Library and Information Services to the Visually Impaired Persons in Federal School for the Blind, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.

YUSUF, K. Folashade
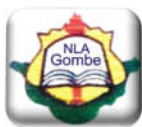babyfolly62@yahoo.com

Abstract
Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. Just as sighted people might read print media as well as download readable electronic information from the Internet; visually impaired people also needed relevant information materials in their chosen accessible format in other to be able to contribute their quota to National development. Developing an efficient library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are significantly fewer books available commercially in accessible formats compared to what is published in print for the sighted public. For the visually impaired people to be productive, they need to be provided with needed information materials in accessible format. It was against this background that the researcher intends to know the extent of availability, use and level of satisfaction that the visually impaired users derived from using the vocational training centre library (INLAKS). The paper also highlighted the challenges experienced by the visually impaired people as well as the library. Some suggestions which include adequate funding as well as provision of assisted technologies were made for improvement.

Keywords- Visually impaired, Blind, Library services, Assisting technology, Non-Governmental Organisation.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of information to the development of man cannot be over emphasized, without adequate provision of information, no man can develop to its fullest. In provision of needed information to the society, libraries play a fundamental role. The resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society. Since information is essential to all human beings, every library's must provide the right information at the right time and in the right format to its users regardless of his/her ability or disability.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) cited in Schreuer, Sachs & Rosenblum (2014), stated that disability is a set of physical and mental disorders which keep a person from an independent individual and social life. Among disabilities is visual impairment; Congdon, Friedman & Lietman, (2003) stated that visual impairment is one of the most common disabilities. According to Rayini (2017) visually impaired is a general term used to describe people who are partially-sighted or completely blind. In this paper visually impaired persons applied to both people who are totally blind and to those who are partially sighted. Rayini (2017) stated further that there are about 314 million visually impaired people globally with 45 million totally blind. In Nigeria, according to Adetoro (2011) agreed with the position of the Federal Ministry of Health as cited by the Lagos state branch of the Nigerian Optometric Association (NOA) that people with blindness are over one million, with about three million others with visual impaired, they posited that 42 out of every 100 adult people above the age of 40 are visually impaired in the country. This means that the visually impaired persons in Nigeria especially the adult are on the increase, there is the need

for an avenue where they could source for their information needs in other to be able to take informed decisions and contribute positively to the society where they live.

Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. Just as sighted people might read a newspaper, listen to a CD or download electronic information from the Internet, visually impaired people also want access to relevant information in their chosen accessible format. Developing an efficient library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are insufficient information resources generally for visually handicapped persons (Atinmo, 2000). The need to build collections in alternative formats and make them available for readers who are unable to browse shelves makes it necessary to develop special services.

For an individual to develop into informed, and literate adult he or she must have access to ideas, facts, theories, attitudes, and vicarious emotional experiences. Therefore, blind persons need access to reading material. To a blind person, library service is a critical and often the only source of reading material. This is because, while a sighted person can source for information materials from several sources, a blind person may find it difficult to get information materials that is suitable from these sources, except from the library.

Hence, the establishment of INLAK library by the Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind to ensure that students in their school with have equal access to library services and collections. In this way, the library performs an effective means of making them to take informed decision and live an independent life. This paper aims at knowing various information resources, services and facilities available in the library, library use, level of users` satisfaction, identify various issues involved in the provision of library and information services to the visually impaired persons as well to establish some challenges encountered by people with visual impairment while using the library resources/ services.

Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind, Oshodi, Lagos State Nigeria

In 1945, a group of compassionate individuals came together with a dream of establishing a rehabilitation and training centre where adolescent and adult blind would have the support and skills to ensure they become confident and productive members of the society. The Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind was established in 1955 with the following aims and objectives: To promote the general well-being of blind adults and adolescents and to rehabilitate and integrate them into the community; To participate at all levels in the prevention of blindness; To establish, operate and maintain Vocational Training Centres across the country (Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind, 2015).

In December 1956, a vocational training center was established for the blind at Oshodi. The centre provides a two year vocational programme to enable blind adults and adolescents from all over the Federation acquire skills in handicrafts (Cane work, Raffia work), Braille reading and writing, Telephone Switchboard Operation, Dictaphones, Typing , Computer, Mobility, Tie and Dye and Aso Oke weaving among others which are necessary for job placement in industries or for self-employment. The vocational training centre is playing an important role in inculcating in the students the spirit of independence and self-reliance that will enable them to cope with the tasks and challenges of life. The Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind is aware that, one of the needs of the blind in educational institutions is a well-organized library.

The INLAKS library for the visually impaired, for the training centre was established in 1988 and now has a growing collection of Braille books in different areas of knowledge/ subjects including secondary school and higher education levels textbooks, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board examination past questions, Bible, Quran, Fictions and a host of others. The library is now being used by students from all over the country and beyond. It has borrowing arrangements with the Royal National Institute for the Blind in the United Kingdom and other libraries for the blind. The library is also a legal depository for books published in the United Kingdom and has working relationship with the Library of Congress. In other to ensure effective use of the library, different library services were provided, some of the services include lending services, reference services, selective dissemination of information among others. (Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind, 2015).

Information is essential to all human being, since information is the product of the library, the importance of the library cannot be overemphasized. Libraries play a fundamental role in nation building. The aim of any library regardless of the status of its users` is to provide the needed information at the right time, place and format. This is an implication that, libraries must meet the needs of this diverse community of print/print disabled persons and provide services.

In line with the 1994 IFLA public library manifesto cited in Rayini (2017) Eskay and Chima (2013), Lucky and Achebe (2013), Babalola and Haliso (2011), Adetoro (2004), The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language, or social status. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto recognizes diversity as part of its service, and libraries should adopt an equally inclusive approach: "Library services should be opened to all persons including the visually impaired. Furthermore the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Public Library Manifesto (1994) cited in Rayini (2017) emphasize that; every library must provide proper services for those who do not have easy access to them, such as the mentally and physically disabled, the ill and the imprisoned. For reasonable library services to be provided by a library for the blind, Rayini provided some guidelines which according to him, are based on the guidelines for development of library services to visually impaired prepared by IFLA. These include: Mission, Library legislation, National strategy, Needs Assessments, Meeting User Need, Cooperation and Networking, Work with the Blindness Agencies, Collection Development, Access to Service and Collections, Reader Training Awareness, Production of Alternative Formats (Audio production, Braille production, Large print), Ethics ,Values and Awareness, Marketing and Advocacy, Marketing and Promotion Policy.

Method

This is a descriptive study, and the statistical population included some male and female students with visual impairment in VTC Oshodi. Fifty (50) students were selected by convenience sampling. For data collection self-developed questionnaire was used supplemented with face-to-face interviews when necessary. The questionnaire contains 50 items, in two sections. Cronbach Alpha (α) was calculated for all the variables.Its Cronbach alpha reliability was between 0.711 to 0.790.and its content validity has been confirmed by experts after some amendments. The questionnaire distribution among the students were conducted by the researcher and assisted by a research assistant and analysis was done using descriptive statistics.

Findings
The findings of the present study are provided in two sections: 1. Demographic information; and 2. Availability, use, satisfaction and challenges encountered by library users` with visually impairment.

Out of 50 students with visual impairment, 32 females had an average age of 64 % and 18 males an average age of 36%. 24(48%) were between the age of 21-30, 20 (40%) between the age of 31-40 and 6 (12%) were between the age of 18-20.

Availability of information resources, services and facilities at the vocational training centre library (INLAK) at Oshodi

Table 1.

Information resources, services and facilities	HA	A	NA
Braille books	48(96%)	2(4%)	-
Large print	42(84%)	8(16%)	-
Talking books	47(94%)	3(6%)	-
Electronic Resources	42(84%)	8(8%)	-
Adaptive or assistive technologies	10(20%)	40(80%)	
Newspapers (in Braille format)	46(92%)	4(8%)	-
Services			
Reference service	12(24%)	38(76%	
Users` education service	48(96%)	2(4%)	
Internet service	10(20%)	40(80%)	
Lending service	45(90%)	5(10%)	
Selective dissemination of information	47 (94%)	3(6%)	
Current awareness service	46(92%)	4(8%)	
Transcription service	48(96%)	2(4%)	
Translation service	47(94%)	3(6%)	
Facilities	**Agreed**	**Disagreed**	
Building easily accessible	50(100%)	-	-
Slab-way provided	50(100%)	-	-
Tables &chairs well arranged	42(84%)	8(16%)	
There is space between chairs	50(100%)	-	
Book shelves well arranged	46(92%)	4(8%)	
Catalogue cards well arranged	50(100%)	-	-
Tape recorder and ear phone are available	50(100%)	-	-
Library guides are provided	50(100%0	-	-
Recording studio is available	50(100%)	-	-
Availability of convenience	50(100%)	-	-
Availability of braille press	50(100%)	-	-
Availability of talking room	50(100%)	-	-
Availability of individual listen room	50(100%)	-	-
Availability of computer room	50(100%)		

Table 1. shows the respondents response to availability of information resources in the library. Braille books were highly available with 96%, this is followed Talking books with 94%, Newspaper 92%, large print and electronic resources 84% each, only 20% of the respondents indicated that adaptive technology is highly available, while majority of the respondents 80% indicated that adaptive technology is available. The findings show that the

listed information resources were actually available at various degree. On availability of services, findings shows that, 96% of the respondents indicated Users` education and transcription services are highly available, followed by selective dissemination of information and translation service 94%, current awareness service 92%, lending service 90%, while 80% of the respondent and 76% indicated that internet and references service were not highly available. On facilities majority of the respondents 100% indicated agreed to statement on facilities except statement on book shelves well arranged with 90% respondents agreed and 8% disagreed, in the same vain tables and chairs well-arranged 84% of the respondents agreed and 16% disagreed. Considering the high level of percentage indicated by the respondents, it shows that, the facilities are highly available.

Frequency and use of the library resources, services and facilities.
Table 2.

Information resources, services and facilities	Yearly	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Braille books				2(4%)	48(96%)
Large print				35(70%)	15(30%)
Talking books				3(6%)	47(94%)
Electronic Resources				20(40%)	30(60%)
Adaptive or assisting technologies				20(40%)	30(60%)
Newspapers (in Braille format)				3(6%)	47(94%)
Services					
Reference service				2(4%)	48(96%)
Users` education service				50(100%)	-
Internet service.				3(6%)	47(94%0
Lending service			4(8%)	38(76%)	8(16%)
Selective dissemination of information				3(6%)	47(94%)
Current awareness service			1(2%)	10(20%)	39(78%)
Transcription service				3(6%)	47(94%)
Translation service				38(76%)	12(24%)

Facilities statement.	Agreed		Disagreed	
Building easily accessible	50 (100%)			
Slab-way provided	50 (100%)			
Tables &chairs well arranged	42 (84%)		8(16%)	
There is space between chairs	50 (100%)			
Book shelves well arranged	46 (92%)		4(8%)	
Catalogue cards well arranged	50 (100%)			
Tape recorder and ear phone are usable	50 (100%)			
Provision of Library guides & signage.	50 (100%)			
Recording studio is functioning	50 (100%)			
Convenience are usable	50 (100%)			
Braille press is functioning	50 (100%)			
Talking room is usable	50 (100%)			
Individual listen room is usable	50 (100%)			
Computer room is functioning	50 (100%)			

Table 2. shows the respondents response to frequency and use of information resources, services and facilities in the library under study. On information resources, Braille books are the most frequently use on daily basis with 96% respondents, followed Talking books and Newspapers 94% each, Electronic resources and adaptive technology 60% each while 70% of the respondents indicated they uses Large print weekly followed by Electronic resources and adaptive technology 40%, Talking books and Newspapers 6% and braille books 2%. Also on services, 96% of the respondents show that, they uses reference service on daily basis, followed by, internet, selective dissemination of information and transcription services 94% each, current awareness service 78%, translation service 24% and lending service 16%. Users education service is mostly used weekly by all the respondents 100%, followed by lending and translation services 76%, current awareness service 20%, internet, selective dissemination of information and transcription services 6% each and 4% uses reference service. 8% of the respondents indicated that they uses lending service monthly followed by current awareness service 2% respectively. On facilities, all the respondents 100% agreed with the facilities statement except statement on tables and chairs well-arranged 84% respondents agreed 16% disagreed and book shelves well arranged with 92% respondents agreed and 8% disagreed. The findings show that, all the available resources, services and facilities are being put to use by the respondents.

Level of satisfaction with resources, services and facilities.
Table 3.

Information resources, services and facilities	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Braille books	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	
Large print	12 (24%)	38 (76%)	
Talking books	47 (94%)	3 (6%)	
Electronic Resources	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	
Adaptive or assisting technologies	12 (24%)	38 (76%)	
Newspapers (in Braille format)	38 (76%)	12 (24%)	
Services			
Reference service	12 (24%)	38 (76%)	
Users` education service	47 (94%)	3 (6%)	
Internet service.	14 (28%)	36 (72%)	
Lending service	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	
Selective dissemination of information	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	
Current awareness service	47 (94%)	3 (6%)	
Transcription service	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	
Translation service	14 (28%)	36 (72%)	
Facilities statement.			
Library building	50 (100%)		
Slab-way	50 (100%)		
Tables &chairs	50 (100%)		
Space between chairs	50 (100%)		
Book shelves	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	
Catalogue cards	50 (100%)		
Tape recorder and ear phone.	50 (100%)		
Library guides and signage.	50 (100%)		
Recording studio.	50 (100%)		
Convenience (Toilets)	50 (100%)		
Braille press	50 (100%)		
Talking room	50 (100%)		
Individual listen	50 (100%)		
Computer room	50 (100%)		

Based on table 3. Findings show that, 96% of the respondents were highly satisfied with the braille books, followed by talking books 94%, Electronic resources 92%, Newspapers 76%, Large prints and Adaptive technologies 24% each, while 76 % of the respondents were satisfied with Large prints and adaptive technologies, Newspapers 24%, Electronic resources 8%. Talking books 6% and Braille books 2% in that other. On services, 96% of the respondents are highly satisfied with selective dissemination of information and transcription, followed by current awareness service and users` education, 94%, lending service 92%, internet and translation 28% and reference service 24%. 76% of the respondents were satisfied with Reference service, internet and translation 72%, lending 8%, current awareness service and users` education 6%, selective dissemination of information and transcription 4% each. Furthermore, on facilities 100% of the respondents were highly satisfied with the facilities except book shelves with 96% of the respondents indicated that they were highly satisfied while 4% satisfied. The findings imply that though the respondents were satisfied, there is still need for improvement for those that are satisfied to be highly satisfied.

Challenges Facing Visually Impaired in Using Library Resources and Information Services.
Table 4.

Items	Agreed	Disagreed
Inadequate braille books	1 (2%)	49(98%)
Inadequate talking books	1 (2%)	49(98%)
Lack of library use skill	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
Inadequate large prints	1 (2%)	49(98%)
Poor attitude of library staff	1 (2%)	49(98%)
Irregular power supply	3(6%)	47 (94%)
Lack of access to library materials	4 (8%)	46 (92%)
Lack of awareness of library services	1 (2%)	49(98%)
Lack of awareness of library resources	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
Inadequate transcription services	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
Inadequate electronic resources	3(6%)	47 (94%)
Inadequate adaptive technologies.	38 (76%)	12 (24%)

Findings on the challenges encountered by the respondents in the library shows that 98% disagreed with inadequate braille books, talking books, large prints, poor attitude of library staff , lack of awareness of library services statements, followed by inadequate transcription service, lack of awareness of library resources, lack of library use skill 96%, irregular power supply, inadequate electronic resources 94%, lack of access to library materials 92% and 24% respondents disagreed with inadequate adaptive technology. In the same vain, 76% of the respondents agreed with inadequate of adaptive technologies as problem followed by 8% lack of access to library materials, irregular power supply, inadequate electronic resources 6%, inadequate transcription service, lack of awareness of library resources, lack of library use skill 4% and inadequate braille books, talking books, large prints, poor attitude of library staff, lack of awareness of library services 2% each. To improve the use of the library, the identified problems no matter how little must be looked into.

Discussion
The demographic information shows that, the library render information services to persons consider to be adult, who are expected to be part of decision making and contribute positively to the society where they live. Hence the availability of information to this group of people is

paramount. Considering the fact that information materials for the visually impaired are not easily available due to the acceptable format in which they must appear findings shows that, INLAKS library made available information materials on different subject areas and in acceptable formats. Adetoro (2011) stated that information resource for the visually impaired persons are converted into alternative formats such as Braille, talking books/audio recordings, large prints and e-resources to meet their reading need. These alternative formats give the visually impaired persons the opportunities to read and communicate like sighted counterparts. Furthermore, The American Foundation for the Blind (2013) points out that information material becomes useful to people with visual impairment when they are transcribed into alternative formats. This shows that, the library actually catered for the information needs of its users, so that they will be able to contribute to the development of the society. Atinmo (2000) stated that information and literature are important in the lives of everyone, information resources are vital for the education, employment and enjoyment of all including the visually impaired. Furthermore library services and facilities are equally available as agreed to by all the respondents (100%), these are expected to facilitate easy mobility as well as access to the to the library vis-à-vis the resources. With good library signage, well arranged catalogue cards visually impaired persons will be independent in their interaction, access and use of various resources and facilities within the library. In support of this, Deines-Jones (2007) stated that libraries should be designed to be universally accessible, and should have equipment in place to enable all users to get maximum benefit from the library materials and services provided, he stated further that , libraries should have equipment that facilitates both easy mobility and easier intellectual access for those who are challenged by visual impairments. Furthermore Gerstenberger (1985) stated that the National Federation of the Blind's notion that blindness is a disability which can be reduced to the level of a nuisance, rests on two critical provisos: One of the more important of these is the accessibility of reading materials. This shows, the important of signage in visually impaired library.

On frequency of use of information resources, services and facilities in the library. information collected from the users, it shows that 96% of the respondents uses the information materials in the library especially the braille books on daily basis, this is because braille books are one of the alternative formats that is generally available to the visually impaired. This is supported by Ogba (2000) who opined that, Braille books is a universally used means of reading and writing for the blind. In relation to services, the respondents indicated they used the services available to them. Reference services 96%, internet services and selective dissemination of information 94% on daily basis, Library users` education three times in a week, this is to enable the users` use the library effectively. This is supported by Uzohue and Yaya (2016) in their study on provision of Library and Information Services to the Visually Impaired Pupils in Pacelli School for the Blind, Lagos, stated that one hour thirty minutes allocated to each class for library use is to teach them the use of library and how to read story books.

Considering the level of users` satisfaction, majority of the respondent are either highly satisfied or satisfied, based on the data collected none of the respondent indicated that he/she is not satisfied with the resources, services and facilities provided by the library, although some are highly satisfied with braille books (96%) while 4% satisfied. Also adaptive technologies, majority were satisfied (76%) while 24% highly satisfied. This is because braille books seem to be highly available so many users can have access to them, adaptive technologies may not be highly available because they are very expensive. Uzohue andYaya
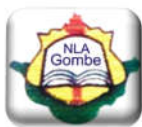
(2016) stated that high cost of purchasing these technologies, is one of the challenges facing library serving pupil with visual impairment.

Challenges Facing Visually Impaired in Using Library Resources and Information Services.
Uzohue and Yaya (2016),Eskay and Chima (2013),Mann (2010) in their various studies stated that Individuals with visual impairment as well as the library faces numerous challenges which include, shortage of books and others published materials in appropriate format that are accessible to them, inability to personally gaining access to technologies that would help them to become independent in society, lack of current informational materials in accessible format. Besides, it could be deduced from the interview conducted that the following challenges were experienced by the library:
Shortage of staff: The library is manned by only two (2) members of staff, this is grossly inadequate compare to the services provided to the users of the library. This shortage of staff could be attributed to so many factors which include inadequate funding which may not be favourable for them to employ more librarians.

Inadequate Funding: Lack of adequate funding is a major problem in the centre vis-à-vis the library, the centre is funded by Non-Governmental Organisation and supported by concerned or spirited individual, cooperate organization and little from the state and federal government. Managing the library is not an easy task, high cost of converting information from print to Braille and alternative format and the cost of purchasing these technologies. Lot of fund is needed which is not forth coming.

Information Technology: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a great role to locate and access information, to scan, translate and print materials in appropriate formats through various Devices. These technologies are highly needed and not adequately provided because they are very expensive.With the little budget allocated for the library, achieving the provision of needed technology may be difficult.

Lack of recognition/Stigmatization: Some of the respondents stated that, the society did not see them as people who have something to offer themselves none the society. The societal attitude towards the visually impaired person most of the time it is negative. This is having negative effect on not only psychological but also on their rate of employment. In some cases, even their families do neglect them. This is supported by Eldridge (1982) in study on library service for blind and physically handicapped individuals stated that some persons interviewed felt that society does not take blind people seriously, and that most people with sight feel uncomfortable around the blind. Blind people would like to be taken seriously; unfortunately, many struggles with poor self-image. Mandesi (2007) adds that people with disabilities face numerous challenges to access opportunities equal to those enjoyed by their peers in day-to-day life. Environmental, physical, legal and institutional barriers are found throughout society, and negative attitudes to persons with disabilities often cause social exclusion and are the hardest to overcome.

Conclusion and Recommendations
Conclusion: Looking at the Library and Information Services to the Visually Impaired Persons, one can deduced that, there are different information resources, services as well as facilities provided by the library for its users. Studying these areas provided the opportunity to assess what information resources and services was provided for the users and the level of satisfaction the users` derived from using the library. At Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind, Oshodi, Lagos State Nigeria INLAK library for the visually impaired have a balanced

library resources collection, efficient service and functional facilities. However, there is tremendous room for improvement. Of course, improving the information resources and services provided to people with visual impairment by adequate funding will improve provision of adequate information resources and service delivery. This will provide the ground to build their self esteem, reduce poverty, improve their quality of life and increase their contribution to National development.

Recommendations
1. Adequate funding: The State and the Federal government should take up the responsibility of funding the center vis a vis the library in order to improve the provision of adequate resources, services and facilities for its users`.
2. Reader Training and Awareness: Library management should create awareness of new services or changes to existing services through special training sessions or any other effective mechanism for introducing users to a new service and guiding them through it.
3. Marketing and Advocacy: Library should employ special technique and engage a wide group of stakeholders, including other agencies and the general public to market their services to the users.
4. Provision of Advancing Assisting Technology: The library should make provision for additional Advancing Assisting Technology such as JAWS. This will facilitate easy and fast learning by the users.
5. National advocacy: The Federal government through the Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency from time to time organise sensitization program geared towards positive attitudinal change to the visually impaired persons.
6. Staffing: Additional staff should be employed to work in the library, to assist especially in information retrieval.
7. Resource sharing: Library should continue to support their work with direct links to specialized agencies serving those who are print disabled. With the partnerships, duplicating services that are often quite costly can be avoided.
8. Nigerian Library Association in collaboration with other stakeholder like the State and Federal Government must stand up to their moral responsibility in ensuring an inclusive and equitable library and information services to the visually impaired.

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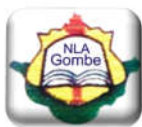
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