

Original Research Article

Evaluation of Library and Information Service Delivery in Houses of Assembly of Three States in South West Nigeria

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Abstract

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The objective of the study is to evaluate library and information service delivery in three states houses of assembly in southwestern part of Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted with a study population of 84 legislators and 9 library staff from three state houses of assembly in Ondo, Osun and Oyo states. Questionnaire was the main research instrument used for data collection. Data was analysed using frequency distribution and percentages run on SPSS. The study revealed that books/monographs and relevant periodicals 57(86.3%), reference materials 65(98%) and government publications 56(84%) were readily available to the legislators. Also, current awareness services 58(87.9%), reference services 46(69.7%) and selective dissemination 55(83.4%) among others were the services specially delivered to the legislators by the parliamentary library. The legislators used library for research and consultation. Conversely, non availability of current books 39(59.1%) was highlighted. The study recommends the introduction of services like document delivery, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services and others that will specifically address the needs of the legislators.

Keywords: Information service delivery, Library services, House of Assembly, Legislative library, Southwest Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Without the effective use of information in the law making process, dependable and corrective laws in the Nigerian states cannot be achieved. Information is the basic material in establishing facts in the decision making process of a state. The importance of information service delivery to governance and policy making cannot be over emphasized in this economic environment and information society. In the institution of politics, various kinds of information services have been provided, such as the government library information services. To serve

the political community well, Vaughan (1997) in his research opined that, information experts need to know the sources of information and user's perspectives in gathering information for the benefits of the community at large. Good information service delivery to library users is one of the fundamental points of administration including the library and is the capacity of any specialist to provide promised products/services. The services render by the library is to invigorate academic and research exercises thereby giving access to world-class data asset

(Manjunatha and Shivalingaiah, 2004).

Information service delivery can be described as the set of services provided by the library to its users in order to meet their various and diverse needs. Such services include reference services, referral services, document delivery, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, bibliographic searching, lending services, interlibrary loan, internet access, etc. Nevertheless, the effective provision of this set of services to the legislators can only be possible with the availability of relevant and up-to-date information materials in various formats. As academic libraries are to students, lecturers and researchers, so are the parliamentary libraries to the legislators.

Nigeria operates the federal system of government. Federalism, according to Kincaid and Cole (2005), is a system consisting of at least two constituent parts that are not wholly independent but together form the system as a whole. It operates where individual state is vested with the power to govern their own affairs and subjects but is controlled by a central government for national decisions. According to Kan (2010) the system combines the principles of unity and diversity; the constituent units must have powers of their own and must be entitled to participate at the federal level and also, protect the will and conscience of the people (Pare 2001). The federal structure of Nigeria allows for typical separation of powers among the three arms of government namely the legislature, executive and the judiciary. The legislature, also known as parliament features as House of Assembly in the components states.

The State House of Assembly is the legislative body that makes laws within a given jurisdiction, that is, a state. Other duties of the State House of Assembly according to the Constitution of Nigeria are: deliberating on all matters of interest to the State; debating, amending and approving annual budget submitted by the executives, which serves as a way of controlling public fund; educating the electorate through their deliberations, publications and other activities.

Ubhenin (2004) stated that law makers must be genuine delegates of the considerable number of areas of the population, and to attain this portrayal, there must be free race, proper legitimate electoral poll, electorates and periodic election. The legislature is the real site of representation in a democracy. Modern democracies, especially liberal democracy is about the people exercising their powers through elected representatives. It is in this sense that, the legislature provides the idea of the people's sovereignty, its true meaning and expression. They embrace arrangements and make laws through the procedure of consultation in view of some expansive arrangement of standards contained in composed constitution. They use available resources, materials and experiences to sieve through written and unwritten information to resolve ideological position for

the advancement of their constituency and the nation at large. Iwhiwhu (2011) in his report averred that the legislators perform dual roles by making laws that influenced the whole state which are likely proposed for the benefit of the country overall, also, they have the obligation to speak to the enthusiasm of their individual body electorate.

Kirkwood (2004) opined that legislature takes a place of importance in today's world government through its vital and prompts input for government actions and events because all activity of government entails the authority of some enabling laws. The legislator links the people to the government through the diversity of interests and constituencies well represented in the legislatures because the sovereignty of the people is exercised through their elected representatives. It is for this reason that the legislators are often regarded as the First Estate of the Realm.

Common observation in the legislative libraries shows that most of the book materials in these libraries are perhaps either obsolete or archaic. It was also observed that due to the nature of duties and responsibilities of the legislators, many legislators do not really have time to visit the library either those attached to the state house or any other one. They are thereby generally known to be suffering from inadequate access to and use of information, information resources and services.

Besides, many legislators in Nigeria frequently neglect to access various information resources and services and administration even when such is available. They do not see the library as being necessary in carrying out their legislative functions. Many of the legislators prefer to seek information from the media, friends and co-legislators and they rely on this information for their decision-making activities. It is in the light of these that this study is carried out to evaluate the library and information service delivery in houses of assembly of three states in south west Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives are to:

1. investigate the types of information sources and services available to the legislators in the states parliamentary libraries;
2. identify the frequency of use of parliamentary libraries by the legislators in states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria;
3. assess the level of satisfaction with information service delivery by the legislators in states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria;
4. identify factors militating against effective provision of information services to the legislators in southwestern states of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions formulated to guide the study;

1. What are the types of information sources and services available to legislators in the states parliamentary libraries in southwestern Nigeria?
2. What is the frequency of use of the parliamentary libraries by legislators in the states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria?
3. What is the level of satisfaction with information service delivery by the legislators in states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria?
4. What are the factors militating against effective provision of information services to the legislators in southwestern states of Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library and information services are major factor in providing smooth access to vital information for the development of an economy. Library contributes to the creation and development of intellectual freedom, protects norms, values and also, the universal civil right of the citizens. According to the report of IFLA (2003) it strives to serve all within and outside their community regardless of age, gender, religion, political party and beliefs, sexual orientation or communities which might be geographically based, or linked only by technology and shared interests. Nalumaga (2009) posited in his research that the use of library by legislators serve divergent purposes; as resource center for consultation in formal information sources and other services, as reading facility, an ICT service and as a social meeting place. Some of the resources that were heavily utilized include newspapers. The ICT facilities were in heavy use as well, despite the presumed extension of the network to legislators' parliamentary offices. The intermediaries had pointed out that some of the legislators were often challenged by the information technologies, so they would prefer to utilize facilities within close proximity to professional support - from library staff. Adeleke (2005) explained that library must not just give access, but, also guarantee successful utilization of the services by its users /community. Okiy (2000) corroborated this and posited that, for the library to deliver effectively, its resources and services must be effectively used. Thus, access to relevant information services is very necessary. Availability of information services is an important regular theme in the legislative setting of Nigeria and any other democratic states of the world.

Furthermore, Buckland (2005) explained that the availability of a well stocked bibliographical identified resources and services in the library may not be easily accessible to user even if it is relevant to their subject of

interest because readers tend to use materials and resources that require little efforts in assessment. Therefore, librarians must render timely library services to legislators and other users so that they can carry out their duties as expected. Legislators need information to take active part in legislation; hence, legislative library is created; attached with permanent staff to carry out reference and research services such a report production, tracking the progress of key legislation and of newspapers clippings to both legislators and parliamentary committees in the parliamentary house.

Information needs and seeking behavior of legislators in Nigeria

Olorunfemi and Mostert (2012) surmised that directors in the parliament consider information as means through which ideas, knowledge, events are conceived and created and thus, pave way for positive chance to frame judgments and settle on choices on the financial, educational, legal and political issues. To Folorunsho and Haruna (2005), information is a fact, an opinion or an idea from any source; (either written or unwritten source) which can help to settling on sufficient choices. Furthermore, Smith and Mostert (2000: 114) assert that information is "a property of matter, any message, sign and codes, document, or information resource; any publicly available symbolic material; or any data" that divine an individual's knowledge and understanding. Reddy (2010), revealed that information can be acquired, processed, sorted, arranged and disseminated through the use of the library. According to him, library resources, users and information experts converse together for the transmission of 'informational knowledge'. Nwosu and Reddy (2010) reported in their findings that the transmission of 'informational knowledge' is the most valuable and key resource in the attainment of the goals and objectives of institutions of higher learning. Therefore, Reddy (2010) agreed that it is essential for librarians and other information managers to understand how information resources are searched and used effectively by library users.

Information plays a crucial role in achieving goals. This assumes a higher dimension if one considers information use by legislative policymaking bodies. Ratz (2007) sees information need as a gap in man's information that when experienced at the cognizant level as an inquiry, it offers rest to a scan for answers.

Accurate information enables the legislators to carry out their legislative functions effectively, represents their constituencies; presenting their needs and agenda that will bring about socio-economic, legal and educational development to the society. This is supported when Frantzich, (1979) in Miller et al (2004) posited that agents of democracy need complete, accurate, timely and

confidential and verifiable information to function effectively. Misaras (2007) observed that individual lawmakers have interests, gifts talents, capacities, limits (such as information handling, influence, and basic leadership) and numerous different components influencing their choices. Also, getting selected to a specific legislative council, especially the budgets and appropriations council keeps legislators responsible to their constituents and house leadership.

Sources of information for legislators in the legislative libraries

Libraries of all types including the legislative libraries are moving from the conventional type of giving manual administration to the electronic frame, with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) channels, for effective and productive information conveyance to users. The term ICT has been defined in a variety of ways by scholars across various disciplines. Mansell and Silverstone, in Bosire (2011) indicated that ICTs are electronic networks, which consist of hardware and software that are linked by a vast array of technical protocols. ICTs are embedded in systems that influence the local and global accumulation of the general flow of knowledge (Bosire E. 2011. Moi University, Unpublished PhD Thesis). Therefore, ICTs can be said to be the electronic tools utilized for social affairs and for gathering and storing information and data for easy access by users.

Nalumaga's (2009) study revealed various examples of information sources of legislators. They include documentary sources supplied through the mail system, information acquired through oral interactions, the formal information structures set up by Parliament, the library, research services and electronic services. Legislators could subscribe to other information sources and they could utilize several media sources, for example, radio and television. The use of internet as a source of information by the legislators was explored by Nalumaga (2009) who revealed that the use of internet was split at several levels, and most female legislators indicated usage, for reading online news (papers), conducting searches for information pertaining to their areas of interest, examples cited include information on women and children's welfare, parliamentary information for instance on national budgets and to make presentations. One respondent expressed disinterest in internet (and the parliamentary library), while another felt less proficient or being 'semi-computer literate' but attested relying on the expertise of other people and family members, thus using the service by proxy. This respondent also pointed at the congestion in the Library ICT facilities, thus preferring 'leaving the fight to younger legislators'. There were in addition other women Four (4) who expressed

dissatisfaction about the infrastructure, while two (2) pointed out time constraints, with access seemingly consuming a lot of time, thus a preference for documents – books.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey research design to investigate the use and effectiveness of library and information service delivery to the legislators in houses of assembly in south west Nigeria. The study population comprised of 26 legislators in Ondo, 26 in Osun and 32 legislators in Oyo state houses of assembly respectively, 3 librarians; 1 from each legislative library, 6 support staff; 2 from each legislative libraries mention above, formed part of the study population. The total population for the study therefore consists of 84 legislators, 3 librarians and 6 support staff.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The study adopted questionnaire and structured interview as the instruments for data collection. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection and this was complemented with structured interview. This questionnaire was titled: Library Services Delivery to the Legislators (LSDL) Questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it would elicits answers to the research questions which the study seeks to answer and test respectively. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire with six (6) sections. The scale of measurement of variable was four (4) Likert type scales ranging from 4 point to 1 point. Section A elicits information on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; Section B covered other aspects relating to the objectives of the study. The analysis of data collected for the study was based on basic descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency counts. Figures and tables were also used to present findings. Inference and recommendations were drawn from them. The statistical package for the social science (SPSS) was used for the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the types of information sources available to legislators in the states parliamentary libraries in southwestern Nigeria?

It was shown that textbooks/monographs were available in the parliamentary libraries with a response rate of 57(86.3%). Also, 65(98.5%) of the respondents from the houses of assembly indicated that newspaper/magazines /newsletters, as well as reference materials

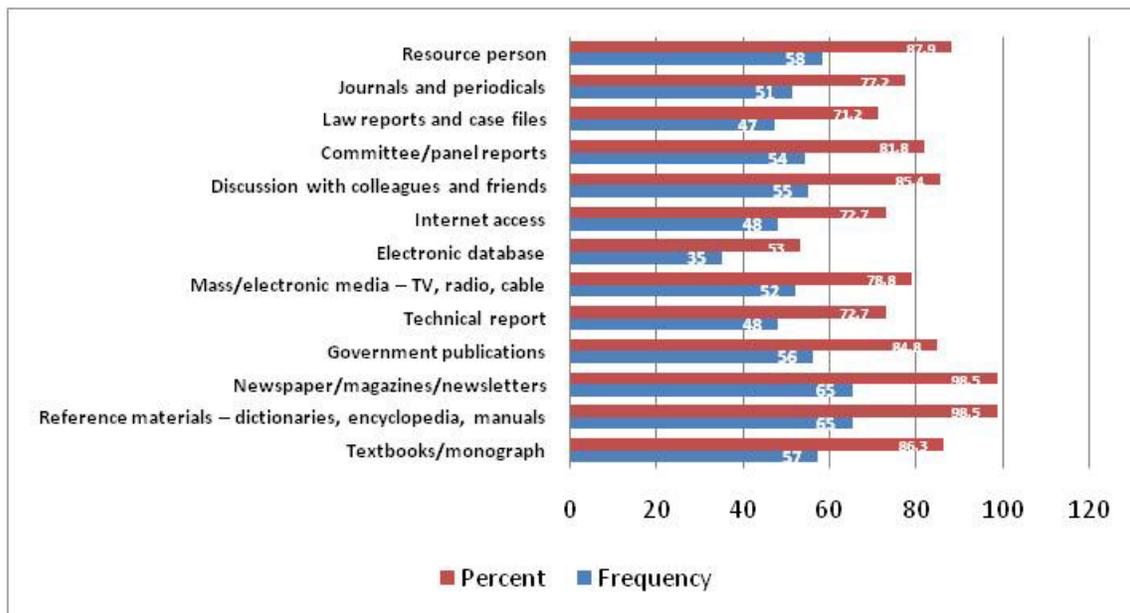


Figure 1. Revealed the respondents' perceptions on the availability of information resources in the libraries.

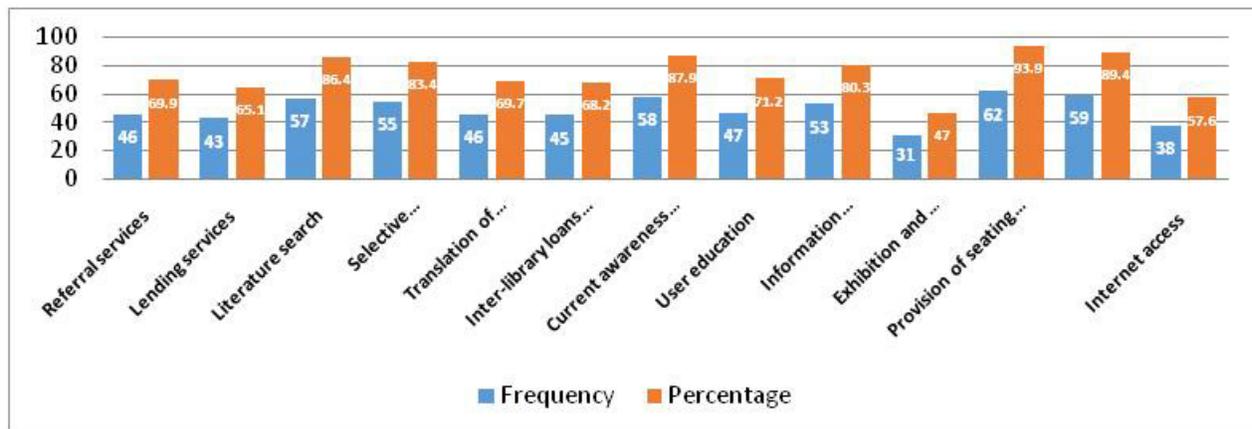


Figure 2. Types of information services in parliamentary libraries

were available in the parliamentary libraries while another 56(84.8%) respondents indicated government publications. (Figure 1)

Research Question 2: What are the types of information services provided by staff to legislators in the states parliamentary libraries in southwestern Nigeria?

Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents 58(87.9%) from the houses of assembly affirmed that the parliamentary libraries provide current awareness services to the users. Likewise, about 46(69.7%) of the respondents agreed that reference services was available in the libraries, and 55(83.4%) of the respondents indicated selective dissemination of information. While 47(71.2%) respondents indicated the

provision of user education to users, another 53(80.3%) respondents indicated that the libraries offered information literacy programmes.

Research question 3: How often do the legislators make use of the parliamentary libraries in states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria?

Figure 3 shows that more than half of the respondents 35(53.0%) of the respondents used the parliamentary library resources and services frequently, while 13(19.7%) of them sometimes used the library. About 11(16.7%) of the respondents from the three house of assemblies used the libraries always and occasionally respectively. Only 2 respondents rarely used the library and 3 of them never used it at all.

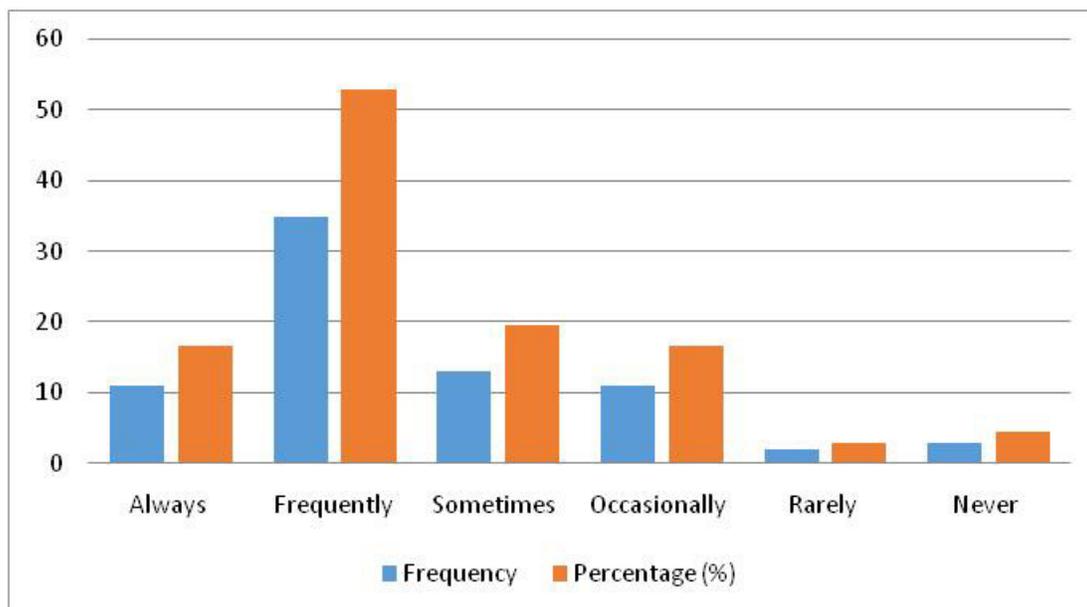


Figure 3. Frequency of use of parliamentary library

Table 1. Level of satisfaction with information service delivery

S/N	Information service delivery	Level of satisfaction			
		VS	S	LS	NS
a.	Referral services	16(24.2%)	44(66.7%)	4(6.1%)	2(3.0%)
b.	Lending services	9(13.6%)	44(66.7%)	12(18.2%)	1(1.5%)
c.	Literature search	20(30.3%)	37(56.1%)	9(13.6%)	--
d.	Selective dissemination of information	22(33.3%)	32(48.5%)	12(18.2%)	--
e.	Translation of information	12(18.2%)	42(63.6%)	12(18.2%)	--
f.	Extension and outreach services	12(18.2%)	21(31.8%)	32(48.5%)	1(1.5%)
g.	Inter-library loans and delivery of services	8(12.1%)	36(54.5%)	19(28.8%)	3(4.5%)
h.	Current awareness services	13(19.7%)	40(60.6%)	12(18.2%)	1(1.5%)
i.	User education	17(25.8%)	28(42.4%)	18(27.3%)	3(4.5%)
j.	Information literacy programme	7(10.6%)	42(63.6%)	14(21.2%)	3(4.5%)
k.	Exhibition and display	15(22.7%)	23(34.8%)	22(33.3%)	6(9.1%)
l.	Provision of seating and study facilities	28(42.4%)	25(37.9%)	8(12.1%)	5(7.6%)

Research 4: What is the level of satisfaction with information service delivery by the legislators in states houses of assembly in southwestern Nigeria?

Table 1 revealed that more than half of the respondents 60(90.9%) from the selected states houses of assembly were satisfied with monographs/textbooks in their respective parliamentary libraries. Also, 58(87.8%) of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with provision of information materials in the libraries. The same thing goes for other services offered by the libraries. It is, therefore, surprising to see that the respondents were satisfied with all the services in the libraries. This could be attributed to the fact that many of

them do not always go to the library and that whenever they visit the library, they get whatever they needed. Consequently, they had no cause for complaints.

Research Question 5: What are the factors militating against effective provision of information services to the legislators in southwestern states of Nigeria?

Table 2 described the factors that militate against the provision of information services in the parliamentary libraries. It was revealed that most of the respondents, 39(59.1%) affirmed that current books were not always available in the library. Also, inadequate library materials were experienced by only 30(45.5%) respondents. Only 5(7.5%) of the respondents complained that the

Table 2. Factors militating against provision of information services

S/No	Factors Hindering Use of Library	SA	A	D	SD
a.	Current books are not always available	20(30.3%)	19(28.8%)	10(15.2%)	17(25.8%)
b.	Library materials are not adequate	13(19.7%)	17(25.8%)	21(31.8%)	15(22.7%)
c.	Inadequate seating space	7(10.6%)	24(36.4%)	22(33.3%)	13(19.7%)
d.	Books are not well-organized	4(6.1%)	5(7.6%)	31(47.0%)	26(39.4%)
e.	There is no competent and qualified librarian to attend to legislators' requests	1(1.5%)	5(7.6%)	20(30.3%)	40(60.6%)
f.	Library do not open regularly	2(3.0%)	15(22.7%)	49(74.2%)	--
g.	legislators are not allowed to borrow books	3(4.5%)	3(4.5%)	22(33.3%)	38(57.6%)
h.	Librarian's attitude is repellent	2(3.0%)	3(4.5%)	23(34.8%)	38(57.6%)
i.	Materials on the library shelves are dirty and dusty	1(1.5%)	4(6.1%)	22(33.3%)	39(59.1%)
j.	Chairs in the library are not comfortable	2(3.0%)	12(18.2%)	26(39.4%)	26(39.4%)
k.	Reading in the library is difficult	1(1.5%)	4(6.1%)	29(43.9%)	32(48.5%)
l.	Library is too dark for reading	2(3.0%)	26(39.4%)	38(57.6%)	--
m.	Lack of library skills to access materials	7(10.6%)	3(4.5%)	33(50.0%)	23(34.8%)
n.	The library environment is always noisy	1(1.5%)	3(4.5%)	13(19.7%)	49(74.2%)

librarians' attitudes are repellent, while some few also complained of inability to borrow materials in the library.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the librarians in the parliamentary libraries of Ondo, Osun and Oyo states, the available library materials include textbooks, journals, conference proceedings, newspapers, magazines, technical reports, government publications and annual reports, and every other sources mentioned above. The librarians reported that the library resources included constitutions, house resolutions, sponsored bills, and so on. This finding was supported by Joel-Ikokoh (2009) affirmed that collection in the parliamentary library includes: historical volumes of the country, enacted and failed laws, information on public policy such as tax, education etc. Iwhiwhu (2011) also confirmed that "lawmakers do not have adequate and relevant legislative information sources, but they obtain relevant information from all the options available to them, which they employ in the legislative process".

The study revealed that provision of library services in the library include: lending services, reference services, user education, referral, literature search, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, provision of reading materials and seating/study facilities. This study conforms to Joel-Ikokoh (2009) who outlined that Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), current awareness service, in-depth subject studies and information dossiers etc are the information services provided for the legislators in the Nigerian parliament.

Based on the research conducted, the legislators in the selected states houses of assembly used the parliamentary libraries for various purposes such as for the retrieval of information on certain issues, research

purpose, among others. The findings coincided with Obbong and Etebem's (2012) study in which the figures of the usage of library resources and services smacked off some features and attitudes of disinterest on the part of the parliamentarians in using the library. The authors recorded a poor grade in the uses of the library and its resources partly because of relevant reformation and low rating of the library in terms of what it can offer. The parliamentarian infrequency in the use of the library was explained as responsibility and function of staff strength and their total competence.

Also, the purpose for which the legislators used the parliamentary libraries was investigated by Iwhiwhu (2011) and he found that 12(50%) of the legislators used the information obtained to enact and amend laws, and to prepare sound reports and bills for the parliament. 6(36%) of the legislators confirmed that they used information obtainable to them to discern their constituency needs and provide solutions to political issues within and outside the constituency.

Findings revealed that majority of the legislators in the selected legislative libraries are not good library users. This is evident in the result in which more than half of the total respondents indicated that they seldom visited the library while less than 40% of them often visited it. It is assumed that many of the legislators that seldom visited the library also constitute those that sometimes used the library and many at times never used the library. The librarians in the parliamentary libraries, particularly Oyo and Osun states even confessed that many of the legislators are more concerned with issues relating to money than any other things; and since there is no money in the library for them to take, they have no business visiting the library.

The study conducted revealed that legislators in Ondo, Osun and Oyo states were very satisfied with the

information service delivery like lending services, reference services, user education, referral, literature search, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, provision of reading materials and seating/study facilities. As far as the librarians in the parliamentary libraries were concerned, the legislators were always satisfied with the services of the library. The legislators rarely encounter any problems with the information service provision in the parliamentary libraries. The only visible problem indicated by some respondents was non-availability of current books which was barely a little over average responses. The respondents almost disagreed with most of the barriers identified. Although, with this findings, one cannot conclude that the information service delivery in the parliamentary libraries were adequate since the users to whom the library is meant for rarely utilize it.

This finding is corroborated by an earlier study by Big (2009) in Research and Information Services, Nigerian National Assembly, which revealed the inadequacy in the acquisition and stocking of relevant and current books and e-books in the parliamentary library, unprofessionalism in staffing and inadequate training of staff and the non usage of library and its resources by the legislators. Joel-Ikokoh (2010) stated that although parliamentary libraries in Nigeria provide traditional services such as reference and bibliographic services, but those libraries are foreign and this poses problem of understanding the specific needs of parliamentarians.

The research of Iwhiwhu (2009) revealed further that unstable and lack of internet facilities to conduct research on current issues and developments, time factor, library automation, unprofessional attitudes of management in the provision of current and vital information to law makers and inadequate provision of library materials are major factors negating the legislators from making effective use of the library and its services.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of library services to decision-makers and legislators cannot be underestimated. It was established that although information service delivery of all types are available in the parliamentary libraries but they are grossly underutilized by the legislators. The effectiveness and performance of a library can only be determined only if the library is well patronized and adequately utilized by the people whom it is meant for. Legislators by the nature of their duties and responsibilities require a lot of information on issues of national importance. This information enables them to make important decisions that affect the group of people whom they are representing. However, the following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Awareness programs of different types may be carried out to call the attention of the legislators to the available resources and services in the parliamentary libraries.
2. Repackaging of information services available in the parliamentary libraries can also go a long way in attracting the legislators to the library. The services should be presented to them in the best possible formats that they can easily use to meet their needs.
3. A more proactive means for marketing the library resources and information service delivery to the legislators should be devised by the librarians in charge of parliamentary libraries.
4. The parliamentary libraries need to introduce new user-oriented services like document delivery, and particularly selective dissemination of information as well as current awareness services which will be specific to the needs of the legislators at all times.

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