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## Funding Of Public Libraries: Issues And Way Forward

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### ABSTRACT

This study looked at public library funding: problems and solutions. Four (4) distinct goals serve as the paper's compass. In addition to defining public libraries, the study contrasted them with other kinds of libraries. The topic of public library funding was also covered. Other funding options for public libraries were also discovered and discussed in the study. As a result, the study suggested that: In order to make it easier for the public to obtain information resources, public libraries should have sufficient funding. Information and communication technology proficiency should be a top priority for public library staff. Alternative methods of raising money for public libraries should be connected to the management of public libraries.

**Keywords:** Public Libraries, Concept of Funding, Issues and Way Forward for Public Libraries, Need for Funding Public Libraries, Alternative Funding for public Libraries,

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, public libraries have drastically decreased as a result of the nation's political and economic circumstances. The building's structure, upkeep, size, collection content, and general service delivery have all been impacted by the financial crises. As a result, the primary function of libraries today is to provide reading and study spaces for students, who occasionally use their own materials and do not consult library collections (Aisa, 2000). Public libraries are equipped with a variety of information resources covering a wide range of topic areas, which allows them to cater to the vast number of patrons that visit them on a daily basis. Public libraries welcome all types of patrons, but academic libraries restrict the kind of patrons they accept. According to Akanwa (2013), public libraries offer services, recreational opportunities, and information resources to the broader public, including the young, the elderly, the literate, and the illiterate. In a similar description, Aina (2004) points out that the public library is not limited to a certain user group, whereas other kinds of libraries are intended for particular user groups.

Nevertheless, given the services and demographics that public libraries serve, it is crucial to provide them with sufficient funding so that they can meet the information demands of various consumers. According to Akanwa (2004), the public's information demands, the acquisition of information resources, the provision of library services, the upkeep of infrastructure, and staff motivation are the reasons why public libraries require funding.

According to Anafulu (1991), finance is the foundation of any business, and the library is a prime example of an enterprise regardless of how we view it. Anafulu goes on to say that if the library is to fulfil the purpose for which it was created, it must acquire and process resources, hire staff, and buy and maintain equipment. Public libraries should receive sufficient funding in order to fulfil their role as the local gateway to knowledge. This is because public libraries must provide library services in order to serve the vast number of patrons who require their services. Every person should be able to identify their own information requirements, know where and how to obtain information, and understand how to use a variety of information resources to complete their possibilities in life. The purpose of public libraries is to promote information literacy. However, public libraries cannot achieve these noble goals without sufficient resources. In every institution, funding is crucial, but it's especially important for the public library, a nonprofit.

### The Study Objective

This study's main goal is to investigate public library funding, problems, and potential solutions. The particular goals are:

- (1) To determine if public libraries require funding
- (2) To determine alternate sources of funding for public libraries
- (3) To ascertain the goals of public libraries; and
- (4) To pinpoint problems and future directions for public libraries

Public libraries should be supported for a variety of reasons, some of which are as follows:

### Needs of Carter for the Information of the Public Library:

The broader population is served by public libraries. It should be adequately supported in accordance with the nature of its public service so that it can offer its clients satisfactory service. In support of this claim, Aina (2004) asserts that the public library is not limited to any particular user group, whereas the other kinds of libraries are intended for certain user groups.

**To acquire information resources:** - For its patrons to use them, public libraries need information resources. Any library, whether academic, special, or public, cannot be properly utilised by its patrons if it lacks a comprehensive collection of print and non-print materials. Because of this, public libraries have a significant impact on the lives of its patrons, but they need funding to buy books, audiovisual materials, and other information resources.

**To provide library services:** Users can now access library services from the comfort of their homes, making library services different from what they were in the past. using online resources such as Facebook, WhatsApp, email, and the website. For the public library to offer these services, sufficient financing is required.

**To maintain infrastructure:** Libraries' infrastructures require upkeep. Every establishment needs maintenance in order to avoid becoming dilapidated. Due to poor maintenance, many public libraries are currently in poor condition. Some libraries have extremely outdated and ugly print materials, which may even have an impact on how often these libraries are used.

**To enhance staff motivation:** A library with enough funding will motivate its employees, which will improve output. Lack of funds will prevent library employees from carrying out their responsibilities efficiently (Egbufor, 2004).

### **Substitute Finance for the Public Library: -**

Given the foregoing, it is now abundantly evident that public libraries must find alternative ways to sustain their operations as the government is unable to provide sufficient funds for them. They can accomplish this by generating money for the library's operations through churches, schools, and even social organisations. Employees of public libraries might create a journal and offer it for launch by gathering money. The development of a rural library, the acquisition and installation of new technology, information resources, and the remodelling or digitalisation of library assets might all be funded by this.

**Friends of the library:** A group of library enthusiasts may join an association called "Friend of the Library," which the public librarian may identify with by raising money to support the public library. This can be accomplished by holding book fairs, supporting library outreach initiatives, and organising fund-raising activities.

**Through advocacy the library can also raise money.** Public awareness campaigns to raise public knowledge of the services public libraries may provide can help achieve this. The following strategies can be used by library staff to help enhance the library's reputation: (a) public awareness programs designed to raise public awareness of the public library's services. According to Agosto (2008), raising awareness of the public library's services can be quite beneficial because people can occasionally volunteer to work there and contribute to its budget.

### **Private Donation**

More money comes from private donations than from any other source. The use of private donations to fund public libraries is not a recent development. In order for public libraries to meet the information demands of the various audiences they serve, it is crucial that they get sufficient funding. Personal donations have helped many public libraries around the world, including in the United States. In 1839, John Jacob Actor gave \$400,000 of his estate wealth to build a public library, making it the first major private donation. Andrew

Carnegie also provided funding for the construction of new libraries in 1,418 American localities between 1839 and 1999. (Sessa, 2003 and Seaway, 2003)

“Similarly, Mr. Emeka Offor, a native of Irefo Orafite in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State, has been assisting libraries through his foundation, which is in charge of giving money and information resources to public libraries, especially the public library system, which is one of the best in all of Nigeria.”

Government grants and business and foundation grants are the two categories of grants, according to Abdulrahim (2019). Government grants are money given by the government to a certain group to carry out a project. In certain instances, the government provides grants to public libraries so they can purchase information materials, create websites, purchase ICT devices, or carry out particular public awareness campaigns. In Nigeria, grants are difficult to obtain, particularly given the nation's current economic downturn.

The second type of donations are company and foundation grants, according to Abdulrahim (2019). One of the main alternative financing sources for public libraries is this prize, and it appears that corporate sponsorship of organizations—public libraries in particular is occasionally increasing.

This may be due to social media, the Internet, e-newspapers, magazines, and other technical developments that facilitate online communication. Public library directors should search for these addresses and links online and utilise them to secure funds for the libraries in order to profit from this. About 280,000,000 people on the African continent have benefited from the Global Libraries Initiative's partnership with public libraries, which has made funds accessible for library expansion. (Abdulrahim, 2019)

### **Concerns and Way Forward for Public Libraries; -**

Ngozi (2012). The Nigeria Library Association Abia State chapter's inaugural meeting covered some of the fundamental problems with public library operations. She claims that the usage of social media for networking and information exchange, together with the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT), have significantly altered the overall information handling process. She continued by saying that the development of information handling has forced public libraries to modify their resources and responsibilities, requiring them to learn new information technology skills in addition to more conventional library abilities. According to Titangos and Jan (2006), the library profession is at a turning point in the twenty-first century since conventional library services appear to be dwindling while new technology-based services are expanding.

The Future of Public Libraries Information handling in public libraries requires skill development, according to Singh and Pinki (2009). He argued that librarians should use various information technology abilities to provide services to patrons. A skill-based curriculum with greater opportunities for specialisation should be implemented in library and information science schools. A well-equipped computer lab and timely syllabus updates are necessary to keep up with the rapidly evolving technology landscape. Universities and

professional bodies should occasionally arrange short-term incentives for employees to improve their skills. Organising conferences, workshops, and seminars for professionals is another strategy. (Singh and Pinki, 2009)

## CONCLUSION

This essay has undoubtedly done a good job of explaining what a public library is for a deeper comprehension of the idea. Public libraries provide high-quality education for the benefit of all members of society without discrimination. Satisfactory funding for public libraries will contribute to the general enlightenment of society. All forms of information resources, including books, video resources, and electronic information resources, as well as recreational facilities, should be sufficiently provided in public libraries. It should connect the library with foreign donors and other interested parties who are able and ready to help, offering chances for lifelong learning and lowering the overwhelming number of school dropouts. In this era of computers, public libraries ought to be able to provide their patrons with cutting-edge technologies like social media, the internet, maker spaces, and all kinds of digital materials, particularly for kids. In order to make their materials easier to access online, public libraries should also digitise their information resources. The government should make every effort to provide public libraries with sufficient financing so they can carry out all of the admirable projects covered in this essay. Public library practices will be in line with international best practices if all of the suggestions and conclusions in this article are put into reality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions have been made:
- 2 Public libraries should get sufficient funding to enable the acquisition of information resources for public use.
- 3 Public library employees should have had extensive training in information and communication technology.
- 4 Alternative methods of raising money for public libraries should be connected with their management.

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