

PUBLIC LIBRARIES PARTICIPATION IN HIV/AIDS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines public libraries involvement in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in South West Nigeria. These include the materials and services available on HIV/AIDS and challenges to their participation in the war against the epidemic. The study revealed that public libraries in South West Nigeria are not participating in the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign owing to lack of information materials, lack of support from government and non-governmental agencies, financial constraint, and dearth of trained personnel. The study suggested adequate funding, support from government and non-governmental organizations and provision of adequate information materials on HIV/AIDS for the public libraries.

Introduction

"AIDS has killed more than 25 million people since it was first recognized in 1981, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. AIDS claimed 3.1 (2.8 – 3.6 million) lives in 2005; more than half a million (570,000) were children. About 40.3 million people are now living with HIV, close to five million people were newly infected with virus in 2005 (Go Between, 2006)".

As the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (2001) puts it HIV is the 'genocide of a generation'. It is also believed that the epidemic has claimed more lives than any war. Africa, the least developed and the poorest continent of the world recorded the highest number of people with HIV/AIDS (UNFPA Report, 2002).

Studies have shown that medical and clinical solution cannot produce the desired result without adequate education through provision of information in print and non print media for awareness creation and improved factual understanding that enhance behaviour change and overcome misconceptions. According to Bature (2005), AIDS has no cure. Information is the most potent weapon available in the war against HIV/AIDS epidemic. Libraries as traditional information providers have a key role to play in the dissemination of HIV/AIDS information. Libraries especially public libraries not only provide information materials and cater for information needs of the society, but also provide access to them through their various services. Because of their closeness and

nearness to the grass root, public libraries are in the best position to spearhead the education, awareness-raising and campaign against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In Nigeria the information sector is highly neglected and it is neither involved nor given the wherewithal to contribute to the war against the HIV / AIDS. The information sector is confronted with problems such as financial constraint, decay and obsolete infrastructure, inadequate trained manpower, outdated materials, just to mention a few. Most of these centers are nothing but glorified reading rooms without the necessary materials. This research investigated the participation of public libraries in the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in the South West Nigeria.

The objectives of this study were to:

- (1) Examine public libraries participation in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in South West Nigeria;
- (2) Examine availability of library materials on HIV/AIDS in public libraries in South West Nigeria;
- (3) Investigate the availability of the library services on HIV/AIDS public libraries in South West Nigeria;
- (4) Identify hindrances to public libraries participation in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in South West Nigeria;
- (5) Proffer solutions to problems confronting public libraries participation in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in South West Nigeria.

Literature Review

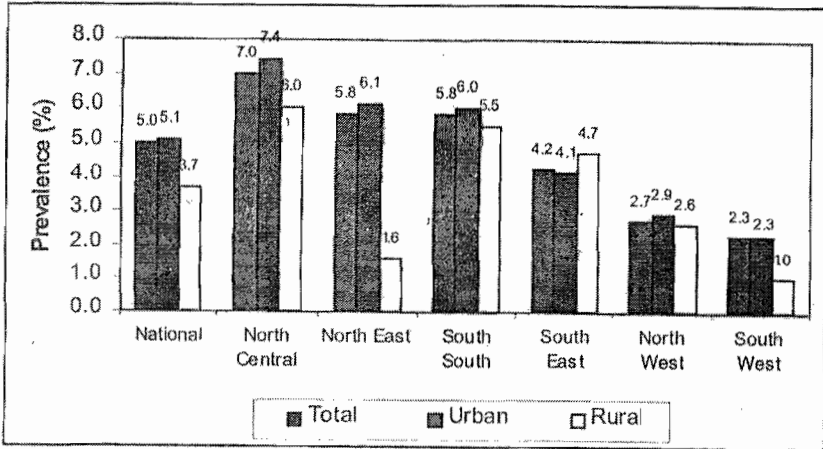
In June 1981, the Centre for Disease Control in United States of America reported the first 31 cases of patients with marked impairment of the cellular immune response, with a gross reduction of the T helper phenotype of peripheral blood lymphocytes (Miller et al, 1986). In Nigeria, the first official report of two AIDS cases to the Federal Government was made in 1986. In 1986 HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) was set up (National Millenium Development Goals Report, 2004). The campaign against HIV/AIDS reached its peak between 1998 and 1999 when national response to AIDS became an issue of national emergency that have to be confronted via multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach. By year 2001/2003 a Presidential Committee on AIDS (PCA), the highest decision making body on HIV/AIDS under the chairmanship of President Olusegun Obasanjo and National Action of AIDS was set up to improve response and multi-sectoral and

multi level participation. Presently, in Nigeria HIV/AIDS committees have been formed at various levels. These include Nation Action Committee on AIDS (NACA), State Action Committee on AIDS (SACA) and Local Action Committee on AIDS (LACA) by Federal, State and Local governments respectively.

HIV/AIDS is transmitted in a variety of ways which include sexual intercourse and transfusion of infected blood products in medical procedures (UNFPA, 2002). Non-sexual transmission occurs predominantly among new-born children. According to (UNFPA Report, 2002), 90 per cent of HIV/AIDS in sub Saharan Africa is transmitted sexually. Socio-cultural factors that contributed to spread of HIV/AIDS include: low literacy level; widespread unemployment and generalized poverty; and prostitution. Other factors are: patriarchy, multiple sex partners; inefficient health care system; limited use of condoms; lack of anti-retroviral drug; and stigmatization and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS.

According to the UNAIDS Executive Director (2005) about five million people were affected by HIV/AIDS world wide in 2005 alone bringing the total estimated to 40 million. The report also revealed that the disease claimed 3.1 million lives in 2005 more than half a million of them children. Sub Saharan Africa accounted for sixty four percent of the new infections taking the number of cases there to an estimated 28.5 million. In Nigeria Adult HIV prevalence increased from 1.8 percent to 5.8 per cent in 2001 and to 5 percent in 2003 (FMOH 2003). Research reports revealed that there is large regional difference in prevalence rates among the six geo-political zones, higher prevalence in the North Central, North East and South zones. The age group most affected includes 20-24 years old, followed by 25-29 years old in all the zones except the South West of the country where the highest prevalence is found among 40-49 years old (National Millennium Development Goals Report, 2004).

Figure 1: HIV Prevalence at the National level and by Geo-political Zone



Source: National HIV Zero-prevalence Sentinel Survey, Federal Ministry of Health (2003)

There are many factors militating against successful battle on HIV/AIDS in Africa, and Nigeria in particular. These constraints include the following: poor funding and lack of political will by political leaders. These are demonstrated by the existence of poor health infrastructure, health facilities in the primary and tertiary hospitals have become obsolete while new ones are not procured to replace the collapsed ones. Lack of trained personnel also constitutes an impediment to the eradication of HIV/AIDS for example between 1996 and 2001; the ratio of doctor to citizens in Nigeria was 1:4703 (NISER, 2003). Millennium development report (2004) also revealed that the commitment of most governors and local government chairmen to HIV/AIDS is very low and funds are hardly allocated to fight the epidemic. Over dependence on foreign sources of funding is another problem confronting the war against HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. Support for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and People Living with HIV/AIDS are predominantly from western countries with limited support from local sources including the government.

Inadequate information materials (print and non print) especially in local languages or dialects on HIV/AIDS is another problem confronting the war against the disease. For example whereas majority of the people are only literate in their local language little or no materials exist in the local languages. Stigmatization and discrimination of people living HIV/AIDS is also another problem.

Olayinka and Idogho (2005), observed this problem "as the case in most countries, fear, denial, stigma and discrimination have been the major factors fueling the epidemic in Nigeria." Level of knowledge of safe sex and HIV remain low in many countries even in countries where prevalence of the epidemic is high and growing. In 24 Sub-Saharan African countries two thirds of young women aged 15 – 24 years) lack comprehensive knowledge of the disease transmission (GO Between, 2006).

In the battle against HIV/AIDS epidemic libraries and librarians have an important role to play. Provision of rural library service can definitely meet the information needs of the villagers, especially on health related matters. Material like posters, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, filmstrips, video tape, radio and audio cassettes will enhance the work of rural librarians in meeting the demand of their clientele. This is because villagers will readily avail themselves of these facilities by listening to some of them being read to them by librarian when making reference and referral requests (Adewale, 2001).

Areas in which public libraries can participate in the campaign against the disease include:

- (1) Provision of reading materials both print and non print on HIV/AIDS to the populace to enhance awareness raising and behavior change.
- (2) Library display to enhance awareness and decrease misconceptions, stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.
- (3) Out-reach programmes like workshops, seminars and conference on the HIV/AIDS
- (4) Repackaging information to meet the information needs of the people on HIV/AIDS related disease.
- (5) Provision of library materials on HIV/AIDS in local languages or dialects because majority of the people are literate in their local language this is evident in people reading newspapers published in local language (Yoruba) e.g. Alaroye, Irohin Yoruba etc.

Methodology

Simple random sampling technique was used for this study. Data for the research was collected from public libraries of five out of the six states in the south west and a branch of National library of Nigeria. The five states were, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Oyo. A self-structured questionnaire, interview and documentary resources were used to collect data for the research from the sample public libraries.

Findings

Data in Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by library: Osun State library Board Osogbo had highest number of respondents, followed by Lagos State Library Board Ikeja, Simeon Adebo Library Abeokuta and Oyo State Library Board Ibadan.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Library

Library	Number of Respondents	
	Frequency	%
Lagos State Library Board, Ikeja, Lagos State	5	17.9%
Simeon Adebo Library, Abeokuta, Ogun State	5	17.9%
Ondo State Library Board, Akure, Ondo State	3	10.7%
Osun State Library Board, Osogbo, Osun State	6	21.4%
Oyo State Library Board, Ibadan, Oyo State	5	17.9%
National Library of Nigeria, Lagos	4	14.28%
TOTAL	28	100%

Results in Table 2 below reveals the major library clientele are civil servants (78.6%), students (71.4%), researchers/scientists (67.9%), artisans/traders/farmers (67.9%) and children (60.7%).

Table 2: Categories of Library Clientele

	Frequency	%
Civil servants	22	78.6
Students	20	71.4
Researchers/Scientists	19	67.9
Artisans/traders/farmers	16	67.9
Children	17	60.7
Handicaps	12	42.9

Likert scale of 4 point of highly available, available, moderately available and not available was used to measure the library materials that are available in the sample public libraries. Results in Table 3 shows that materials on HIV/AIDS are not available in public libraries in South Western Nigeria, library materials that showed some level of availability are: reference materials which had 7 (25%) highly available, 8 (28.5%) respondents available, 6 (21.4%) moderately available, 5 (17.9%) not available and 2 (7.1%) no response. Books had 5 (17.9%) highly available, 2 (7.1%) available, 7 (25.0%) not available and 9 (32.1%) no response. Serial publications had 3 (10.7%) highly available, 14 (50%) available, 6 (21.4%) moderately available, 3 (10%) not available 2 (7.1%) no response. Grey literature had 1 (3.6%) highly available, 4 (14.5%) available, 8 (28.6%) moderately available, 13 (46.4%) not available and 2 (7.1%) no response. Other library materials especially Audio Visual Materials that are supposed to have the highest level of availability had the poorest level of availability.

Table 3: Library Materials Available on HIV/AIDS

Library materials on HIV/AIDS Type of library materials	Highly available		Available		moderately available		Not available		No Resp	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Reference materials, encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, guides, yearbooks etc	7	25	8	28.6	6	21.4	5	17.9	2	7.1
Books (monographs)	5	17.9	2	7.1	5	17.9	7	25.0	9	32.1
Audio visual/electronic materials (film strips, slides, motion picture, audio cassettes, CD-ROMS, VHS, DVD, VCD etc	-	-	2	7.1	6	21.4	14	50.0	6	21.4
Microforms/microtexts (microfilm, microfiche, micro opaque etc	-	-	-	-	5	17.9	14	50.0	9	32.1
Serial publications (Journals, newspapers, conference proceedings, newsletters, publications of international organizations e.g. WHO, UNO etc	3	10.7	14	50	6	21.4	3	10.7	2	7.1
Grey literature (pamphlets, handbills, posters, flyers, clippings etc	1	3.6	4	14.5	8	28.6	13	46.4	2	7.1

Table 4 below depicts library services available on HIV/AIDS in the sample public libraries in South West Nigeria. Measured on Likert scale of highly available, available, moderately available and not available data shows that public library services on HIV/AIDS are poorly available. Library services that showed some level of availability are: Reference service with 7 (25%) respondents highly available, 2 (7.1%) respondents, available, 3 (10.7%) respondents moderately available, 1 (3.6%) not available and 15 (53.6%) no response. This is followed by readers' advisory service and quick enquiry with 4 (14.3%) highly available, 2 (7.1%) respondents available, 5 (17.9%) moderately available, 5 (17.9%) respondents not available, 1 (3.6%) respondents not available and 16 (60.7%) and 16 (57.1%) no response respectively. Internet service, e-mail service and selective dissemination of information (SDI) had the poorest level of availability. The highest level of no response from the respondents also shows that services are not available on HIV/AIDS in the sample public libraries.

Table 4: Library Services Rendered

Library Services	Highly available		Available		moderately available		Not available		No Resp	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Reference service	7	25.0	2	7.1	3	10.7	1	3.6	15	53.6
Bibliographic service			2	7.1	6	21.4	14	50	6	21.4
Interlibrary loan			2	7.1	7	25	1	3.6	18	64.3
Quick enquiry	4	14.3	2	7.1	5	17.9			17	60.7
Readers' advisory service	4	14.5	2	7.1	5	17.9	1	3.6	16	57.1
Referral service	1	3.6	6	21.4	1	3.6	1	3.6	19	67.9
Mobile library service				17.9	3	10.7	1	3.6	19	67.9
Library displays/exhibitors	1	3.6	6	21.4	3	10.7			18	64.3
Selective Dissemination of information (SDI)	-	-	-	-	8	28.6	2	7.1	18	64.3
Health education VHS, VCD, DVD, CD-ROMs, lending/display service	-	-	4	14.3	2	7.1	4	14.3	18	64.3
Online Information Searching	1	3.6	4	14.3	4	14.3	2	7.1	17	60.7
Repackaging Information Service	-	-	-	-	1	3.6	7	2.5	20	71.4
Internet Service	1	3.6	-	-	-	-	9	32.1	18	64.3
E-mail service	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	35.7	18	64.3
OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	-	-	-	-	1	3.6	8	28.6	19	67.9
Outreach programmes (seminars, lectures, workshops, meetings, conferences etc)	2	7.1	4	14.3	2	7.1	2	7.1	18	64.3
Document Delivery Service	-	-	2	7.1	7	25.0	1	3.6	18	64.3

Table 5 below represents impediments and constraints that incapacitate public libraries in the South West Nigeria from participating in the awareness campaign programme against HIV/AIDS. Likert scale of, strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree was adopted to measure the constraints facing the study libraries.

Table 5: Impediments to Provision of Services on HIV/AIDS by Public Libraries

Impediments	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Resp	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Inadequate financial resources	18	64.3			4	14.3	2	7.1	4	14.3
Lack of support from government and non-governmental organizations/agencies	9	32.1	9	32.1	4	14.3	2	7.1	4	14.3
Administrative constraints	1	3.6	9	32.1	6	21.4	5	17.9	7	25
Unconscious of the role of public library in the war against HIV/AIDS epidemic	2	7.1	1	3.6	9	32.1	10	35.7	6	21.4
Lack of policy/programme on healthcare HIV/AIDS awareness	7	25	10	35.7	5	7.9	1	3.6	5	17.9
Indifference of library users to HIV/AIDS scourge in our society	3	10.7	4	14.3	8	28.6	6	21.4	7	25
Lack of trained personnel to design and carry out the programme	4	14.3	8	28.6	6	21.4	4	14.3	6	21.4
Insufficient information materials on HIV/AIDS epidemic	9	32.1	6	21.4			8	28.6	5	17.9
Lack of facilities/infrastructure to render the services	6	21.4	4	14.3	6	21.4	6	21.4	6	21.4
Poor attendance at the previously organized programmes	2	7.1	2	7.1	6	21.4	10	35.7	8	28.6
Inadequate materials in local language/dialect	9	32.1	6	21.4	4	14.3	6	21.4	3	10.7

Research findings indicate that financial constraint constituted the paramount inertia of public libraries in the discharge of their duties on HIV/AIDS awareness campaign with 18 (64.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 4 (14.3%) respondents disagreed, 2 (7.1%) respondents strongly disagreed and 4 (14.3%) no response. This is followed by lack of support from Government and non-governmental organizations/agencies with 9 (32.19) respondents strongly agreed, 9 (32.1) agencies with 9 (32.1%) respondents agreed, 4 (14.3%) represent disagreed, 2 (7.1%) respondents disagreed and 4 (14.3%) no response. Inadequate information materials in local

dialect of the user had 9 (32.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 6 (21.4%) respondents agreed, 4 (14.3%) disagreed, 6 (21.4%) respondents strongly disagreed and 3 (10.7%) no response. Insufficient information materials on HIV/AIDS epidemic had 9 (32.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 6 (21.4%) respondents agreed, 8 (28.6%) strongly disagreed and 5 (17.9%) respondents no response (see table 5 for more details).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings from this research have shown that public libraries in the South West Nigeria have not been involved or participated in the awareness campaign against HIV/AIDS. Reasons for the non-participation include lack of information materials, inadequate funding and facilities to render the service. The study revealed that apart from reference materials, books and serial publications that showed some level of availability in the public libraries other important library materials are poorly available, for instance, audio visual materials that are supposed to be available at sufficient quantities were found to be inadequate.

The war against HIV/AIDS is a collective responsibility of all individuals, associations, groups, government and non-governmental organizations. Public libraries because of their closeness to the people should be involved in the campaign against HIV/AIDS pandemic. The study makes the following recommendations:

- (1) Provide adequate funding for public libraries to enable them participate in HIV/AIDS campaign.
- (2) Library materials (print and non-print) mostly audio visual aids like; VHS, DVD, VCD and CD-ROMs especially in local languages on HIV/AIDS are provided to increase awareness.
- (3) Government and non-governmental organizations/agencies saddled with responsibilities of HIV/AIDS eradication campaign must provide financial and information material on HIV/AIDS to public libraries.
- (4) Public libraries in the South West Nigeria should design and organize outreach programmes such as seminars, workshops, conferences etc on HIV/AIDS to sensitize, educate and create awareness on the impact and the effect of the disease on the members of the public.

- (5) Trained library personnel with skills and knowledge on healthcare must be employed to design and implement library policy on healthcare/HIV/AIDS programmes.

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