

**COMMUNITY LIBRARY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF USERS IN URBAN AND
RURAL COMMUNITIES OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

UMO ANTIGHA BASSEY

Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science
University of Calabar
P.M.B. 1115 Calabar, Nigeria

ANTIGHA OKON BASSEY

Associate Professor Lecturer, Department of Sociology
University of Calabar
P. M.B. 1115 Calabar, Nigeria

&

ESSIEN COBHAM UZOH

Lecturer, Department of Social Work
University of Calabar
P.M.B. 1115 Calabar, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Community library is a type of public library which serves as community builder, manager of diversity, centre for arts, culture and preservation of heritage, promotion of learning and socialization, promotion of democratic values and catalyst for addressing social problems. The effective performance of these functions through library holding, materials, resources and services is expected to yield social development in terms of: association engagement, intergroup cohesion, gender equality, cultural advancement and preservation, interpersonal safety and trust, building of democratic values, spread of education, increase awareness and socialization. Qualitative design was adopted in which three Focus Group Discussions were conducted consisting of ten participants each, with a total of thirty in urban and rural areas of Cross River State. Anchoring on Robert Merton Functional Theory, the study shows that influence of library functions was not widespread on indicators of social development, in order to invoke widespread social development

of Cross River State and her people. It was recommended that more libraries be established, especially community libraries in rural areas, training of library personnel, renovation of existing libraries and updating library materials in order to bring about the desired social development.

Keywords: *Community library, public library, social development, library functions, effective and efficient services.*

Introduction

Library is a very important institution in the development of communities and human civilization. The realization of the strategic role of library in human development prompted widespread advocacy for establishment of public libraries in Europe and North America (Harris, 1999; Battles, 2003; Murray, 2009). It is for this reason that community library is examined as a possible agent for social development for Nigeria rural communities and their people. Generally, library refers to a room or building containing books which are carefully arranged and preserved for easy reference and usage. Library is highly desired because the utilization of library resources is believed to increase awareness and cognition that can help improve life in diverse ways (School Library Association, 2016). One important area or aspect of development is social development.

Development is social in dimension when it involves a network of interaction of people, which community represents. Social development is experienced when there is improvement or advancement in people's lives as well as in relationship between and among

them, as a group. It is therefore pertinent to examine if there exists a link or relationship between community library functions and social development.

Statement of problem and research questions

The purpose of community library as presented by Edward, Rauseo and Unger (2013) are: community building, management of diverse population, universal source of knowledge, preservation of arts and heritage, and youth championing, which proves that it exists to improve the life and social condition of users, being community members. Summarizing the objectives of public library which community library is an example, Ashikuzzanam (2018) identified the following: human adjustment, selfimprovement and development, personality development, spread of education, leisure promotion and cultural revival. In essence, community library serves as a centre of information, culture and education for the community members, which are similar to the goal of social development in any society.

Social development as noted by Davis (2004) has seven main indicators or objectives, namely: intergroup cohesion, civic activism, awareness socialization, interpersonal safety and trust and gender equality. When these

objectives are realized, it therefore means social development has taken place. But when they are not realized, it means there is no social development.

Comparing the purpose of community library and the objectives of social development, it can be determined whether social development is experienced where there is community library and where community library is not in existence, whether community and members experience social development. The central task is to examine utilization of community library or otherwise and achievement of social development objectives in Cross River State urban and rural communities, Nigeria.

Analytical and conceptual review

Community library

A community library is a library service and associated space owned by local community and is controlled by representatives of the community in a way which is responsive to the wishes and needs of the community and people therein. Community library is a type of public libraries which serve cities and towns of all types. Community libraries are designated for specific small communities, be it rural or urban. A public library as defined by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994) “is the local gateway to knowledge which provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making in cultural development and social groups, which must be established under the clear

mandate of the law.” Public libraries are funded by public tax in which users are not supposed to pay fees. It is operated by librarians, library para-professionals and support staff.

The purposes of community library are very symbolic to social development of the community. Edwards, Rauseo and Unger (2013) identified the following purposes or functions:

1. ***Community building***: Community library build communities by supporting local culture. Community members meeting in the libraries as avenue to make connections, share ideas and develop partnership which may lead to the improvement of their lives.
2. ***Management of diversity***: The population of most communities is made up of people from diverse backgrounds and culture, meeting and interaction in community library provides avenue for integration and solidarity. Community library serves as avenue of ensuring unity in diversity, especially in heterogeneous communities.
3. ***Centre for arts, culture, heritage preservation and archives***: Community libraries preserve arts and cultural history of a community, which helps in the understanding of community life in terms of music, literature, belief pattern and

environment. Materials and historic artefacts are often preserved in community library which help to promote oral histories and heritage.

4. ***Promotion of learning, socialization and awareness creation:*** Understanding lifestyle of community members is a major socialization element, which involves learning and internalization of norms and values. Social interaction emanates therefrom. Users of community library learn easily the culture of the community in order to function effectively by contributing to growth and development.
5. ***Promotion of democratic values:*** In community, library materials are provided which are systematically sourced and placed to develop democratic ideals in readers. In this regard, the community library champion the development of democratic culture and principles, thereby promoting the spread of democracy in community political life which is an important element of social development.
6. ***Catalyst for addressing individual and social problems:*** Personal problem affects an individual, while social problems affect a large number of people and requires collective action in order to resolve

it. Community library resources and materials are carefully selected and provided in order to enable users in community articulate and resolve their individual and collective problems. In this regard, community library is seen as a catalyst in addressing individual and social problems in communities. A catalyst is anything that prompts an event or occurrence without necessarily taking part in it, such as the community library in resolving individual and social problem.

7. ***Manager of youth:*** The management of youth in any organization or group is a delicate and important role as youth constitutes symbolic demographic segment. Crime and other social vicissitudes are often carried out by youth. Community library is designed to engage youth and redirect them out of forms of deviant behavior and prepare them as agents of social development. Engagement of youth take away idleness and helps to occupy them, therefore reducing incidence of crime and diversity of social vicissitudes.
8. ***Provision of small business resources:*** Community library provides information on small

business policy and programmes of government. Creating awareness on public-private partnership and openings for local people, therefore acts as catalyst for addressing social problems, and catalyst for small business development in community locality, boosting entrepreneurship.

As noted earlier, community library is a type of public library which functions include: human adjustment, spread of education, personality development, economic development, science and technology promotion, as well as development in culture and leisure (Ashikuzzaman, 2018). These functions revealed socio-economic indicators as enumerated above, therefore community library becomes an important component or contributor to socio-economic development of any society in general and inclusive communities in particular. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994) public library manifesto opines that, “a public library is a living force for education, culture and information, as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women”. Central to any programme of social development in any society are: information, education and culture, which are enshrined fundamental component functions of public library.

Social development

The International Institute of Social Studies (1995) defined social development as the transformation of society, which results in individuals treating each other more fairly in their daily lives, leading to increase in social cohesion, integration and solidarity. Davies (2004) emphasized the fact that social development is a commitment that entire development of society should benefit people holistically, ensure equitable distribution of benefits and resources without any form of bias.

Any community that is socially developed should be marked by improvement in pattern and ways of social interaction, norms and learning, with the prevalence of acceptable universal values that promote peaceful and harmonious living in groups and the society as a whole. Major indicators of social development stipulated by the International Institute of Social Studies (1995) are: clubs and association engagement, socialization, civic activism, intergroup cohesion, gender equality and interpersonal safety and trust.

Consequently, impact of community library functions shall be considered on social development in terms of spread of education and awareness socialization, intergroup cohesion; human adjustment and gender equality; cultural advancement and preservation of heritage.

Methodology and theoretical framework

Qualitative method was utilized in investigating the relationship between

community library functions and social development in Cross River State. Two Focus Group Discussions were conducted with participants drawn from library users from two main public libraries in Calabar, Cross River State. A third Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted among rural dwellers in Creek Town Western Calabar, located in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State to ascertain the need for community library. Each FGD consists of ten participants, with a total of 30 participants in all three FGDs.

Secondary data was also used for sources of information, such as newspapers, magazines, journals, official documents, textbooks and archival materials. A qualitative ex-post-facto design was specifically utilized to examine if social development was experienced by users after their use of library facilities in their communities. Participants were accidentally chosen.

Merton (1936) structural functionalism provided the theoretical foundation for analyzing the link between community library functions and social development. Social structure refers to the consistent pattern of arrangement or organization of groups through individuals' interaction with one another. Social structure in simple language may be used interchangeably with social institution or organization which library can be seen as one. Social function is an objective consequence of an action on the system in which the action takes place. The action of focus is the function of community or public libraries, while the

expected consequence is social development, which is anticipated or manifest.

Description of study area

In Cross River State, there are four main public libraries which serve library users. These are: Calabar Central Library, National Library Calabar, Ikom Library and Ogoja Library. Only the National Library in Calabar is owned by the federal government. Calabar Central Library, Ikom and Ogoja libraries are all owned by the state government, all four libraries provide general library services to the communities where they are located. Calabar Central library is the biggest among the four in terms of size of the complex and holdings, and was opened on April 17th, 1989 (Uche, 2018).

Other libraries in Cross River State that are significant and worthy of mention are academic libraries, institutional libraries and school libraries. Academic libraries are owned by tertiary institutions, serving members (staff and students) of the institutions:

1. University of Calabar Library, Calabar
2. Cross River State University Library, Calabar with annexes in Obubra and Ogoja
3. Federal College of Education Library, Obudu, Cross River State
4. College of Health Technology Library, Calabar

5. Cross River State College of Education Library, Awai – Akamkpa
6. Arthur Jarvis University Library, Akpabuyo
7. University of Calabar Teaching Hospital Library, Calabar

All of these libraries are institutional and do not serve the generality of the public. The same applies to secondary school libraries, which serve only staff and students of such schools but not the general public.

All the four public libraries that are located in the state are in urban areas, namely Calabar, Ogoja and Ikom urban. There is no public library in rural areas of Cross River State. This condition necessitates the need to examine if the effect of public library functions can replicate in rural areas in terms of social development or otherwise.

In examining the state of the four public libraries serving Cross River State as a community, Uche (2018) in a newspaper heading revealed the shameful condition of public libraries in Cross River State which citizens bemoan by stating that, “the pride of Cross Riverians is in their **last legs**, parading outdated books, with book-lovers disillusioned at the unpleasant turn of events”. He narrated a situation where the Calabar Central Library precinct is constantly used for wedding receptions on weekends and other social events on weekdays, making it uncondusive for reading and other academic activities, which requires serene environment. In Ikom and

Ogoja libraries, Uche (2018) explained the need for revamping of infrastructure and restocking of antiquated books and other materials. This condition shows that these three public libraries in the state are not in good condition or shape.

A more deplorable condition of Calabar Central Library is provided by Edem (2017), who reported that snakes, grasses have taken over the library and virtually all the roofs have been blown off by rain and wind, with the environment covered with weeds, providing a breeding ground for rodents and snakes, thereby exposing staff and library users to hazards. Lack of electricity, water supply, insufficient staff, poor condition of service and outdated books, absence of functional vehicles were all identified as obstacles militating against the proper functioning of all public libraries owned by the state.

The National Library which was renovated and restocked cannot adequately serve the large population of Cross River State, as the facility is small and can hardly accommodate up to 50 users conveniently at a time, with reported average persons coming to the library daily put at 100 person (Etuk, 2019). It is also reported that poor and unstable power supply in Calabar remains a major challenge to the function of e-library service in the Calabar branch of the National Library (Etuk, 2019).

Apart from school libraries in secondary schools in rural areas of Cross River State, the people in rural areas are yet to access public library services except when they travel to urban cities like Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja,

where such are available. It is in view of this condition or absence of library facilities in rural areas that the social development is assessed in both rural areas where there is no library and urban areas where there are public libraries.

As mentioned earlier, primary data was obtained from three focus group discussion (FGD) sessions. Two were conducted in Calabar being an urban area with two public libraries to serve the large population of the community, while one was conducted in Creek Town, Odukpani Local

Data presentation, analysis and discussion

Government Area with a small population purposively selected to represent rural areas due to proximity to investigators. Each FGD consists of ten participants excluding the three researchers acting as moderator and research assistants. FGD I was conducted with users of State Central Library in Calabar, FGD II conducted with users of Federal Library in Calabar and FGD III conducted with residents of Creek Town community in Odukpani, a settlement which heralds the entry of Christian missionaries in Eastern Nigeria (Bassey, Bassey & Omono, 2012). First and second FGDs were conducted in 2019 and third in 2020.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Participants in FGD I, II and III

S/N	Age	Edu. Qual.	Religion	Sex	Occupation	Educational Status	Tribe	Awareness of Library facility	Previous usage of library
FGD I									
1	19	SSCE	Christian	Male	Student	Undergraduate	Efik	Yes	Yes
2	26	B.Sc.	Christian	Male	Student	Postgraduate	Ejaghama	Yes	Yes
3	18	SSCE	Christian	Male	Student	Secondary school leaver	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
4	32	B.Sc	Christian	Female	Applicant	Postgraduate	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
5	28	SSCE	Christian	Male	Student	Undergraduate	Yala	Yes	Yes
6	21	SSCE	Christian	Male	Student	Undergraduate	Yala	Yes	Yes

7	25	SSCE	Christian	Female	Student	Undergraduate	Ejagham	Yes	Yes
8	38	M.Sc.	Christian	Male	Journalist	Postgraduate	Yala	Yes	Yes
9	45	HND	Christian	Male	Public Servant	Postgraduate	Igbo	Yes	Yes
10	24	SRN	Christian	Female	Nurse	Undergraduate	Igbo	Yes	Yes

FGD II

1	18	SSCE	Christian	Female	Applicant	Applicant	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
2	16	SSCE	Christian	Male	Applicant	Applicant	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
3	17	SSCE	Christian	Female	Applicant	Applicant	Yoruba	Yes	Yes
4	23	SSCE	Christian	Female	Student	Undergraduate	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
5	20	SSCE	Christian	Female	Student	Undergraduate	Ejagham	Yes	Yes
6	17	SSCE	Christian	Male	Applicant	Applicant	Oron	Yes	Yes
7	18	SSCE	Christian	Female	Applicant	Applicant	Bekwara	Yes	Yes
8	15	JSS	Christian	Male	Student	Secondary school dropout	Efik	Yes	Yes
9	16	JSS	Christian	Female	Student	Secondary school dropout	Efik	Yes	Yes
10	14	JSS	Christian	Male	Student	Secondary school dropout	Annang	Yes	Yes

F GD III

1	27	SSCE	Christian	Female	Business	Sec. Sch. leaver	Efik	Yes	Yes
2	35	SSCE	Christian	Female	Business	Sec. Sch. Leaver	Efik	Yes	Yes
3	23	SSCE	Christian	Male	Student	Undergraduate	Annang	Yes	Yes
4	42	SSCE	Christian	Male	Farmer	Sec. Sch. Leaver	Ibibio	Yes	No
5	65	FSLC	ATR	Male	Rtd. Public Servant	Pensioner	Efik	Yes	No

		- 1 SRN - 1 SSCE - 19 JSSC - 4 FSLC - 2 Total - 30		30	1 Public servant - 1 Retired Pub. Serv. - 1 Nurse - 1 Business - 2 Farmer - 5 Total - 30	Leavers - 7 Undergraduates - 8 Postgraduates - 4 Applicants - 5 Pensioner - 1 Total - 30	7 Yala - 3 Igbo - 2 Yoruba - 1 Oron - 1 Bekwar ra - 1 Annang - 2 Total - 30		Total - 30
6	45	JSS	Christian	Male	Farmer	Sec. Sch. Dropout	Efik	Yes	No
7	37	FSLC	Christian	Male	Farmer	Pry sch. Leaver	Efik	Yes	No
8	28	SSCE	Christian	Male	Farmer	Sec. Sch. Leaver	Ibibio	Yes	Yes
9	19	SSCE	Christian	Female	Student	Sec. Sch. Leaver	Efik	Yes	Yes
10	26	SSCE	ATR	Male	Farmer	Sec. Sch. Leaver	Efik	Yes	Yes
Total		M.Sc. - 1 B.Sc. - 2 HND	Christian - 28 ATR - 2 Total - 30	Male - 18 Female - 12 Total -	Students - 13 Applicant - 6 Journalist -	Pry Sch. Leaver - 1 Sec. sch. Dropouts - 4 Sec. sch.	Efik - 10 Ejagha - 3 Ibibio -	All were aware (100%)	Library users - 26 Non- users - 4

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2019 and 2020

Age of participants in the three FGDs range from 14 – 65 years of age. All participants were able to read and write, and understand the role of library in society, though four out of thirty never used public library before, being 15.34 percent. Participants were

educated from first school leaving certificate (FSLC), senior secondary school certificate (SSCE), junior secondary school certificate (JSSC), State Registered Nurse (SRN), Higher National Diploma (HND), Bachelor Degree (B.Sc.) and Masters Degree (M.Sc.) Six were in possession of Junior Secondary School Certificate and below representing twenty

percent (20%), while twenty-four had from SSCE to M.Sc. representing eighty percent, which shows high literacy that correlates with awareness of library functions and uses.

Participants consist of eighteen male (sixty percent) and twelve female (forty percent), among which were twenty-eight Christians (ninety-three percent) and two African traditional Religious followers (seven percent). This shows that Cross River State, Nigeria, is a predominantly Christian community and Christians are highly attracted to western education and heritage of colonialism like library patronage. Preponderance of secondary school leavers, university undergraduates, postgraduates and applicants who constitute regular library users, seeking information for academic, career and vocational pursuit, reflect traditional library users. Indigenous tribes of Cross River State among the participants were Efiks, Ejagham, Yala and Bekwarra being seventeen (fifty seven percent) shows the indigenous Cross Riverians compete favourably in educational enrolment and usage of public library in their community, with nonindigenes from Ibibio, Igbo, Yoruba, Oron, Annang being thirteen (forty three percent).

Analysis and discussion

In analyzing and discussing data obtained from three FGDs conducted, social development indicators were strictly followed as listed below:

1. Intergroup cohesion and gender equality.
2. Spread of education, awareness and socialization.
3. Cultural advancement and promotion.
4. Civic activism and democratic values.
5. Association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust

Intergroup cohesion and gender equality

Intergroup cohesion and gender equality are two major indicators of social development. When all groups are united and interacting peacefully with one another, is when a community has peace and moves forward harmoniously. Female and male genders constitute two major groups in the society. Social development exists when groups recognize one another and accord each respect by assigning responsibilities, roles and statuses equally. Both intergroup cohesion and gender equality are two related indicators of social development and were considered as dependent variables.

Community library performed the important function of managing diversity, as library resources and materials carefully selected and placed for users are expected to shape users' orientation, thereby helping to manage and ensuring harmonious coexistence between diverse groups in societies, such as: gender groups, ethnic, religious and occupational groups.

Managing diversity function of library is the independent variable.

Variables – Dependent: Intergroup cohesion and gender equality

Independent:

Managing diversity function of community library.

Research questions:

Is there influence of managing diversity function of library on intergroup cohesion and gender equality?

Research objective:

To ascertain if managing diversity function of library influence intergroup cohesion and gender equality

In FGD I and II, participants were generally of the opinion that resources and materials they used in the library influenced their perception of roles and desired patterns of interaction that will bring peace, harmony and symbiotic relationship among groups, individuals and agencies in the society. Based on the prevalence of intergroup cohesion in Cross River State, they responded thus:

“In Calabar the state capital, intergroup conflict prevailed persistently marked by clash of cult groups in Calabar South and some areas of Calabar

Municipality; Inter-communal conflicts in Obubra, Abi, Yakurr, Etung etc.; land disputes in different communities of the state is an

endemic problem. There is no intergroup cohesion yet in our state” (FGDs I & II)

The above position shows that intergroup cohesion is yet to be achieved in Cross River State, which is an important indicator of social development.

On gender equality, participants unanimously echoed that such thing does not exist and mentioned the denial of a woman the position of Chief Justice of the State, which they maintained that was due to her gender and ethnic group, which was not accepted by government in both legislative and executive branch. Despite the two public libraries in Calabar where FGD I and II were conducted, intergroup cohesion and gender equality are still an illusion, meaning that social development is yet to be actualized.

Spread of education, awareness and socialization

Spread of education improves level of literacy which is a very important indicator of physical quality of life index, a basic parameter for measuring development in general. Social awareness entails being conscious of something, may be existence of problems, difficulties, hardship or any phenomenon in the society. Socialization has to do with learning and internalizing the norms and values of the society in order to be able to function effectively as members. Spread of education, awareness and socialization are all inexplicably intermingled, and are dependent variables, as indicators of social development.

Promotion of learning as another important function of library was the independent variable. Public library educate users through library resources and information dissemination. The educational level of participants in both FGD I and II shows high level of literacy.

Variables – Dependent: Spread of education, awareness and socialization

Independent: Promotion of learning library function

Research questions:

Does library promotion of learning induce spread of education, awareness and socialization?

Research objective:

To determine if library promotion of learning induces spread of education, awareness and socialization.

Community library is considered as a reservoir of educational materials for all levels of learners, both in formal and informal learning processes. Users are expected to socialize through use of library materials, learning and awareness of social and physical environment, including the discovery of self, are all considered outcomes of library usage. The higher selfdiscovery and understanding of environment take place, the greater the ability to manipulate environment and adjust self which indicates social development. In FGD I and II, participants were 100% literate and they stated that:

“Continuous exposure to library causes us to be aware of latest development in the society, activities, events and progmmames that will promote our standard of living and quality of life, we are able to comprehend and key into the programmes” (FGD I & II)

This revelation of participants shows the significant role of library in awareness creation, spread of education and socialization process of users, as indicated by Ahsikuzzaman (2018) that library is a centre for the spread of education and gateway to knowledge, a very important condition for lifelong learning and catalyst for independent decision making, which are essential components of social development. The discovery above shows that community public libraries induce spread of education, awareness and socialization.

Cultural advancement and promotion

Cultural advancement refers to a state of intellectual, social and material development in any society which is marked by progress, structural differentiation, specialization of institutions, record keeping, advancement in arts, craft, local products and elimination of practices that are not beneficial to the people, as regulated by prevailing norms and values. Promotion involves widespread projection of cultural advancement to be accepted and practiced by the entirety of people in society. Both cultural advancement and promotion constitute dependent variable.

Another important function of library is that it serves as

center for arts, culture and heritage preservation. To what extent does public library perform this function to influence cultural advancement and promoteion,deserved investigation?

Variables – Dependent: Cultural advancement and promotion

Independent:

Library as center for arts, culture and heritage preservation

Research questions:

Does public library function as centre for arts, culture and heritage preservation influence cultural advancement and promotion?

Research objective: To examine if community library function as center for arts, culture and heritage preservation influenced cultural advancement and promotion.

Public libraries' stock include artistic and culturally rich materials. When these are preserved over time, it is expected to transfer practice of culture from one generation to another, as well as inducting new members to the culture of the society. Availability of cultural materials and resources in library proved library as center for culture, learning of cultural traits, values, symbols, elements, even as, though library materials represent preservation of heritage. Participants in FGD I were asked if their frequent use of library promotes their advancement in practice of their culture in terms of learning new cultural traits,

elements, values and symbols. They responded thus:

“Display of cultural materials, especially in Cross River State Central Library in Calabar, provide insight to the understanding of the past, appreciate our culture, introduce same to others, so that our culture will not terminate with us” (FGD I) This position was corroborated by participants in FGD II who expressed the views that library plays important role in preserving the culture of their society, that some of what they know about their society which they will pass on to others were gathered from library materials. This supported Edwards, Rauseo and Unger (2013) position that library plays the role of Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Preservation.

Civic activism and democratic value

Civic activism or engagement refers to promoting the quality of life in a community which is marked by participation in both political and nonpolitical processes to contribute to public decisions or influence the direction of such decisions. Democratic values entails members of society discovering themselves as citizens and not subjects and actively participate and contribute to decisions affecting them in society which is citizen centered. Both civil activism and democratic value are dependent variables.

Library materials are carefully selected to ensure the function of promoting democratic values, which is an independent variable,

corresponding directly with the dependent variables. Materials are provided which supports public policy and policy direction of government, creating awareness in users to support and participate, thereby enhancing policy and programme success. Variables –

Dependent: Civic activism and democratic values
Independent: Library function of promoting democratic values

Research questions:

Is there any influence of library function of promoting democratic values on civic activism and democratic values as indicators of social development?

Research objective:

To determine if library function of promoting democratic values influence civic activism and democratic values in society as indicators of social development.

In FGD I, 65% of participants accepted that they belong to different types of civil society organisations and associations through which they are able to articulate and aggregate their interest to appropriate government decision making agency. Greater number of participants in FGD II being 78% percent also corroborated the position of participants in FGD I, and also revealed that: “They guide and play leadership roles in associations they are members, because of information they obtained through using library, and they are able to make contributions towards government decisions

and policy and can also influence policy outcome” (FGD II) Despite the revelation above, participants in both FGD I and II were of the opinion that activities of many groups are anti-democratic and they undermined democratic values and ideals, such as being used by politicians to disrupt electoral process; cult activities and other social vices prevailing in Cross River State which makes the state that was once regarded as the most peaceful place in Nigeria, to be referred to as the center for kidnapping and armed robbery. In view of this condition, civic activism and democratic ideals are not obtainable in Cross River State, though avenue exists for political participation and contribution to decision making.

Association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust

Association engagement involves ensuring participation of various groups and their members in society or broad community activities. It pertains to mobilizing participation and involvement. Interpersonal safety and trust refers to prevailing norms in which trust and security exists to the extent where members of the society exhibit reliance even on those they are yet to meet with. All these constitute dependent variable and indicators of social development, where they exist.

Library serves as a catalyst of addressing social and personal problems, as well as community building block, which constitutes independent variables.

Variables – Dependent: Association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust

Independent:

Library as catalyst for addressing social problems and building community Research questions: Does library function as catalyst for addressing social problems and building community influence association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust?

Research objective:

To assess if library function as catalyst for addressing social problems and building community influence association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust.

Responding to the research questions above, participants in FGD I and II maintain that associations and groups existing were not objectively engaged by government and its agencies. They express the opinion that individual politicians only engage them for their personal use, which is often at the detriment of the society at large. Interpersonal safety does not exist according to all participants and no trust, as people live in fear. The level of crime, kidnapping, child trafficking, forced commercial sex work, armed robbery and other social vicissitudes like Skolombo, area boys and ritual killings cause the state to be a fearful place to live and do business in. This condition undermined any attempt to look at economic development dimension in terms of library providing

information for the growth of small businesses resources, income generation and employment, as businesses are closing and packing out of the state. In essence, library functions as a catalyst for addressing social problems and building community has failed to ensure association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust, thereby worsening the condition of personal and social problems.

The need for community library

Community libraries as integral component or type of public libraries are locality oriented. Generic public libraries are owned by government and run with public revenue obtained from taxes. Some community libraries are established and funded by the government for locality residents, due to lack of proximity to city and town public libraries. In most cases, community members contribute their resources to establish and manage their own libraries due to strategic social benefits that will accrue to the community and its people in terms of social development.

It is in this regard that Focus Group Discussion III was conducted in rural areas of Creek Town in Odukpani Local Government Area to determine their community need, which revealed a social development gap due to lack of library and library services. In FGD III, all participants (100%) indicated their awareness of library and how they and their community will benefit if library is established for them. 60% (sixty percent) have been using a library before, while

40% (forty percent) never used one, but are fully aware of library usefulness. They stated that: If community library is established here, we will have information on what government is doing, how government action will benefit us. It will guide us to prepare for higher studies and good career pursuit, and reduce idleness, crime and many other social problems we are having now” (FGD III).

Focus Group Discussion is one of the strategies or tools of community needs assessment, which revealed that there exists anticipatory need for a community library in rural areas, which will take the rural communities that lack libraries to their expected social development level.

Summary, conclusion and recommendations

In summary, Cross River State is one of the educationally less developed states, as placed in social development index of Nigeria. Library is an important aspect of education and four public libraries are grossly inadequate for the social development of the state from educationally disadvantaged to educationally developed state. Findings are:

1. There is no intergroup cohesion and gender equality as a result of library function of managing diversity
2. Library induce spread of education, awareness and socialization through promotion of learning.
3. Library helps to ensure cultural advancement and promotion through its function as a center for arts, culture and heritage preservation.
4. Library does not promote civic activism and democratic values through its functioning.
5. Library does not promote association engagement, interpersonal safety and trust by functioning as a catalyst for addressing social problem and community building.

The functioning of public libraries in Cross River State failed to promote social development of citizens and the state as a whole. This is due to inadequate number of libraries when compared to the large land mass and ever increasing population of the state being 3.738 million people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). This shows a ratio of 1 library to 934,500 persons which is grossly below accepted standard. The deplorable condition of library facilities, stock and infrastructure cannot foster effective social development realization through functioning of the libraries in Cross River State.

Another major impediment which affects the achievement of social development in Cross River State through library functions are the clear absence of public or community libraries in rural areas. This condition cuts the rural dwellers totally away from benefitting from library service to access social

development. Library services should cover the entire state including rural and urban areas if social development is to be widespread.

Consequently, it is recommended that:

1. Federal government should extend federal library service to other senatorial districts (North and Central) to bring the number of federal libraries in the state to three.
2. State government should establish new state libraries in all local government headquarters.
3. Government should renovate and restock, by updating materials, resources in existing libraries and improving power supply.
4. Emphasis should be placed on training and retraining of library staff to update their knowledge and skills in modern library techniques.
5. Individuals should assist their communities by providing materials and participation in establishment of community libraries.
6. Corporate organisations should build, stock and donate library and library materials to host communities as a matter of corporate social responsibility.
7. Awareness should be created for more students to enroll and study library and information science in order to provide required

manpower for emerging community libraries that will be established as agent and catalyst of social development in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria as a whole.

REFERENCES

- Ashikuzzaman, M. D. (2018). Public library functions and objectives. Library and Information Science academic blog, www.libsdirect>libraryscience Retrieved 16 February, 2019
- Bassey, A., Bassey, U. & Omono, C. (2012). An empirical analysis of the influence of religion on career choice and success among Creek Town people, Nigeria”. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society*, 4, 67-79
- Battles, M. (2003). *Library: An unquiet history*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Davis, G. (2004). A history of the social development network in the World Bank. Washington D.C.: The World Bank Social Development Paper No. 56, March
- Edem, E. (2017). “Snakes, grasses take over Cross River State Library”. *Daily Post, October 20th*. Lagos: Daily Post Publication
- Etuk, N. (2019). “Official: Poor electricity hinders e-library in Calabar”. News Agency of Nigeria. Calabar, April 24

- Harris, H. M. (1999). *History of libraries in the western world* (4th Ed.) Lanham: Scarecrow Press. Inc.
- International Institute of Social Studies (1995). *Indices of social development*. World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen
- Merton, R. (1936). "The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action", *American Sociological Review*, 1(6), 894-904
- Murray, S. A. (2009). *The library: An illustrated history*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing
- National Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Projected population of Nigeria based on 2006 Census*. Lagos: Federal Government Printers
- School Library Association (SLA) (2016). The purpose of school library. <http://sla.org.uk> retrieved 6/09/18
- Uche, I. (2018). "Citizens bemoan shameful conditions of Cross River State libraries". *Vanguard Newspaper*, 6th February. Lagos: Vanguard Press
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994) UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, www.unesdoc.unesco.org Retrieved 26th December, 2019