

No. 35 \$36



NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Proceedings of

**2021 CONFERENCE OF
NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
KADUNA STATE CHAPTER**

— **THEME** —

**TOWARDS ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS THROUGH LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION SERVICES DELIVERY IN NIGERIA.**



Held At:

National Research Institute for Chemical
Technology (NARICT), Zaria.

August 4th, 2021

INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the role of the public library in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria. It investigated the rate at which Nigerian public libraries are aware of the existence of sustainable development goals. It also examined the quality of human resources in public libraries in Nigeria. It investigated the challenges faced in the achievement of the SDGS. The objectives of the study were to determine the level of awareness of sustainable development goals in public libraries in Nigeria, ascertain the qualities of the available human resources in the public libraries that can enhance the achievement of sustainable development goals and enumerate the factors inhibiting the implementation of sustainable development goals by Nigerian public libraries the systematic sampling was used to select six states, one from each geopolitical zone and purposive sampling was further used to select a sample size of 158 library staff from the population. The survey approach was adopted using questionnaire to collect data. Data collected was analysed through the use of frequency tables, percentages and Somers' delta was used for the hypothesis testing. The result of the study showed that there is some form of awareness of the SDGS on the part of the library staff but very low involvement in activities that drives the SDGS and found that the Nigerian public library is hardly in a good state materially to play an efficient role in the achievement of SDGS. It was also discovered that the challenges inhibiting the public library from playing its role as a developmental tool include, infrastructural problem, lack of adequate funding and poor government involvement in public library activities. The study concluded that the public library staff have to be educated on the SDGS, wholly involved in the modern way of information acquisition and dissemination which involves being active on social media platforms. The study recommended that government should put the public library in a good state in infrastructure, material resource and human resource; it was also recommended that SDGS offices work hand in hand with the public library in their programmes.

Keywords: Public library, Sustainable Development Goals, Nigeria, Awareness

Introduction

Development refers to improvement in a country's economic and social conditions. It refers to improvements in the way of managing an area's natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people's lives. The purpose of development is a raise in the level and quality of

life of the population. Barder (2015) defined development as a process rather than an outcome; it is dynamic, meaning that, it involves change from one state or condition to another.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is a collection of 17 goals with a total of 169 targets covering economic, environmental and social developments. These seventeen sustainable development goals are built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and call upon collaborative partnership between countries in balancing, economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusion for all. Barder (2015) stated that without ensuring sustainability, all development efforts will be short-lived, and may cause more harm than good.

According to Unwin (2017), to achieve these goals, those who develop policies and implement programmes need to address issues of empowerment, focus on the needs of the poorest, develop innovative technological solutions and new business models, legislate new kinds of regulation through which governments facilitate the ICT and telecommunication sector, and ensure that there is effective security and resilience within the systems being developed.

According to Mamman (2015), the public library's major function is to provide free information to the people in the community. The need for an agency available to all, which provides access to knowledge in printed and other formats such as multimedia and internet sources, to support formal and informal education, has been the reason for the foundation and maintenance of most public libraries and remains a core purpose for the public library. That is why Stiglitz (2015) noted that learning does not end with the completion of formal education but is, for most people, a lifelong activity. Therefore, the public library has an important role in assisting this process.

Unlike other types of libraries where their services are limited to a particular group of users, the public library embraces all types of users. As such IFLA (2016) confirmed that in order to fulfil its mandate, the public library performs specific functions which include the following: to provide for educational development of all people in the community; to support the civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations in a positive way; to make recreation and leisure time wholesome and positive; and to give the user access to information over a wide range of human activities such as agriculture, crafts, commerce and industry.

According to United Nations (2015), it is a basic human right to be able to have access to and an understanding of information, and there is now more information available than ever before in the world's history. The public library has a particular responsibility to collect local information and make it readily available. The public library must therefore be well equipped to satisfy the information needs of the various individuals and groups in any given community. Chewe and Imasiku (2018) stated that public libraries were conceived to provide members of the community with an avenue for recreation, in which people could go and find something to read for leisure, hence the emphasis on fiction material. While serving recreational purposes, people could also use the information resources for self-education.

Promotion of sustainable development in the 21st century demands access to information. Thus, with the increasing need of information, the diverse needs of every individual can be met and taken care of once there is free access to information through the public library. With the increasing need for information in various activities of human endeavour, the world has since become a global village where information is made readily available by just a click of few buttons. In other words, the services that information and communication technology (ICT) facilities offer have no limitation to service rendered in the library and it cuts across all areas of human life. Implementing sustainable development goals by taking advantage of the benefits accruable from the use of ICT's effectiveness is not an exception. United Nations (2015) posited that public access represents the most economical, expedient and equitable way to reach the greatest number of new users and that is why public libraries are often one of the only places where many people can access computers and the Internet.

PublicLibraries2020 (2015) stated that training and resources are needed to help libraries and librarians upgrade the information and services they provide to users. In another study, World Bank

(2016) defined Information and Communications Technology as an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning.

Around the world, public libraries are used as strong tools in actively communicating with people and filling needs, for example, in Slovenia, an Employment Information Service (EIS) was created by the Ljubljana City Library and this programme helped about 1,200 people per year, to find a job. The library taught them to improve their resumes and apply for jobs. Whereas in Nigeria, their potentials are yet to be fully harnessed. In a study carried out by Okojie and Okiy (2019), the public libraries in Nigeria are not actively involved in programmes that help in the implementation of SDGs. More so, most of the public libraries lack working ICT tools and trained personnel in the field of ICT to make the process easier and faster.

Statement of the Problem

Countries around the world are actively involved in the implementation processes of SDGs using the public libraries as effective tools (UN, 2018). For the public library to carry out these responsibilities effectively, it has to be equipped at least with basic materials and human resources which include, book and non-book materials, information and communication technology, trained library staff, among others.

However, the state of Nigeria's public library is not as stated above. Ejeechi (2018) stated that the public library in Nigeria is not only lacking in materials and adequate manpower but also, is in a poor infrastructural state. The author further pointed out that the government is yet to see the library as a tool for development and solving many challenges we may have as a nation. As such, the nonchalant attitude of the government towards the building of the public library as a whole, has preponderated its problems.

As shown in Okojie and Okiy (2019), majority of Nigerian public librarians do not have knowledge of the sustainable development goals and therefore, may not have been actively involved in its implementation. As a result, the researcher has embarked on a study to investigate how public libraries could help in the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria by the year 2030.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this study is to find out the role of public libraries on the attainment of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of sustainable development goals in public libraries in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the qualities of the available human resources in the public libraries that can enhance the achievement of sustainable development goals.
3. Enumerate the factors inhibiting the implementation of sustainable development goals by Nigerian public libraries.

Null Hypothesis

H₀₁ - There is no significant association between the librarians' level of awareness and the implementation of sustainable development goals.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is made up of 1,776 library staff which includes certified librarians, library officers and library assistants from the

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37 public library headquarters and their annexes in each of the state capitals including Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, NUC (2018). Data was collected through the administration of a four likert scale Questionnaire. Quota sampling technique was used to select 6 states from the 6 geopolitical zones of Nigerian 36 states.

These states are, Nasarawa (North Central); Adamawa (North East); Kaduna (North West); Enugu (South East); Cross river (South South); and Lagos (South West). Purposive sampling was used to sample only public libraries headquarters in each of the selected states which had a total of 158 staff. Thus, 158 questionnaire were duly answered and valid for the study with a response rate of 100%. The data was analysed using frequency counts and percentages; while, the hypothesis was tested using Somers' delta (somers' d). Mean scores were calculated with a mid-point of 2.5. Responses rated below 2.5 were rejected while responses above 2.5 were accepted.

Table 1.1 Response Rate of Library staff

State	Total F	shared F (%)	Total retrieved F (%)
Cross-River	10		10
Nasarawa	14		14
Enugu	08		08
Lagos	03		03
Kaduna	11		11
Adamawa	09		09
Total	55(100)		55(100)

The table 1.1 above reviewed the total number of library staff in the headquarters of the six selected states from each geo-political zone in Nigeria. Cross River State has 10 library staff. Nasarawa state has 14 library staff. Enugu state has 8 library staff. Lagos State has 3 library staff. Kaduna state has 11 library staff, while, Adamawa state has 9 library staff totaling 55 library staff from the six selected States.

Discussion of findings

Level of awareness of sustainable development goals in Public Libraries in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Extremely Aware F(%)	Moderately Aware F(%)	Somewhat Aware F(%)	Slightly Aware F(%)	Not at all AWARE E F(%)	Total F(%)	Mean	Decision Mean >= 2.5
1	Sustainable development goals (SDGs)	14(25.5)	25(45.5)	7(12.7)	5(9.1)	4(7.3)	55(100)	3.727 3	Agreed
2	Attended programmes that have to do with SDGs	15(27.3)	10(18.2)	8(14.5)	9(16.4)	13(23.6)	55(100)	3.090 9	Agreed
3	Received training on how best to communicate about e SDGs to our	9(16.4)	15(27.3)	7(12.7)	5(9.1)	19(34.5)	55(100)	2.818 2	Disagreed

4	users Partaken in programs to end hunger and achieve food security	10(18.2)	10(18.2)	2(3.6)	10(18.2)	23(41.8)	55 (100)	2,527 3	Disagreed
5	Partaken in programs to help in providing quality education for the people	13(23.6)	19(34.5)	9(16.4)	4(7.3)	10 (18.2)	55 (100)	3,381 8	Agreed
6	Partaken in programs to ensure sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	13(23.6)	15(27.3)	9(16.4)	4(7.3)	14(25.5)	55 (100)	3,163 6	Agreed
7	Banners and flyers in the library on the SDGs	9(16.4)	17(30.9)	10(18.2)	7(12.7)	12(21.8)	55(100)	3,072 7	Agreed
8	Organized programme in relation with development of its community	12	18	12	2	11	55(100)	3,327 3	Agreed

Table 1.2 Responses of library staff on their level of awareness of sustainable development goals.

The table 1.2 showed responses by library staff on the level of awareness of sustainable development goals in public libraries in Nigeria. 14 respondents representing 25.5% responded that they are extremely aware of the sustainable development goals. 25 of the respondents represented by 45.5% responded that they are moderately aware of sustainable development goals.

7 respondents represented by 12.7% responded that they are somewhat aware of sustainable development goals. 5 respondents represented by 9.1% responded that they are slightly aware of sustainable development goals while, 4 respondents represented by 7.3% responded that they are not aware at all of sustainable development goals. 15 respondents represented by 27.3% responded that they have attended programmes that have to do with sustainable development goals.

10 respondents represented by 18.2% responded that they have moderately attended programmes that have to do with sustainable development goals 8 respondents represented by 14.5% responded that they have somewhat attended programmes that have to do with sustainable development goals while nine of the respondents represented by 16.4% as slightly aware of programmes that have to do with sustainable development goals while 13 respondents as represented by 23.6% have not at all attended programmes that have to do with sustainable development. Objective 1 sought to find out the level of awareness of SDGS in public libraries in Nigeria and the table 4.1 above attempts to answer this question.

The main results of question 1 2 5 6 7 and 8 are =>3, which means that the decision is retained. In essence, a large number of respondents are moderately aware of the existence of SDGS. A large number are also aware of the organised programs that have to do with SDGS but even though they claim to be aware, a large number also stated that they haven't particularly received any training on

how best to communicate about SDGS to their users. In summary to objective 1, it is obvious that the public library in Nigeria have some form of knowledge of the existence of SDGS but haven't particularly had any significant activity in regards to that. This finding is in line with Okunlola et al (2017) who stated that many librarians are aware of the 2030 SDGS agenda but lack any in depth knowledge of it or are simply nonchalant about it.

Human resources available in the Public Library that can enhance the achievement of sustainable development goals

Table 1.3 Responses of library staff on Human resources available in the public library that can enhance the achievement of sustainable development goals.

S/N	Items	Very High F(%)	High F (%)	Low F(%)	Very Low F(%)	Total	mean	Decision >=2,5
1	Staff with a degree and above in Library science	13(23.6)	22(40.0)	11(20.0)	9(16.4)	55(100)	2.7091	Agreed
2	Staff with diploma, NCE in library science	11(20.0)	30(54.5)	11(20.0)	3(5.5)	55(100)	2.8909	Agreed
3	Attendance of conferences	8(14.5)	11(20.0)	26(47.3)	10(18.2)	55(100)	2.3091	Disagreed
4	Attendance of seminars	5(9.1)	15(27.3)	29(52.7)	6(10.9)	55(100)	2.3455	Disagreed
5	Attendance of workshops	4(7.3)	20(36.4)	27(49.1)	4(7.3)	55(100)	2.4364	Disagreed
6	Active on Facebook	10(18.2)	20(36.4)	19(34.5)	6(10.9)	55(100)	2.6182	Agreed
7	Active on Instagram	2(3.6)	20(36.4)	25(45.5)	8(14.5)	55(100)	2.2909	Disagreed
8	Active on Linkedln	4(7.3)	19(34.5)	18(32.7)	14(25.5)	55(100)	2.2364	Disagreed
9	Active on WhatsApp	15(27.3)	23(41.8)	10(18.2)	7(12.7)	55(100)	2.8364	Agreed

The table 1.3 shows responses of library staff on the quality of human resources available in the public library that can enhance the achievement of the studied sustainable development goals. 13 respondents representing 23.6% responded to very highly having a degree and above in library science. 22 respondents representing 40% higher agreed to having a degree and above in library science. 11 respondents representing 20% lowly agreed to having a degree and above in library science, while, 9 respondents representing 16.4% very lowly agreed to having a degree and above in library science. 8 respondents representing 14.5% very highly agreed to attend conferences. 11 respondents representing 20% highly agreed to attend conferences.

26 respondents representing 47.3% lowly agreed to attend conferences while, 10 respondents representing 18.2% very lowly agreed to attend conferences. 14 respondents representing 25.5% very lowly agreed that they are active on Linkedln. 15 respondents representing 27.3% very highly agreed that they are active on WhatsApp. 23 respondents representing 41.8% highly agreed that they are active on WhatsApp. 10 respondents representing 18.3% lowly agreed that they are active

on WhatsApp. 7 respondents representing 12.7% very lowly agreed that they are active on WhatsApp. Objective 2 sought to find out the quality of human resources available in the public library that can enhance the attainment of the SDGS. From the responses from public library staff, it can be deduced that there are more staff with diploma or NCE in library science than there are with a degree and above. The instrument for collection further shows that there is indeed a low attendance of conferences seminars and workshops by public library staff. This could be because of the financial constraints or the staff not seeing the need for attendance of such programs as a way of improving themselves and services.

On the use of Facebook and WhatsApp, majority of the respondents agreed that they are active on Facebook and WhatsApp, while activity on Instagram and LinkedIn are relatively low. Ejiechi (2017) rightly noted that social media is an effective tool that can contribute to the awareness level of library staff. In this digitised age, the role of public library has become enhanced all over the world by the advent of information technology. This finding is in line with United Nations (2018) who stated that for the library to be an effective tool in actualizing the 2030 agenda, it will have to be fully equipped not only with material resources but most importantly with adequate human resources.

Factors inhibiting the implementation of sustainable development goals by Nigerian Public Libraries

Table 1.4 Responses of library staff on factors inhibiting the achievement of sustainable development goals by Nigerian public libraries.

Items	Strongly Agree (SA) F(%)	Agree (A) F(%)	Disagree (D) F(%)	Strongly Disagree (SD) F(%)	Total	Mean	Decision
1 Poor supply Power	22(40.0)	21(38.2)	4(7.3)	8(14.5)	55(100)	3.0364	agreed
2 Poor Infrastructure	14(25.5)	24(43.6)	14(25.5)	3(5.5)	55(100)	2.8909	agreed
3 Inadequate material resources	13(23.6)	31(56.4)	11(20.0)	0(0)	55(100)	3.0364	agreed
4 Inadequate human resources	6(10.9)	26(47.3)	18(32.7)	5(9.1)	55(100)	2.6000	agreed
5 Inadequate knowledge of SDGs	12(21.8)	18(32.7)	22(40.0)	3(5.5)	55(100)	2.7091	agreed
6 Non-attendance of conferences / seminars	14(25.5)	22(40.0)	18(32.7)	1(1.8)	55(100)	2.8909	agreed
7 No internet connectivity	16(29.1)	16(29.1)	19(34.5)	4(7.3)	55(100)	2.8000	agreed
8 Lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGs	15(27.3)	25(45.5)	11(20.0)	4(7.3)	55(100)	2.9273	agreed

The table 1.4 shows responses of library staff on factors inhibiting the achievement of sustainable development goals by Nigerian public libraries. 22 respondents representing 40% strongly agree that power supply is one of the factors inhibiting the achievement of SDGS by public libraries in Nigeria. 21 respondents representing 38.2% agree that power supply is one of the factors inhibiting the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. 4 respondents representing 7.3% disagree that power supply is one of the factors inhibiting the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. 8 respondents representing 14.5% strongly disagree that power supply is one of the factors inhibiting the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries.

14 respondents representing 25.5% strongly agree that non-attendance of conferences and seminars inhibits the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. 22 respondents representing 40% agree that non-attendance of conferences and seminars inhibits the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. 18 respondents representing 32.7% disagree that non-attendance of conferences and seminars inhibits the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries.

1 respondent represented by 1.8% strongly disagree that non-attendance of conferences and seminars inhibit the achievement of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. 50 respondents representing 27.3% agree that lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGS inhibit implementation of SDGS in Nigerian public libraries. 25 respondents representing 45.5% agree that lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGS inhibit the implementation of SDGS in Nigerian public libraries. 11 respondents represented by 20% disagree that lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGS inhibit the implementation of SDGS in Nigerian public libraries while for respondents represented by 7.3% strongly disagree that lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGS inhibit the implementation of SDGS in Nigerian public libraries.

Objective 3 sought to find out factors inhibiting implementation of SDGS by Nigerian public libraries. The challenges inhibiting the implementation of SDGS in Nigerian public libraries ranges from poor power supply, poor infrastructure, inadequate human resources, inadequate knowledge of SDGS, lack of internet connectivity, non-attendance of conferences and seminars and lack of sufficient awareness on the SDGS.

The highest mean response is on power supply and inadequate material resources. The option with the lowest mean value is that of the inadequate human resources; this shows that there has been an increase in the human resources in library science profession. Lack of awareness and lack of internet connectivity also poses a challenge for the public library in carrying out their services.

Inadequate knowledge of SDGS and no attendance of conferences and seminars were also highly agreed to be a contributing factor to the challenges affecting the implementation of SDGS by the public library. This, according to IFLA (2016), is because adequate knowledge is needed to properly disseminate information and also adequate knowledge is needed for the implementation of SDG in a way that their impact can be felt.

Table 1.5 Result of hypothesis 1

Directional Measures

Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers' d	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Symmetric Library staff level of awareness Dependent		.457	.172	1.212	.225
		1.000	0.000	1.212	.225
Implementation of sustainable development goals Dependent		.296	.223	1.212	.225

From the table 1.5, there is a strong association between library staff level of awareness and implementation of SDG. This shows that as library staff level of awareness about SDG increases, the rate of implementation of SDG will be high. Furthermore, the approximate significance shows that there is a statistical significance value of $p=0.225$, which means $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is rejected.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study discovered that the public library is a viable tool for the development of the people. And for this to be effectively done, the public library staff have to be educated on the SDGS, fully involved in the current ways of information acquisition and dissemination which involves being active on social media platforms so that they can keep abreast with what is happening around the world and exposure to the use of ICT components. To ensure that public Libraries play a role in being an active tool for SDG implementation, some important steps must be considered and these are presented as the recommendations below

Recommendations

1. There should be adequate awareness programmes by the government agencies in charge of SDGS in order to enlighten public library staff about the existence of SDGS and to work in collaboration with for the effective dissemination of information about SDGS.
2. The public library staff should be encouraged with adequate incentives to attend conferences, workshops and seminars that pertain to development in order to further expose them to developmental strides happening around the world.
3. The government should invest more in the public Library through provision of better infrastructure, modern material resources and better packages for staff to awaken the Nigerian public Library system.

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