

PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AS A MEANS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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ABSTRACT

It is often said that a society that is information poorly improvised is likely to experience poverty and retardation, in other spheres too, in the same vein, a developing country like Nigeria that abandon the provision of accurate, current and adequate use of instructional materials and library services to its special needs people who form an integral part of the population is not likely to attain success in sustainable development. This paper observed that instructional materials and library services which are indispensable to learning are found inadequate and at times absent in most schools. This is why this paper deems is necessary that, there is need for the special need children to benefit from formal school teaching and learning by providing them with necessary Information and services. In the light of his, this paper examined some concepts, potentials of school library, and instructional materials challenges of instructional materials and library services and their educational services to the special needs children. This paper was rounded up with conclusion and recommendation among which are provision of adequate and current instructional materials and library services to the special needs children, incorporating school library programme into teachers training programme courses and encouraging rural librarianship.

Keywords: *Library Services, Instructional Materials Special Needs Children Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

In the world today, development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any country. So, for any country to be classified as developed, it has to be able to provide qualitative life for its citizen, Nigeria despite its huge human, materials and natural resources endowment is engulfed by poverty, unemployment, rural stagnation, starvation and growing inequalities which made it to be listed among the

less developed countries. All these problems need to be addressed. In the light of this, the writers felt sustainable development is essential and necessary as is the growth and sustenance of Nigeria, in order to successfully enhance meaningful standard of living among the populace. Indeed, as library services and instructional materials hold the key to all information needed in the society (special needs inclusive), the supply of needed information through library services will make them to be functional to the society.

Furthermore, it is a well known fact that, we are living in a society which information forms the bedrock, but it is unfortunate that most special needs do not have access to vital Information from library. For instance they find it difficult to exploit physical materials such as resources in libraries or even operate gadgets that can give them electronic information via internet. Babalola (2007) once observed that since disability is not synonymous with ability the special needs themselves have innate and latent abilities and talents which the provision of efficient library services will help to activate and develop. With this special needs needed to be carried along in the development of the country by exposing them to quality library services. Teachers should use relevant and adequate instructional materials in teaching them in the classrooms for better understanding of major concepts.

So, for the country to bridge the gap between the educationally disadvantaged and non educational advantaged and make it complete, there is need to give adequate and proper care to the special needs. Indeed special needs need to be made useful and productive by sensitizing them on the use of library and utilization of instructional materials for knowledge to be meaningful to them. Educating them in library usage and provision of improvisation of materials will make them productive in nation development. Neglecting the special needs who constitute an integral of Nigeria population is tantamount to modernization und wastage of human resources.

To back this up, the National Policy of Education (2004) stated that, the provision of education for the special needs come under formal special education training In line with this are some objectives of special education which are:

- To give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children with physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities.
- Provide adequate education for people with special needs in order that they may fully contribute their quota to the development of the nation.
- Design a diversified and appropriate curriculum for all beneficiaries.

To achieve these objectives there is need to provide library services and instructional materials for teaching the special needs using different media. More so as we are living in a new millennium, the information age, the special needs children can be reached in different communities through electronic media.

To buttress this, Iroka & Ndulaka (2018) added that a library is an active information centre that collects, organizes, preserves and disseminates information stored in different media to a target audience. Special needs can be made functional, effective and skillful through the use of library services and instructional materials and improvisation of some instructional materials through the teacher's effort during curriculum implementation.

To make the special needs formicate and fire from shackles of ignorance and knowledge distribution they need to be provided with necessary and useful information which can be obtainable through different library services discussed in this paper. Kanno and Onyechua (2018) even confirmed that instructional materials and library services are indispensable for effective teaching and learning in all institutions for all categories of learners.

To sum up, exposing special needs children to using selective dissemination information, using current awareness services, using audio-visual materials and encouraging improvisation strategies in teaching by teachers as explained in the body of the paper will make learning to be meaningful. It will also help special needs children to be able to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation as stated in the National Policy of Education as in the objectives of special needs education.

Definitions of Terms

Some terms were defined in this paper by some authors, such as follows;

Sharma (2006) define the library as an organized collection of published and unpublished books, audio-visual material with the aid of services of staff who are able to provide and interpret such materials as required to meet information, research, education and recreational needs of its users.

Ukwusike (2017) equally ace school library as an academic kitchen store, that house information bearing facilities and materials in form of poetry, novels, short stories, music, photographs, and non-fiction and other tactical report that make collection accessible.

With all said a library is seen as a place, an idea learning environment that provides vital informative resources to develop sustainable development. While

instructional materials are seen as objects that are designed, prepared or selected and used by the teacher as supplement or support to verbal presentation of subject matter to the learners (Okoro, Haruna and Boyi 2012). Udomior (2013) elaborated further that instructional materials are things that tell and guide a learner on how to do something or how to use equipment so that they will understand the things they are taught easily than listening to abstract ideas presented in words. With these, special needs children will benefit more from the teacher that uses instructional materials in his or her lessons.

On the other hand special needs children in this context are people who have physical, learning, visual, mental or hearing impairment. The impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the children's ability to perform normal day to day activities that bother on their survival within the society. Also special needs according to Macmillan English Dictionary (2007) are the particular needs of people who have physical or mental disabilities. Special needs children are those who have physical, visual, mental or hearing impairment. The impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to perform normal day to day activities that bother on their survival within the society.

Sustainable development is a development that guarantees a better quality life for everyone and generation to come. Iroko & Ndulaks (2018) also explained that sustainable development is found in the overall change and improvement in the society as related to the individual in progress in the social, political, religious and economic structure of the nation. Sustainable development goals in this context are seen as transformative changes needed to cater for the needs of the future generation (special needs children inclusive) without causing harm so the future gen in terms of meeting their own needs.

With this, it is an imputable fact that library and information centres play an unquestionable role in sustainable development through providing integral component information required in educating the special needs to move them forward in the society. For Nigeria's experience with sustainable development the right, adequate, appropriate, accurate and up to date information should be disseminated to appropriate groups with the right medium.

Importance of School Library and Instructional Materials to Learners

Special needs people are persons with disabilities or handicaps who have some innate and latent abilities and talents which the provision of efficiency in library services and instructional material will help to unveil, activate and develop as enumerated below:

- The library helps to develop pupil's cognitive, social and literacy skills acquisition.
- The library helps to develop personal reading skills because its activities activate the learner's interest in reading and personal studies.
- It serves as an academic collection of literature where all the needed information that serves every category of learner in the learning process are housed and safeguarded.

Ezugwu (2014) stated the importance of school library that, it gives pupils awareness of the wide scope of knowledge and therefore stimulate their desire to find out, investigate, collect and disseminate information.

Iroka and Nduka (2018) affirmed that, all types of libraries whether for special needs or others people are educational tools in developing individuals in the society through their services. Such services include acquisition and processing, of materials, repacking of information, serving as centre for encouraging reading habits, expanding learning process and development of critical thinking Obviously provision of library for special needs will make them experience total lasting positive revolutionary transformation in all facet of our society.

Similarly, resource materials as observed by Akude and Anulobi (2014) are perfect communications that clarify concepts, knowledge and facilitate, understanding for learners. The fact is that instructional materials are self supporting and part of an instructional system which help to achieve the objective of instruction. It was even pointed out by Ike (2011) that, instructional materials are essential components of lesson used to make point clearer in the classroom environment. Akude (2011) added that instructional materials make lessons lively, interesting and boost pupils' morals as well as learning ability of the children.

To further boost, the importance of instructional material Ike, Iwu and Anulobi (2017) affirmed that lessons taught using instructional materials are for life and if related to pupils immediate environment will be appealing to children. So, lack of library and instructional in any school (both that of special needs and others) will affect academic performance of learners and effective teaching and learning process will be hindered.

Hence, the school library and instructional materials are seen as the heart of the school around which school programmes revolve as they provide opportunities for self directed learning and enquiry and sustainable development.

Challenges of Access to Library and Instructional Materials

The basic objectives of primary education in the National Policy of Education (FRN, -2013), is the inclusion of permanent literacy taken together with numeracy. Inculcation of permanent literacy is source from school library literacy materials in form off print and non print materials plus instructional materials. Indeed lack of access to these facilities is a big challenge to education.

Despite the fact that, right to access facilities, information, sources and services without any hindrance is one of the fundamental rights of everyone in the society. It is sad that most schools (primary, secondary and tertiary) cannot provide these services to their learner's especially special needs children. Some author's such as Okoli (2010) confirmed to this by stating that people with disability face instrumentable barrier in their quest for education. Balina (2014) even made it clear that people with disabilities mostly find it difficult to exploit physical materials such as resources in library or even operate gadgets that can give them electronic information via the internet. This is a big challenge to special needs children. Similarly, Somarina, Zimi, Lokteeva and Musholt (2015) outlined the challenges of library services to special need children in schools thus:

- ❖ Absent of infrastructure to house or keep the books donated by philanthropist, NGO's, and Government.
- ❖ Absence of free and convenient access to library and low competence of special needs pupils in modern technology usage because there is no experts to put them through Robert Crittenden & Crittenden (2011) also listed these challenges:
- ❖ Negative attitudes towards disabilities or lack of training of staff handling children in the field of disability.
- ❖ Inadequate knowledge of physical and mental capacities of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ Most of the curriculum used for special needs are adopted ones.

In addition, Oroka and Ndulaka (2018) equally elaborated on the problems against the performance of learners in library and instructional materials usage thus:

- ❖ Inadequate infrastructure: Many schools do not have library, because of lack of classrooms to display few available books, they may end up being eaten by termites in the store or head teacher's office.
- ❖ Inadequate human resources: Shortage of qualified staff to handle special needs children to guide them picks the right book of their choice.
- ❖ General low perception of library: Most learners and staff have low perception of library and instructional materials. They even lack knowledge of improvisation.

- ❖ Inadequate Funding: Lack of fund to purchase instructional materials or even books to display on library shelf. Also community and government where schools are situated have non-chalant attitude to this form of challenge which could escalate bigger problems later.
- ❖ Managerial Issues Lack of qualified staff to assist special needs pupils to access library resources. Also most furniture in some reading carrels a times are deemed not suitable but no staff to guide new productions.

Despite that, special needs children at the foundation level need accessory architectural structure and equipment such as automatic doors to facilitate easy entry to library, braille equipment, sign language interpreters. Lack of all these serve as hindrance to successful learning delivery.

With all the aforementioned to make persons with special needs formidable in our nation, there is need to provide learners at the initial stage with necessary and useful information which are obtainable through different library services and use of instructionable materials that match each group of disabilities.

If provided, persons with special needs will be able to contribute their quota to their nation which will help to realize sustainable development in the country.

Providing Library Services and Instructional Materials to the Special Needs

Providing information in form of library services and instructional materials for less privileged people with a view of making them better, useful and productive in the society is mandatory if sustainable development is to be realized in the shortest possible period at the foundation level.

Babalola & Babalola (2004), buttressed this when they said that neglecting the special needs is capable of plunging the nation back into the dark era, retrogression, poverty and misery. To achieve sustainable development therefore:

Babalola (2007) recommended the provision of the following media for teaching special needs at any level:

- ❖ Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI): One need to search and get specific information that matches needs of the special group and carefully select such information to meet the anticipated target (goal). For instance, to teach the special needs such as persons with hearing impairment how to sew, select materials that match sewing in details with a view to make them to become experts, master and mistress

- ❖ Using Audio-visual (AV) or the new media to provide library camp enlightenment services to the persons with special needs. Also specialists in the field of special needs education need to use their experiences and skills to teach those learners.
- ❖ Exposing special needs learners to use of computer and its associated gadgets. Look for experts to teach special needs how to send fax and e-mail address messages, browse the internet and get a lot of things done with rapidity and much ease through computer usage.
- ❖ Equipping public schools especially primary with special academic library with materials and gadgets that are fascinating to special needs with giant prints (character). Likewise, supply them with real and audio-visual materials
- ❖ Current Awareness Services: Current awareness services can be given with projectable and non-projectable media to persons with special needs in school. The projectable required the use of screen and projector, small images are magnified and screened by the projector 6mm or 8mm film projector, overhead projector (OHP) slide projector etc. Non-projectable media do not require screen of projectors, examples are cameras, all electronically operated media, radio, television, video etc.
- ❖ Accessibility of Web: it offers the possibility of unprecedented access to information and interaction to person with disability. Barrier Break Technology (2012) asserted to this by providing access to resources through screen reader and screen magnification support alternate format services, accessible website and digital library.

Furthermore, Ezeani, Esther, Ukwonna and Jacon Igwe (2017) in *Researches Constructed on Media Model for special needs in Nigeria* May 17 outlined the following as access to information to ensure the achievement of sustainable development goals by special needs learner's.

- ❖ Providing learners with Braille Collection, Braille Embossers and refreshable Braille display.
- ❖ Providing persons with special needs with photocopying, scanning facilities, located signage and way finding system.
- ❖ Providing teachers with adaptive and assistive technologies like recorders, video and chats, screen reader and magnifiers.
- ❖ Provide special needs learners with closed captioned film materials and large print collection.
- ❖ Delivery of books to home of special needs clients. Similarly Ikpeazu and Onwuana (2003) emphasized that for effective education of persons with hearing impairment there is need for provision of adequate instructional materials such as hearing aids, mirrors and charts showing demonstrations of mouth and tongue position.

It was further pointed out that early introduction of hearing aids will enable persons with hearing impaired acquire basic communication skill, Barsness & Eric (2015) advocated that employing instructional materials for teaching people with visual and mental impairment in schools will make lessons interesting and understandable to them. Though most of these equipment can not be affordable by the public primary school but teachers, governments, NGO's and philanthropists can come to learners aid.

Learning Disabilities Association of American (2015) also upheld their views that activities for special needs teamers would be made activity oriented using viable, colorful and problem solving instructional materials. This is because youths with learning disabilities have inherent difficulty in learning abstract terms and concepts hence books and tapes are important in teaching them.

Hence, sustainable development can be achieved through collective efforts of parents, teachers and government.

Also researchers like Azubike & Ibe (2017), in their researches listed the following instructional materials for teaching which most schools lack in their study, objects and their names, charts, musical instruments, mode, movable alphabets, picture, cutting ratio, tape recorder, telephone (GSM), television, computer simulation etc. it was concluded that lack of the essential materials will deprive the pupils adequate knowledge and lack of improvisation will make teaching less effective not only to normal pupils but particularly to special needs children.

Result of another study conducted on use of instructional resources for teaching special needs children in Abia State by Kanno & Onyechua (2018), revealed that out of 20 instructional resources expected to be in special needs education classrooms, eight were available representing 40%. Finding revealed that pupils taught with instructional materials learn better than those taught without instructional materials. Teacher also confirmed that pupils taught using sign language performed better than those taught in integrated classrooms where special needs children are taught together with vocalized words without instructional materials. This is clearly due to the provision of all these services to the special needs which enabled them become capable enough to make contribution to the society.

Way Forward

Based on all the challenges identified in the body of the paper, the following were suggested as the way forward for sustainable development to be achieved in schools especially primary schools.

- ❖ The government should ensure library stay accessible to the special needs because they are twice as likely to live in a low income household as a non “disabled person”.
- ❖ Create an avenue for library services for special needs children to read up about their conditions, explore treatment options, apply for jobs, and gain from any government benefit. They should be entitled to all these free.
- ❖ School library programme should be incorporated into teacher training programmes courses.
- ❖ Qualified staffs who are specialist in special education, skillful and compassionate should be employed to handled these special needs children in school, they should also be sent on regular workshop and confirmer to update their knowledge in use of library.
- ❖ School training centres, information centres and libraries should be equipped with relevant gadgets, tools and equipment that can be used in teaching the special needs, for example, Braille for the persons with visual impairment and sign language interpreters for the persons with hearing impairment all should be adequately supplied.
- ❖ Government should encourage rural librarianship: Rural librarianship will be able to go to the community to minister to the special needs with diverse disabilities in their localities.
- ❖ The special needs should be given encouragement to come for training through scholarship, full free training etc this will gear them up and make them useful member of the society and make them contribute their quota to the development of the society.
- ❖ The government should provide funds to schools for purchasing facilities and needed services for school children.
- ❖ Every school with special needs learners need resource room where instructional materials should be kept.

For Sustainable development to be achieved all the aforementioned need to be gives priority.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned discussion the following inferences were reached.

- Provision of adequate, current and special library services and resources centres for persons with disabilities will go a long way to accentuate the much sustainable development in Nigeria.
- The school library has been seen as needful and potent tools for achievement of the objectives of primary education and intellectual development.
- Use of library and instructional materials are among the instructional components that contribute to good standard and quality education. Any negligence in the

provision and utilization of these services to the special needs in school will mean failing to achieve sustainable development.

- Conclusively the special needs in this context needs to be given special attention as their negligence will serve as hindrance to sustainable development.

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