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LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

by:

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ABSTRACT

This is a situation report on the state of library development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The survey discovers that much as there are prospects for library development in the form of an enabling edict and supporting government policies, the implementation of projects to actualize the development of libraries is still a setback. Librarians are advised to be more pro-active and dynamic to draw government attention to the library sector.

INTRODUCTION

Akwa Ibom State was created on September 23, 1987 by the government of President Ibrahim Babangida from the former Cross River State. With an area of 8,412 square kilometers it is located on latitude 4°32' and 5° 53' North and longitude 7° 25' and 8° 25 East. The state has a population of about 3 million. There are divisional libraries in the major cities of Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Eket and Etinan.

The winds of change that have swept across Akwa Ibom State since her creation in 1987 have accelerated considerably the pace of her library development. The emergence of new government ministries, agencies and parastatals, higher institutions of learning, multinational companies and specialized agencies in the state are of particular importance. In 1987, there were only few of these institutions but presently, their numbers have increased. Political development in the State has been accompanied by planned efforts aimed at economic and social development to raise living standards of citizens. The rapid expansion of education in the state and the role played by libraries are key factors in this process. In this paper, attempt shall be made to discuss library development in Akwa Ibom State under the following headings: Policy and Legislation, the Library Association, Library and Information Science Education, Types of libraries, and the contribution of libraries to the Akwa Ibom society.

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Libraries in Akwa Ibom State are established under the clear mandate of law, so framed as to ensure state-wide provision of library services. The term "legislation" denotes the action of making and giving of laws to a people in a

society. It entails the enactment of laws or the transformation of bills, which are draft laws into Acts through ratification by a legislative organ or assembly. The major purpose of law is to provide guidelines, establish a logical procedure and regulatory mechanisms for controlling the activities and behaviours of people in a given society. Laws are therefore to provide standards, reinforce accountability and ensure order in the operation of various systems and human activities.

The development of libraries in Akwa Ibom State has largely depended upon one legislative measure: the Akwa Ibom State library Board Edict, 1995. Under this measure, the State Library Board was mandated to ensure that libraries in the State should be of the highest standards. The Edict establishing the board is summarized as follows:

- (a) (i) There is hereby established a Board to be known as the Akwa Ibom State Library Board.
- (ii) The Board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal with power to sue and be sued in its corporate name and to own, hold and dispose of property movable or immovable.
- (b) (i) The Board should consist of the following:
 - (a) A part-time chairman
 - (b) One part-time member representing institutions of Higher learning in the state;
 - (c) One part-time member representing the book industry.
 - (d) A representative of the Ministry of Information not below the rank of principal information officer
 - (e) A representative of the Ministry of Education not below the rank of principal Education officer;
 - (f) The State Librarian;
 - (g) A representative of the Nigerian Bar Association, State branch.
- (ii) Except in the case of members under paragraph (d), (e) (f) of subject
- (i) of this section, members of the board shall be appointed by the state governor on recommendation of the commissioner for Education (Akwa Ibom State Library Board Edict, 1995).

FUNCTIONS OF AKWA IBOM STATE LIBRARY BOARD

Subject to the provisions of the Edict of 1995 establishing the library Board, the functions of the Board include establishing, control and maintaining:

- (a) The state Library;
- (b) The divisional and mobile libraries;
- (c) The book depot to purchase and sell books and other library materials;
- (d) Library services in all primary and post primary institutions in the state;
- (e) Library service in all ministries and department of government of the state.

Under these functions, the Edict state that the publishers of every book in the state shall within one month after publication, deliver to the state library at his own expenses, six copies, three which shall be deposited in the state library for permanent preservation and the others shall be sent to the National Library of Nigeria by the state librarian. The Edict also specifies if the department of the State Government or the Federal Government operating in the state publishes any printed matter, the officer in-charge of the publication should deliver to state library:

- (a) 32 copies if it is published by the department of state government; and
- (b) 10 copies if it is published by the department of the Federal Government.
- (3) The obligations imposed by sub-section (2) of this section are in addition to any similar to the Federal Government.
 - (i) The copies delivered in the State Library under sub-section (1) and (2) of this Edict shall be informed, in formal and content.
 - (ii) The publisher who fails to comply with the provision of sub-section (1) and (2) of this section shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not less than N3,000.00. In addition, the court convicting the offender shall order the publisher to deliver 6 copies of the books or 32 copies or 10 copies of the printed matter as the case may be or pay to the state library the value of these copies.

Under the Miscellaneous Previsions, the Edict places the State Librarian as the Chief Executive of the Board that shall carry out the execution of the policy guidelines as may be from time-to-time approved by the Board for day-to-day management of the affairs of the board, and perform such functions as the board may from time-to-time approve. This means, the Board should put in place policy guidelines, directives, evaluation, and procedures for monitoring of the operational activities of the library service in the state, which the actual implementation of this policy lays with the State Librarian. Thus, the Board functions as an advisory organ and a management for policy making on matters relating to library services in the state.

Table 1: Number of Admitted and Graduated Students, Uniuyo

Level of Study	Year	Students Admitted	Students Graduated
Diploma	1999/2000	10	8
	2000/2001	10	4
	2001/2002	6	
	2003/2004	30	
BLS	1999/2000	15	
	2000/2001	10	
	2001/2002	15	
	2003/2004	16	
MLS	1992/1993	3	2
	1993/1994	3	3
	1994/1995	8	8
	1995/1996	8	8
	1996/1997	5	5
	1997/1998	5	5
	1998/1999	4	4
	2000/2001	5	6
	2001/2002	3	
	2003/2004	11	
Ph.D	1999/2000	5	1
	2000/2001	4	
	2001/2002	5	
	2003/2004	5	

Table 2: Librarians in the University of Uyo

S/N	Designation	Circulation	Bus. Lib.	Law Lib.	Acquisition	Serial	Processing	Ref.	Govt. Doc.	Africana/ N. Essien	Ag. UI's Office
1.	University Librarian									1	
2.	Senior Librarian 1	1									
3.	Librarian II						1				
4.	Librarian I					2					
5.	Assistant Librarian				1					2	

Table 3: Staffing of other Libraries in the State

Name of Ministries/ Parastatals	Designations	No. of Professionals
Governors Office Library	Chief Library Assistants	1
	Library Assistants	2
	Office Assistant	2
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic	Polytechnic Librarian	1
	Chief Librarian	1
	Senior Librarian	1
	Librarian II	1
Akwa Ibom State Newspaper Corporation	Chief Librarian	1
	Senior Lib. Officers	2
Akwa Ibom State House of Deputy Assembly Library	Director of Library Services	1
	Lib. Officer/attendants	3
Akwa Ibom State Library Board	Director 1	1
	Deputy Director	2
	Assistant Director	1
	Chief Librarian	1
	Librarian 1	2
	Chief Library Officer	6
	Princ. Lib. Officer II	3
	Library Assistant	11
	Head Hall Porter	22
	Bindery Assistant	2
Library Assistant	2	
Akwa Ibom State College of Agriculture	Chief Librarian	1
	Prin. Lib. officer	2
	Library Assistants	7
	Library Attendant	1

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Governors Office Library	Chief Library Assistants	1
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Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic	Polytechnic Librarian	1
	Chief Librarian	1
	Senior Librarian	1
	Librarian II	1
Akwa Ibom State Newspaper Corporation	Chief Librarian	1
	Senior Lib. Officers	2
Akwa Ibom State House of Deputy Assembly Library	Director of Library Services	1
	Lib. Officer/attendants	3
Akwa Ibom State Library Board	Director 1	1
	Deputy Director	2
	Assistant Director	1
	Chief Librarian	1
	Librarian 1	2
	Chief Library Officer	6
	Prin. Lib. Officer II	3
	Library Assistant	11
	Head Hall Porter	22
	Bindery Assistant	2
	Library Assistant	2
Akwa Ibom State College of Agriculture	Chief Librarian	1
	Prin. Lib. Officer	2
	Library Assistants	7
	Library Attendant	1

(a) Seminars and Workshops:

The NLA - Akwa Ibom state has introduced workshops, seminars and conferences to enlighten members and keep them abreast of the latest development in the field of Library and Information Science. These programmes provide a

forum for training and retraining of members to become more efficient staff in their various places of work. Workshops provide a continuing education which enables them to face today's challenges in the library market thereby adding support to improve the obvious inadequate preparation of librarians in the past to face the demands of today's information work. Fafunwa (1992) had called for this when he noted that some librarians fresh from library schools today cannot immediately be an asset to the profession but rather have to be retrained to be able to function in a modern library environment.

(b) Monthly/Annual General Meetings:

The meetings of NLA - Akwa Ibom serve as forum for getting acquainted with fellow members and also for sharing ideas and information that can help in the overall well being of the association and its members. Comments and reactions from such meetings give clues on issues and help to monitor the libraries services carried out by different types of libraries in the state. This type of programme gives the association ideas on how much the NLA has contributed to the development of the state or individual member where applicable. Properly reported problematic situations between NLA members and parent institutions allows the executives to wade into difficult cases. Nnaji (1986) had supported this when he affirmed that NLA meetings are for members to exchange ideas affecting their work thereby buying ideas that will help them to improve on their ability, potentials and eventually their work.

(c) Display/Exhibition:

Exhibition is essentially the act of advertising and promoting the services of the library to the society or community it serve (Usanga, 2004). Display/exhibition are educational in orientation and NLA. Akwa Ibom state uses these programmes to create awareness in the newest techniques and skills of library profession for the benefit of her members. It is also a forum that brings members together to refresh their minds on topical themes, which the exhibitions and display may decide to deal on. It helps NLA to enlighten and empower her members in different spheres of life.

(d) Readership Promotion in Schools:

As part of its contribution to improve the standard of education, the state chapter of NLA introduced a "Readership promotion programmes". The aim of this programme is to awaken the reading culture, which is no more available in our schools. NLA Akwa Ibom State with the help of the above programmes has laid a library professional foundation for its members. With these programmes, the state NLA is beginning to intensively sensitize library personnel on the need for professional education, training and

retraining for appropriate skill acquisition, especially in the new information society characterized by:-

- a. A network of information organization which uses information as its associated technologies to increase efficiency, stimulate innovation and increase competitiveness.
- b. An effective information sector that will satisfy the demand for information services arising within the society.
- c. A widespread and high level use of information among the generality of the people
- d. A permeable model of lifelong education.

LIBRARY EDUCATION

The first Library and Information Science School in Nigeria according to Edoke (2001) was established after a seminar held in 1953 by UNESCO on the development of public libraries in Africa. In Akwa Ibom State, the history of Library and Information Science Education is traced to the establishment of the Library School at the University of Uyo. Library Studies in the University started in 1990 with the introduction of a course made compulsory for all Education students and was taught by Dr. Comfort M. Ekpo, now a Professor of Educational Technology. Then, there was no Library and Information Science; the course was incorporated into Educational Technology. In 1992, the Senate of the University of Uyo approved the upgrading of Educational Technology. In 1992, the Senate of the University of Uyo approved the upgrading of Educational Technology Unit to Department of Educational Technology and Library Science. Dr. Felicia E. Etim, an Associate Professor of Library and Information Science was transferred from the University Library to the newly upgraded department to start the Library and Information Science School (Enang. 2004). In 1992, the first sets of students for the MLS degree were admitted into the department. It started with three (3) students. As the years rolled by, there was a great yearn for the programme at the undergraduate level. The bachelor's degree programme started in 1999 with 15 students who are now in their graduating class 2004/2005 session, (Enang, 2004). In 2001, Professor M. Afolabi of ABU, Zaria joined the team.

In order to help the teaching staff of the department and others that are close to the state, the Doctor of philosophy programme in library and information science with specialization in library Science, Information Science, Archival Science and Publishing was mounted. The programme started with 5 students. In the year 1999, a two-year diploma programme started under the umbrella of University of Uyo School of Continuing Education Consultancy. One of the aims of this programme is to help train Akwa Ibom indigenes who cannot afford to travel

to distant places for this qualification. The library school also runs a sandwich degree programme in library and information science. Its duration is five long vacations through the school of continuing education.

The establishment of library and information science school in the University of Uyo has witnessed a tremendous change in the attitude of people towards the course. For instance, the diploma programme intake for 2003/2004 had 30 students and the Bachelors programme had the intake of 16 students, while the Master degree programme was at the third position with 11 students (Enang 2004). There is much yearning from Students to be enrolled into the Ph.D. programme but unfortunately the department has a quota for the intake of Students each year for postgraduate programmes (Enang. 2004).

On the whole, the establishment of library and Information Science School is one of the great achievements of those who believed and saw the future of such Schools. The establishment of library school within Akwa Ibom State has gone a long way to help the State in the provision of improved Services to the library users. The programme educates the populace, train experts, and helps the library attendants, assistants and teacher - librarians to gain more skills in the field of librarianship and information management.

TYPES OF LIBRARIES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

There are different types of libraries. In Akwa Ibom State, five types of libraries exist to serve the needs of different people. These libraries include: School, Public, Government, Academic and Special Libraries. The materials of each of these Libraries are selected to meet the needs of a specific group of patrons. For instance, the Academic/Research Libraries maintain large collections of detailed research materials for advanced students and scholars. The School libraries have collections that provide the basic information needed by elementary and Secondary School Students. Public Libraries tailor their collections to a broad cross section of the public. Special library collections are geared chiefly toward the provision of information for professional people, while Government libraries provide information to ministries and parastals. Each type of library mentioned is hereby discussed in detail.

(a) Academic/Research Libraries:

Academic/Research Libraries exist in institutions of higher Education. These are educational institutions available after Secondary education in Akwa Ibom State, these libraries are found in University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, College of Education, Afaha Nsit, College of Agriculture, Obio Akpa, Maritime Academic, Oron, and School of Remedial Students, Ikono. The direction and extent of functions rendered by these libraries are largely determined by the nature of the academic programmes of each institution.

(b) School Libraries:

School Libraries are libraries in primary and Secondary Schools. This type of libraries focus on the age and grade Levels at the School, and they serve the Students and faculty members. Such libraries exist to provide information resources required for the School education programmes and to help in the learning of the school subjects. School libraries are also expected to improve and increase the reading skills and learning habits of Students. However, it must be stated here that in Akwa Ibom State, there are very few School libraries. The informations in those that exist are very scanty. Lack of funds is often stressed as the major handicap in achieving the required goal, especially in public Schools.

Table 4: Primary Schools with Libraries

Local Government Area	No. of School	Number of Schools with Libraries	Percentage
ABAK	46	10	20
ESTERN OBOLO	10	2	27.8
EKET	29	8	20
ESIT EKET	15	15	27.7
ESSIEN UDIM	54	7	17.9
ETIM EKPO	39	20	48.7
ETINAN	41	4	33.3
IBENO	12	12	100
IBESIKPO ASUTAN	50	14	24.1
IBIONO IBOM	58	10	16.9
IKONO	59	12	35.2
IKA	18	5	27.7
IKOT ABASI	34	12	35.3
IKOT EKPENE	34	12	35.3
INI	44	12	27.2
ITU	37	8	21.6
MBO	27	3	11.1
MKAT ENIN	48	11	22.9
NSIT ATAI	23	3	13.04
NSIT IBOM	31	9	29.03
NSIT UBIUM	38	10	26.3
OBOT AKARA	35	11	31.4
OKOBO	29	5	17.2
ONNA	29	3	23.07
ORON	13	3	28.9
ORUK ANAM	69	20	20
UDUNG UKO	10	2	32.3
UKANAFUN	62	20	40
URUAN	10	4	14.3
URUE OFFONG	21	3	14.3
UYO	47	25	53.19

(c) Special Libraries:

These libraries belong to particular establishments such as; research institutes, Banks, professional bodies and Multinational Companies. In Akwa Ibom State, such libraries include: Mobil Eket, and International Management and finance institute libraries (Etim, 2004). Each special library is maintained by its parent body and it provides information resources and services which are of direct relevance to the interests and activities of that body.

Table 5: Private Companies with Special Libraries

S/N	Companies	Library Status
1.	Mobil Technical School	√
2.	Exxon Mobil Production Nigeria Unltd	√
3.	Aluminum Smelter Company Nigeria	√
	Institutions	Library Status
4.	School of Health Technology - Etinam	√
5.	School of Nursing - Anua	√
6.	School of Nursing - Eket	√

(d) Public Libraries:

Public libraries are those libraries that serve everyone in the community. Public library is the avenue through which the overall information resources are made freely available to all. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religious, nationality, language or social status. By it's nature, public library is a general library and is expected to have the resources needed to satisfy the information needs of the various interests and groups in the community. In Akwa Ibom State, these libraries are available at Uyo, Ikot Ekpen, Etinam, Eket and Abak.

(e) Government Libraries:

These are libraries established and owned by government ministries, agencies, boards, commissions and parastatals. Government officials in the formulation and implementation of public policies use their collections. Examples of government libraries in the state include: the Governor's Office, House of Assembly, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education Libraries.

Table 6: Government Libraries

S/N	Ministerial Department	Library Status
1.	Akwa Ibom State Agriculture Development Project (AKADEP)	√
2.	Akwa Ibom State Broadcasting Corporation (AKBC)	√
3.	Akwa Ibom State Transport Corporation Limited (AKTC)	*
4.	Akwa Ibom State Investment and Industrial Council	*
5.	Akwa Ibom State Newspaper Corporation (PIONEER)	√
6.	Budget Office	*
7.	Champion Breweries Limited (BREWERIES)	*
8.	Civil Service Commission	*
9.	Fire Service Department	*
10.	Government Printing Press	*
11.	Internal Revenue Service Commission	*
12.	Judiciary Department	√
13.	Local Government Service Commission	*
14.	Law Reform Commission	*
15.	Officer of the Auditor General	*
16.	Officer of the Accountant General	*
17.	Officer of the Local Government Auditor	*
18.	Public Complaints Commission	*
19.	Sports Council	*
20.	State Secondary Education Board (SSEB)	*
21.	State Primary Education Board (SPEB)	*
22.	Sub-Treasury Headquarters	*
23.	Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly	√
24.	Ethical and Attitudinal Reorientation Commission (EARCOM)	√
25.	Peacock Paints	*
26.	Pamil Industries Limited	*
27.	Office of the Executive Governor	√

S/N	Ministries/Bureau	Library Status
1.	Ministry of Education	√
2.	Ministry of Justice	√
3.	Ministry of Economic Planning	√
4.	Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resource	*
5.	Ministry of Works & Transport	*
6.	Ministry of Information & Culture	*
7.	Ministry of Lands & Housing	*
8.	Ministry of Rural Development	*
9.	Ministry of Youth & Sports	*
10.	Ministry of Industries, Commerce & Tourism	*
11.	Ministry Science & Technology	*
12.	Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Welfare	*
13.	Ministry of Health	*
14.	Ministry of Environment & Mineral Resources	*
15.	Law Reform Commission	*
16.	Judiciary	*
17.	Civil Service Commission	*
18.	Local Government Service Commission	*
19.	Ethical Reorientation Commission	*
20.	Aks Newspaper Cooperation	*
21.	Hospital Management Board	*
22.	Public Service Office	*
23.	Bureau of Corporate Affairs	√
24.	Bureau of Establishment/Labour Affairs	√
25.	Bureau of Legislative / Policies Affairs	√
26.	Public Services Office	√

N/B: * means no library; v means presence of library

ANY SILVER LINING

The major problem that hinders library development in the state is inadequate support from government. Government is yet to fully implement its programmes and projects for libraries. Libraries are memories of any society. When they are not given the needed support, it becomes impossible for them to

provide the necessary services. A visit to any public library in the state will reveal that most of their collections are out dated, and majority of what they have in stock reflect more of the colonial authors than modern and indigenous authors. Services in these libraries would have been better than what we have if all the library development projects earmarked by government are fully implemented. Therefore, the major task of the present library association and other professional bodies is to persuade the government to actualise its mandate by giving the library proper consideration and attention.

The present democratic government of the state has made library development a priority. This is evidenced in the listing of library projects in the Akwa Ibom State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (AK-SEEDS) viz: Purchase and supply of books and charts to schools, the construction of a central library at Uyo and the renovation of five divisional libraries. In addition, the state administration has recognized the present global economy as that intensely based on knowledge and has taken steps to put the "knowledge worker" at the very center of its system. According to Attach (2005) a state with a kind concentration of knowledge workers will succeed in attracting investments and knowledge companies.

The major objection of the information policy document 2004 is "to make Akwa Ibom State an information and communication Technology society where her citizens shall attain high literacy and for which IT shall be deployed as an instrument for economic development and for daily activities. The main focal point for the entire ICT initiative in the state is the establishment of the ST Park which will form the catalyst for the three key foundation building blocks of the processes namely:

- Human Resource development
- Establishment of Akwa soft and Akwa initiative
- Establishment of Akwa Net

Akwa Net is proposed to provide library and information facilities/internet services and local Area Networks linked across the thirty-one local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

When these become fully implemented opportunities for librarians and information scientist/managers, a truly information society would evolve as would be evidence in widespread diffusion of IT in offices, factories, education institution and home widespread information consciousness and a source of service, commodity and a source of added value and employment (Economic), citizens must see the freedom of information as leading to a political process characterized by increased participation and consensus. Information must be seen as valuable in the promotion of values in the interest of individual and national development. (cultural). Librarians in Akwa Ibom State must make themselves relevant to the

above enabling environment. They must seek to be a resourceful manpower for the change envisaged. They should be proactive and dynamic.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to throw light on the development of libraries in a modern society with particular reference to Akwa Ibom State. Special areas of interest in the discussion were: policy and legislation, the library association, library and information science education, types of library, and contribution of libraries to society. Finally, it is hereby suggested that if the State Government and other Stakeholders in the library and information sector will contribute their quota optimally to library development, libraries in the State, will provide the necessary firepower needed to gun down those factors impeding on technological growth and economic development.

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