismatch between the information provided and the actual needs of these communities may limit the effectiveness of public libraries as instruments of grassroots development. Therefore, a critical assessment of both information needs and dissemination strategies in selected local government areas of Jigawa State is necessary to identify gaps and recommend improvements.

This study is thus designed to fill this research gap by assessing the information needs of Hausa rural communities and evaluating how public library resources are being disseminated to meet these needs in selected LGAs of Jigawa State.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the relevant information needs of Hausa rural communities in selected local government areas of Jigawa State.
2. Ascertain the type of information resources disseminated by public libraries to meet information needs of Hausa rural communities in selected local government areas of Jigawa State.

3. Examine the challenges faced by public libraries in disseminating information resources to meet information needs of Hausa rural communities in selected local government areas of Jigawa State.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design approach which is the combination of quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (interview) that allows for both numerical analysis and in-depth exploration of the study. A descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The study was conducted in three selected LGAs of Jigawa State—Gwiwa, Gumel, and Birnin Kudu known for their predominantly rural populations. The targeted population consist of 3,100 rural dwellers and 97 library staff was adopted. A sample size of 359 (310 rural dwellers and 49 library staff) was determined using Taro Yamene's 1969 formula for finite population.

The reason for drawing out sample from the population is the difficulty in studying all the entire Hausa communities. Therefore, there was need to reduce the population size to a manageable proportion for more accurate results. Purposive sampling, were adopted for the study. These techniques gave room for adequate representation of each rural community and library of the study to minimize biasness. A self-developed questionnaire titled “Assessing the information needs *and public library roles in dissemination of information resources to Hausa rural communities in selected local government areas of Jigawa State* (AINAPLRIDIRHRC)” with thirty-one (31) items. This questionnaire has three section A, B and C. Simple percentage was used to answer question on section questions on section A A, was scaled 1 using Needed/Not Needed responses and 50% bench mark was used for decision. While 0-49 was rejected. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer section B, and C, using lickert four (4) point rating scale responses Strongly Agreed =SA (4), Agreed =A (3), Disagreed =D (2) and Strongly Disagreed =SD (1) was used respectively. All

responses with 2.5 and above mean scores were considered as decision rules for the study, whereas any responses with 0-2.49 were rejected for the qualitative data. Structure interview with six (6) items was granted to two Hausa village heads and two (2) Hausa elders from each of the three (3) local government areas of study. In addition, three hundred and forty-seven copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the aid of two research assistants which were instructed on the mode of administering questionnaires and conducting interview. The data collected for the study was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion of the study

Table 1: Frequency counts and Percentage Analysis on the Types of Information Needs in the Hausa Rural Communities.

S/N	Questionnaire Item	N	%	NN	%	Remark
1	Agriculture	336	93.3	11	3.1	N
2	Politics	314	87.2	33	9.2	N
3	Health	303	84.2	44	12.2	N
4	Cultural festivals	235	65.3	112	31.1	N
5	Environment terrain	238	66.1	109	31.4	N
6	Communal crises	268	74.4	79	21.9	N
7	Business opportunities	300	83.3	47	13.1	N
8	Religious activities	339	94.2	8	2.2	N
9	Historical events	325	90.3	22	6.1	N
10	Poverty alleviation	310	86.1	37	10.3	N
11	Leisure	231	64.2	116	32.2	N
12	Skills acquisition	309	85.8	38	10.6	N

Key: N= Needed, NN= Not Needed

Table 1 shows the types of information needed by Hausa rural communities that public libraries disseminate in three selected local government areas in the Jigawa state. The result table shows that, all the items ranging from 1-12 have the percentage values of 50% and above as “Needed” with religious activities having the highest percentage of 94.2% and the least is leisure which have 64.2%. This indicates that, all the items provided on the types of information resources needed by Hausa rural communities required and also dissemination by the public libraries

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation rating on the types of information resources disseminated by the public libraries in the Hausa rural communities.

S/N	Types of information resources	N	Mean (x)	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Textbooks	347	2.90	.84	A
2	Journals	347	3.21	.98	A
3	Pamphlets	347	3.39	.86	A
4	Running relevant documentaries	347	3.10	.75	A
5	Posters	347	3.40	.94	A
6	Leaflets	347	3.09	.75	A
7	Pictures	347	3.00	.77	A
8	Newspapers	347	3.05	.61	A
9	Agricultural magazines	347	3.15	.62	A
Cluster Mean			3.14	0.79	A

Key: A =Agreed

Table 2 reveals the types of information resources disseminated by the public libraries in the Hausa rural communities in three (3) selected local government areas in Jigawa State. The table shows that all the items (1- 9) scored a mean value ranging from 2.90 -3.40 and S.D .61 - .94 which is above the benchmark of 2.50 above and S.D of 0.79 indicating that all the the types of information resources disseminated by the public libraries for the utilization by the Hausa rural communities.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation rating on challenges facing public libraries in the

dissemination of information resources to the Hausa rural communities

S/N	Challenges facing public libraries	N	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Lack of motivations	347	3.16	.76	A
2	Lack of rural libraries	347	3.08	.81	A
3	Inadequate library staff	347	3.34	.94	A
4	Lack of information dissemination skills	347	3.52	.88	A
5	Dilapidated nature of public library branches	347	3.39	.89	A
6	Outdated nature of information resources	347	3.05	.76	A
7	Lack of published literature/serials in local dialects	347	3.12	.74	A
8	Lack of funds	347	3.10	.71	A
9	Environmental terrains	347	3.52	.82	A
10	Inadequate in-house training	347	3.56	.85	A
Cluster Mean			3.28	0.81	A

Key: A =Agreed

Table 3 revealed the challenges facing public libraries in the dissemination of information resources to the Hausa rural communities. Based on the rating of the challenges. All the items in the table have mean ranges from 3.05-3.56 and S.D 0.36-0.58 with a grand mean of 3.28 and S.D 0.81 which fell within the agreed category of the minimum benchmark of 2.50. This indicates that, there were various challenges facing public libraries in the dissemination of information

Resources to the Hausa rural communities such as access to library resources, availability of relevant books and others.

Interview

The interview granted to two illiterate (2) heads and two (2) illiterate elders in the Hausa rural communities also disclosed that, “ *we sincerely need information on the various illness ulcer, typhoid, HIV, leprosy is one of the major illness here, many of our people are blind because of eye problems, poverty reduction because our people are dying of hardship, agricultural information on how to improve on our farming system as well as produce high yield, prevention of herdsmen from destroying our farms, crime reduction, some of our people are in the interior so need information on how they will enroll in formal education system and improve on our marketing policies*”.

Discussion of findings

The first finding of this study underscores that the Hausa rural communities have divert information need. Specifically, information on Agriculture, Politics, Health, Cultural festivals, Environment terrain, Communal crises, Business opportunities, religious activities, Historical events, Poverty alleviation, Leisure and Skills acquisition were often needed by Hausa rural communities or enhancement of their rural wellbeing as well as development.

It is noteworthy that the findings of this study align with previous research in highlighting the central role of agriculture in rural communities. For instance, Adamu, Ibrahim, and Umar (2020) observed that agriculture remains the backbone of the rural economy in Jigawa State, and that farmers require timely and accurate information on crop management, pest control, and market prices. This underscores the agricultural priority identified in this study. Similarly, Bello and Umar (2021) revealed that the dominant information needs of rural communities in Northern Nigeria include agriculture, health, education, and livelihood improvement corroborating this study's findings and reaffirming the need for targeted information services.

In a broader context, Mallik and Nayek (2018) further categorized rural information needs to include not just agriculture, but also job-related inquiries, self-employment programs, animal husbandry, healthcare, legal aid, government programs, and local news. These wide-ranging needs emphasize the importance of understanding the socio-economic realities of rural users when designing library services.

The study also found that the types of information resources disseminated by public libraries in the Hausa rural communities of the three selected LGAs include textbooks, journals, pamphlets, posters, documentaries, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, and pictures. These findings are supported by the work of Ogunleye (2019), who noted that rural libraries serve as hubs for providing both print and digital resources tailored to local needs, enabling individuals to make informed decisions and improve their quality of life.

In terms of dissemination methods, this study aligns with the findings of Stepheno, Hendrik, Stillwell, and Moris (as cited in Otolu, 2015), who documented that information in rural communities is often transmitted through oral means, print literature, and electronic communication technologies. Similarly, Agrawal (as cited in Dlamini, 2004) and Asah (2003) emphasized the effectiveness of pamphlets, newsletters, and journals as dissemination formats. In the same vein, Chinwe, Ogbonna, and Osuchukwu (2014) highlighted textbooks, audiovisuals, television, radio, and magazines as common sources of information in local information centers. Beare and Rushoke (2001) also recommended community radio, monthly bulletins, and mobile phones as practical means of communication. These studies collectively validate the diversity of dissemination formats found in this research.

More importantly, this study highlights the need for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate materials. Suleiman (2022) stresses that effective dissemination in Hausa rural

communities depends on tailoring library collections to reflect users' cultural and language preferences particularly the provision of resources in Hausa.

Despite these dissemination efforts, the study identified numerous challenges that inhibit public libraries from reaching rural audiences effectively. Key issues include a lack of motivation among staff, inadequate rural libraries, insufficient professional personnel, lack of dissemination skills, dilapidated infrastructure, outdated resources, minimal availability of Hausa-language materials, poor funding, environmental barriers, and insufficient training. These findings align with those of Saleh and Lasisi (2011), who reported that Nigerian public libraries lack adequate and qualified staff, and Onyeronke (2011), who cited inadequate funding, outdated materials, and lack of public awareness as major constraints.

Obinyan and Aidenojie (2011) similarly noted that the shortage of professional staff limits libraries' capacity to conduct outreach and promote information services in rural areas. Furthermore, Nyana (2009) emphasized that low library usage in rural Africa is often due to illiteracy, poorly targeted collections, and weak collaboration among information stakeholders. Collectively, these studies affirm the systemic nature of the obstacles faced by public libraries, as confirmed by the current research findings.

Conclusion.

The findings of the study concluded that the Hausa rural communities have different types of information needs such as, that public libraries have made available various types of information resources ready for disseminating to the Hausa rural communities. Dissemination of information resources by public libraries to the Hausa rural communities in three (3) local government areas of Jigawa State were not without challenges.

Recommendations.

However, the following recommendations were made public libraries should ensure that information resources on indigenous knowledge are constantly disseminated to rural libraries to help address their information needs.

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