

## A Survey of Libraries in Gombe State

By

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### Abstract

The paper discuss the importance of libraries to the development of Gombe State. It examines ministries, parastatals, organizations, schools companies, etc in Gombe State to determine which ones have libraries. The paper went further to assess the status of libraries present in these various organizations with a view of determining the adequacy or otherwise of their resources and services. The study reveals that very few establishments and schools have libraries. Suggestions were made that state government should provide funds for organizations to establish libraries and upgrade the existing ones. Librarians were also advised to assist in drawing the attention of the government to the development of the library sectors.

### Introduction

A library is where all types of information resources are acquired, processed, preserved and disseminated for users. Wikipedia (2009) defines a library as "collection of information, resources and services, and the structure in which it is housed. It is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution or a private individual". With the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) libraries are being regarded as places to get unrestricted access to information in various format.

Libraries have emerged since 20th century as places to keep legal, business, religious, historical records, etc. Libraries play pivotal role in the development of any progressive nation. As knowledge becomes an increasingly important factor in production it becomes vital that its acquisition and dissemination is beneficial to the society. In modern societies libraries are particularly important as means of ensuring that citizens have access to knowledge and culture.

### Functions of Libraries

Harrlty (2009) listed some benefits of libraries as providing :

- i. Access to knowledge to improve lives and livelihoods
- ii. Route to self development - independent critical thinking
- iii. Awareness of democratic rights
- iv. Reinforcing cultural identity, etc.

Along this line, CaROIS (2009) in their green paper pointed out that one of the fundamental functions of a library (public) is to provide "indispensable basic knowledge for active citizenship, rendering it accessible for all, irrespective of place of residence, educational background or social status, whereas this helps to create a democratic, open and transparent information society". Similarly, Oketunji (2000) discussed some roles for the library and information centers as:

- i. Provision of materials and services most appropriate and most meaningful to the organization/community.
- ii. Stimulation and guidance of staff of the organization/institution in all places of their reading so that they may find increased enjoyment and satisfaction and may grow in critical judgment and *appreciation*

The National Policy on Education (2004), provided evidence of the importance of libraries, as stated under the education service section as follows:

- i. Since libraries constitute one of the most important educational services, proprietors of schools shall also provide libraries in all their educational institutions in accordance with the established standards
- ii. States and local governments shall establish public libraries and actively promote readership in the use of authority.

### Types of Libraries

There are different types of libraries. They are divided into categories by organizations that support them, such as academic libraries which are found in higher institutions such as Universities, Colleges of Educations, Polytechnics etc, they serve students and staff of the institutions; government libraries which are found in ministries, parastatals etc; public libraries are found in states and local governments, they provide services to the general public; school libraries are found in primary and secondary schools, they serve teachers and pupils of the schools; special libraries are found in hospitals, banks, etc.

### Gombe State

Gombe State was created in October 1996 from Old Bauchi State. It is made up of 11 focal governments, with a total population of 2, 448,236 Wikipedia (2009). It has about 386 secondary schools, 8 higher institutions, 18 state ministries, 32 state organizations and parastatals, 49 Federal

parastatals, 16 banks, 9 development partners, 2 companies and many hospitals, Ministry of Information (2009). In the past 5 years, Gombe State has witnessed a lot of changes. Sebare (2008) pointed out that "the state became a beehive of various development activities and initiatives that are transforming not only the physical structures and vital infrastructures but also the socioeconomic institutions of the states". He further listed the developments as: construction of roads, airport; hospitals were built, renovated and equipped; provision of clean water; establishment of State University and School of Nursing and the rehabilitation of existing ones and the *total* commitment of the State Governor, "to deliver urban and rural development through the provision of basic amenities".

#### **Library Development in Gombe State**

Attempt to develop and establish libraries in Gombe State started when Gombe State library Board was formed after the creation of the state. The functions of the Board as stated in Gombe State library board law are:

- i. Provide and maintain efficient library service for the public in the state
- ii. Establish, equip and maintain the state library in the state capital and where possible open more branches in the state
- iii. To staff and supervise primary and post primary school libraries in the state
- iv. Supervise and help organize library services in ministries and departments in the state.

From the above statement of good intent, it can clearly be seen that the Gombe State Library Board is not restricted to the provision of library services to the public at the state headquarters and Local Government levels alone. But its mandate also covers the provision of library services to primary and post primary schools as well as ministries and parastatals in the state.

Whilst acknowledging the extent to which Gombe State is developing and the structural changes in the State, it is very important to investigate the level of library development in the state. In IS because library has since been recognized as agent of development. More so we are in an information age and the changes in the state are demanding that the government should begin to synchronize information and knowledge to make Gombe State citizens information literate so that they can contribute, appreciate and be carried along in the wave of the development of the state. The contributions libraries and information centers can make to the key societal challenges cannot be

overemphasized. An evolving societal like Gombe State has so much to benefit from libraries, as libraries are valuable throughout one's life.

Therefore it is against this background that this paper set out to investigate the presence or otherwise of libraries in various organizations and institutions in Gombe State. The paper also tries to assess these libraries in terms of adequacy of staff, resources, infrastructure and facilities.

By the mandate given to the Gombe State Library Board, it is expected that libraries are established in all the above mentioned places. It is also expected though not as a mandate, that there are libraries in all the higher institutions in the state. The Federal Government parastatals, as well as the private sectors, such as banks also deserved the presence of libraries.

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#### **Methodology**

The methodology adopted for this paper is survey method. Survey method is defined by Somekh (2005) as a "form of research which seeks information from a large number of people by means of questionnaire". Using this method all organizations and institutions in Gombe State were surveyed in order to collect the data for the study. In order to obtain the population for the study a list of ministries, parastatals, organizations, banks, companies was collected from the State Ministry of Information, the State Ministry of Education provided the list of Schools and libraries, while State University Basic Education Board, Gombe (SUBEB) provided the list of junior secondary schools.

Personal visits were made to all the establishments and institutions in the state to find out if they have libraries and assessment were conducted on those libraries found. The observations centered around physical inspection of the library buildings, facilities and other infrastructures. While assessment was conducted on the library resources, organizations, staffing, etc. Interviews were also conducted with some heads of the organizations and schools.

**Findings and Discussions**

This section seeks to discuss the data collected through personal observation and assessment made on the various establishment and institutions visited in the whole state. Table 1, 2 & 3 below show those organizations and institutions that have libraries.

Table 1: List of State Ministries

S/No	Ministries	Libraries
1	Ministry of Agriculture	
2	Ministry of Works	X
3	Ministry of Education	
4	Ministry of Health	
5	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	X
6	Ministry of Sports and Culture	X
7	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	X
8	Ministry of Youth and Student's Affairs	X
9	Ministry of Water Resources & Environmental & Town Planning	X
10	Ministry of Rural Development.	X
11	Ministry of Cooperatives & Community Development	X
12	Ministry of Information	X
13	Ministry of Land & Survey	X
14	Ministry of Housing & Transport	X
15	Ministry of Commerce & Tourism Development	X
16	Ministry of Higher Education & Special Duties	X
17	Ministry of Justice	
18	Ministry of Local Government	X

= Available X = Not Available

Table 2: Federal parastatals

SIN	Federal Parastatals	Library Status
1	Nigerian Army	
2	Nigerian police State Command	X
3	Nigerian Prisons	X
4	Nigerian Immigration Service	X
5	Federal Medical Centre	
6	Nigerian Security & Civil Defense Corp	
7	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency	X

8	Federal Road Safety	X
9	NITEL	X
10	National Orientation Agency	X
11	Nigerian Television Authority	
12	Power Holding Company Nigeria (PHCN)	X
13	NIPOST	X
14	Federal Pay Office	X
16	Federal Office of the Auditor General	X
16	Nigerian Social insurance Trust Fund	X
17	State Vat office	X
18	NYSC	X
19	Federal Ministry of Housing	X
20	Federal Ministry of Work	X
21	National Teacher Institute (NTI)	X
22	Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria	X
23	Public Complain Commission	X
24	NAFDAC	X
25	Code of Conduct Bureau	X
26	National Population Commission	X
27	Department of National Civil Registration	X
28	Federal Information Centre	X
29	Federal Mines Office	X
30	Gombe Prison	X
31	Federal Character Commission	
32	INEC	X
33	Department of Petroleum Resource	X
34	NNPC	
35	Corporate Affairs Commission	X
36	Raw Materials & Development Council	X
37	NECO	X
38	JAMB	X
39	WAEC	X
40	Nigerian Agriculture Insurance Commission	X
41	Nigerian Health Insurance Scheme	X
42	Federal High Court	X

43	National Poverty Eradication Program( NAPEP)	X
44	State Security Service (SSS)	

= Available X = Not Available

**Table 3 : State Organizations and parastatals**

S/No	State Organizations and Parastatals	Library Status
1	Civil Services Commission	X
2	State Universal Basic Education Board	X
3	Gombe State Independent Electoral Commission	X
4	Gombe state Agriculture Development programme	X
5	Printing & Publishing Company	X
6	Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board	X
7	Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board	X
8	Gombe State Water Board	X
9	State Auditor General Office	X
10	Local Government Auditor General's Office	X
11	State Accountant General Office (Treasury)	.. J
12	Local Government Pension Board	X
13	Local Government Service Commission	X
14	State Library Board	.. J
15	Gombe State Transport service	X
16	Gombe United Foot ball Club	X
17	Central Stores Organization	X

18	State Scholarship Board	X
19	Gombe State Investment & Property Development Company	X
20	State Fire Service	X
21	Judicial Service Commission	X
22	Adult & Non Formal Education Agency	X
23	Education Resource Centre	v
24	Urban Development Board	X
25	Board of Internal Revenue Service	X
26	Budget and Planning Bureau	X
27	State Fadama 11 Office	X
28	State Pension Board	X
29	State Emergency Board	X
30	Gombe Media Corporation	
31	House of Assembly	
32	State Survey-General's Office	X
33	High Courts	X
34	Magistrate Courts	X
35	Sharia Court of Appeal	X
36	Government House	X

= Available X = Not Available

From Table 1 above, it can clearly be seen that out of the 18 ministries in the state only 4(22%) have libraries. It is sad to note that even Government House, Ministries of Information and Higher Education do not have libraries. Similarly as can be seen in Table 3 above, out of the 44 Federal the picture is the same. Out of 36 of these organization 5(14%) are with libraries. It is surprising to note that even the SUBEB does not have a library. The so called libraries have only few books one of them has newspapers in addition to the few books. There is no doubt that information is a vital resource to the survival of any organization because they need information especially on similar organization in different parts of the world. It is in line with that, that Oketunji (2003) urged that "the extent to which an organization, institution or government will be creative, informed or knowledgeable will be shaped by the boundaries of the contents of its library or information centre.

### Secondary School Libraries

There are about 386 secondary schools in Gombe State, of which, 302 of them are public schools, 47 community schools, 35 private schools, and 2 federal schools. Of there 386 schools, with enrolment of about 138,000 pupils, only 30(0.78%) schools have libraries

### Public Libraries

There are only six public libraries in the whole of Gombe State, it can be deduced that public library development's equally neglected despite the fact that public libraries are the only type of libraries that provide wide range of services of local interests for the community and for all ages. Interview with the Library Board management. revealed that though they are given the mandate of establishing public libraries, they do not receive funds for that. They went further to state that the Board had to stop providing services they were rendering the community such as mobile library services, outreach services and readership campaign programme because of limited funding.

### Academic Higher Institution Libraries

Table 5 shows that there are 9 higher institutions. Only 2 do not have library. All the libraries are of good standard. The finding IS not surprising because no higher institution can excel or be accredited without a standard library.

parastatals in the state **only 7(16%) have libraries.** With regards to other organizations and parastatals in the state,

Table 4: Presence of Libraries at Local Governments

S/No	Local Government Area	Library Status	Location
1	Akko	X	X
2	Balanga	X	X
3	Billiri		Billiri
4	Dukku		Dukku
5	Funakaye		Bajoga
6	Gombe		Gombe
7	Kwami	X	X
8	Nafada	X	X
9	Shongom	X	X
10	Yamaltu Deba		Yamaltu Deba
11	Kaltungo		Kaltungo

Table 5: Higher Institutions

S/N	Higher Institutions	Library Availability
1	Gombe State University	
2	School of Nursing and Midwifery	
3	School of Health Technology Kaltungo	
4	CABS, Kumo	X
5	Federal College of Education	X
6	Federal College Horticulture	X
7	Open University	X
8	School of Agriculture, Kumo, Akko	

### Assessment of Libraries in Gombe State

It was discovered that out of the 30 secondary schools in the state that have libraries only few of them have shelves and text books in all the subjects taught in the schools. The text books are duplications of **what the** pupils have. The library buildings are too small, dilapidated and without ventilation. None of the libraries has a catalogue cabinet nor use any form of classification system. Text books were arranged according to the taught subjects. The implication of this finding is that most of the students that finish from such schools may not enjoy the benefit of libraries and may also find it difficult to use higher institutions libraries if they gain admission into them.

The libraries in the organizations are also too small with few books. Most of the libraries do not subscribe to newspapers and magazines. The only library that has newspapers is that of Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. This means that users are denied of current information

The heads of most of these organizations are not professional librarians. They neither have diploma certificates or degree in library and information Science. Interviews with the heads of the schools and the organizations also revealed that funding is their major problem. A similar study by Etim (2004) revealed that "lack of funds is often stressed as a major handicap in achieving the required goal especially in public schools

### Conclusions Remarks

From the findings above, it is necessary that:

1. State government should incorporate libraries in their plans, programmes and budgets, so that more libraries can be established and upgrade the few existing ones.
2. Public libraries should be supported to reintroduce mobile library services and other services to enable the libraries play active role in providing access to information in all formats to the community
3. There is need for the few public libraries and school libraries in the state to purchase basic and relevant information materials such as books, pamphlets, newspapers, and materials in local languages for their libraries
4. Some organizations such as Ministries of Information, Education and JAM B that produces publications should be mandated to establish a library and forward such

publications to their libraries so as to be indexed catalogued and make it accessible to others

5. Librarians, through NLA should work together strenuously and draw the government's attention to the library sector in the state. They should appeal to the government through the media to improve services of the existing libraries and establish more Libraries

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