INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEAVIOUR OF IMATES IN ILARO PRISION

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Abstract

The study aims at identifying the prisoner' information needs. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Data were collected through focus group discussions and interviews from 10 inmates and three prison teaching staff respectively. The study found out that health information, education information and spiritual information are the major information needs of Ilaro prison inmates. The study also found that the majority of respondents agreed that the five popular sources of information are their friends, teachers, radio, books and television. However, the study concludes that Ilaro prison (library) fails to fulfil its role as a source of information and in meeting information needs of inmates due to challenges of inadequate information resources, limited time available for inmates to search for information, poor services and lack of funding for the library. The study suggest that Ilaro Prison Service should seek support from some libraries also that State and Federal Government should take into consideration the Prisoners information needs amongst us, thereby provide adequate funding, current information and conducive reading room. Recommendations were forward to improve access to Information by the prisoners.

Keywords: Information needs, information sources, information-seeking behaviour, Ilaro prison, prison inmates

Introduction

Information need is seen by Taylor (2011) is an individual or groups desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. The information and need in information need are inseparable intercorrection. Needs and interests call forth information. Hjorland (2007) saw people's information needs as needs relating to people's educational activities (educational needs), research activities, professional and vocational activities (vocational needs), cultural activities and personal development – spiritually (religious needs) and physically. Both free people in regular society and incarcerated ones have the same information needs. These needs focus on information for survival, on education, work, medical care, rehabilitation, social reintegration and the prevention of backsliding. Rubin(2017) explains that information is vital in the life of all individuals for optimal development and the realisation of socio-political and economic well-being. Prison education is a pillar of effective rehabilitation and gives individuals the skills to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities (Coates, 2016). Lehman and Locke (2005: 17) define a prison as 'any institution/ facility where people are held in custody, incarceration, or detention for crimes committed against society and for their rehabilitation and reformation'. Prisons provide educational and recreational resources to inmates, through books, newspapers, magazines, movies and library programmes, with the hope that this will aid in the rehabilitation process (Coates, 2016). Most of the prisoners who are in prison today, will still go back to the society after completing their sentences. For this reason, they will need information for various reasons both for coping with the prison situation and when released from the prison. Providing for their information needs will help in re-socializing them into the society to become better citizens for themselves and the society. Lehmann (2000) made it clear that incarcerated persons generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world; they can, however, be considered disadvantaged in this regard by the fact that they do not have access to libraries in the outside community. Though restrictions are imposed on the access to certain information usually when such access is known to present a danger to prison security, the fact remains that prisoners have their own information needs.

Another area that the prisioners needs information is on Health. The World Health Organisation (1999) stressed the need for prisoners to have access to health care, including prevention measures equivalent to that available in the community. Health is another area that the prisoners need information. The condition of most prisons; for instance overcrowding make the prisoners prone to a lot of health hazards. This obviously makes information about health and hygiene, prevention and cure of common diseases like air-borne and water-borne diseases vital to the prisoners and

essential for their survival in the prison. Prisoners are inquisitive and this lead to their search for information. They want to know more about their health condition, financial information, new thing happenings around them, and technologies that could be of help to them. "Information plays an important role in our daily activities.
We are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks. The prisoners like others requires information to meet their day-to-day needs. This study therefore aimed at determining the information seeking behavior of the prisoners with a view to improve their condition, and to identify the challenges they face while meeting their needs and possible solutions.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study were

- To determine the information needs of inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State
- To identify the preferred information sources for inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State
- To examine whether the Ilaro Correctional Facility, library is meeting the information needs of the Prisoners
- To determine the factors affecting the available and accessibility of information by inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State

Research Questions

For the purpose of this research, the following questions have been formulated:

- What are the information needs of inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State?
- What are the preferred information sources for inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State?
- To what extent is the Ilaro Correctional Facility, library meeting the information needs of the Prisoners?
- What are the factors affecting the available and accessibility of information by inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State?

Literature review

Concept of Information need and information seeking behaviour

Information need (or need for information) is a factual situation in which there exists an inseparable interconnection with ―Information and ―Need, Information needs can therefore be said to be the amount of information an individual or group of users essentially to have for their work, recreation and others. Thus, information need arise whenever individuals find themselves in a situation requiring knowledge to deal with the situation as they see it. In other words, lack of information needed to accomplish a task results in information need which several authors have variously described and explained.(Singh and Satija 2006) .

Information need is seen by LisWiki (2008) as recognition that one's knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal. This leads to seeking for the information from required sources so as to satisfy the need. Generally, Hjorland (2007) saw people's information needs as needs relating to people's educational activities (educational needs), research activities, professional and vocational activities (vocational needs), cultural activities and personal development – spiritually (religious needs) and physically. Both free people in regular society and incarcerated ones have the same information needs (Shirley 2006).

Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Wilson (2000) described information behavior as a totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use. Wilson goes further to say that information seeking behaviour is purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. Kakai, Odongo and Kigongi-Bukkenya (2004) have defined information-seeking behavior as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development.

According to Tackie and Adams (2007), literature on information needs and information seeking, acknowledges that work related to information seeking is different from everyday information seeking. They further state that information influencers, such as accessibility, availability, and familiarity of source consumed determines the suitability of the information. People according to Safahieh (2007) essentially need information for five broad functions and these functions are the fact finding function, which provides answers to specific question, the current

awareness function, which keeps information up-to-date, the research function, which investigates a new field in-depth, the briefing function, which obtains a background understanding of an issue, and the stimulus function, which provides ideas to obtain stimulus.

Information seeking behaviour from Kaur and Lal (2016) is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. Ogba, (2013) defined information behaviour as actions, sentiments, mood swings and psychological reasoning carried out in the mood of information seeking by individuals; before, during and after information seeking which determines the environment of research, the information source, the information sourced and taken, the ability to conclude research and the mode of using the information sourced. Whether or not information needs are pursued depends on the individual's ability to identify their need and then to express the need in terms that are searchable by themselves or a third party (Sinha, 2015).

Information needs of the prisoners

For public libraries to be able to meet the information needs of their users they need to identify who are the users of the library in other to determine the information needs of the users, their information seeking behaviours and sources of information to be used in meeting their information needs. David (2000) opined "better libraries mean better inmates". Prison library services have been accepted by the world as one of the ways to achieve the objective of prisons, which is to educate and rehabilitate the inmates. Therefore, prisoners need information for religious and the prison yard will afford them the opportunity to know and worship God better than before, to improve their education and also to seek for legal redress. As prisoners they have equal right to information and legal refers person on the street. Womboh (1991) stressed that one of the ways of training a criminal is to make his new environment similar to his natural habitat. This can be possible through libraryservices in the prison yards. Through provision of library services in the prison yards, the prisoner is also exercising equality of man and free access to information as declared by civil library organization (CLO, 1991) the library is a reformatory center where prisoners read books, newspapers and magazines to rehabilitate and reform themselves during their prison terms and after the walls. This could be done through two ways either establishing a library in the prison yard or providing reading materials to inmate through information outreach services of the library.

Prisoners just like other persons have information needs. Most of the prisoners who are in prison today, will go back to the society after serving their sentences. For this reason, they will need information for various purposes both for coping with the prison situation and for when released. Providing for their information needs will help in re-socializing them into the society to become better citizens for themselves and the society. Lehmann (2000) made it clear that incarcerated persons generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world; they can, however, be considered disadvantaged in this regard by the fact that they do not have access to libraries in the outside community. This was recognized in IFLA (2005) which said that an incarcerated person has not relinquished the right to learn and to access information. Though restrictions are imposed on the access to certain information usually when such access is known to present a danger to prison security, the fact remains that prisoners have their own information needs. Ajogwu (2005) maintained that the prisoners' information needs range from legal needs, religious needs, health needs, educational needs, vocational needs, recreational needs and financial needs.

Health is another area that the prisoners need information. The World Health Organisation (1999) stressed the need for prisoners to have access to health care, including prevention measures equivalent to that available in the community. This denotes the prisoners' health information needs. The condition of most prisons; for instance overcrowding make the prisoners prone to a lot of health hazards. This obviously makes information about health and hygiene, prevention and cure of common diseases like air-borne and water-borne diseases vital to the prisoners and essential for their survival in the prison.

The prisoners are usually inquisitive and this prompts their search for information. They want to know more about their health condition, financial information, current happenings around them, technologies that could assist them etc. Bruce (2005) states that, "information plays a significant role in our daily professional and personal lives and we are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks". The prisoners like other counterparts requires information to meet their day-to-day needs. This study is therefore aimed at determining the information seeking behaviour of the prisoners with a view to improving their condition, identify the challenges they face while meeting their needs and proffer possible solutions to them. Just as Dike (2002) and IFLA (2005) noted, the prisoners need spiritual information materials to attain emotional stability and better life style. According to Dike (2002), providing for the spiritual information needs helps the prisoners improve in their emotional stability and spiritual growth.

The World Health Organization (1999) and Ajogwu (2005) stressed, that prisoners need to have access to health care and health information on preventive measures and other related issues. This should be equivalent to that available in the community. In the Western world perspective, Visher and Lattimore (2007) as well enumerated educational needs amongst the re-entry (into the society) needs of the prisoners. This is the case although the workers saw educational and spiritual information as the most highly needed by the prisoners. They are also in high need of recreational information. Most of the prisoners agreed that recreational information resources will help them overcome boredom associated with prison environment. Ajogwu (2005) as well as Singer (2000) maintained that prisoners need recreational information for leisure and overcoming of boredom during incarceration.

The prisoners also have need for educational and vocational training information. This as noted before, exposes them to having serious educational and vocational information needs to further their education and gain employability skills. In the case of Nigeria, Womboh (1991) revealed that most of the prisoners (about 76%) were not educated beyond school certificate. Only about 24% of them acquired education higher than that. The inmates educational level is a major factor to be considered in providing library and information 31 services to them. The Charter for the Reader (1994) developed by the International Publishers Association has for long supported this fact by stating that reading is a universal right. Shirley (2006) and Lehmann (1999) also ascertained that prisoners have similar information needs to those of persons in free society; but with a greater number of prisoners having low education skills, they experience difficulties in articulating their information needs or seeking information. These needs and interests, they said are similar to those of citizens on the outside world. Visher and Lattimore (2007) enumerated prisoners re-entry (into the society) needs to include educational, job training, employable skills other related needs.

Extent is the prison library meeting the information needs of the Prisoners

When information is provided, it is important to make sure it is easily accessible for the prisoners' use. In doing this cognizance has to be taken of the level of literacy of prisoners. In a prison library for example there should be adequate labeling and directions to materials in view of short period usually allocated for library use. Competent professionals should be available to guide users during period of use (Lehman & Locke, 2005; Lehman, 2011). In order to ensure usefulness of information to rehabilitation of programmes, efforts need be made to tailor information provided towards rehabilitation programmes available in the various prisons so as to be useful to the prisoners.

Prisoners, as described by Ozioko, Nwabueze and Eze (2014) simply put are people who are incarcerated and whose movements are restricted because of the crimes they committed. Prisoners have been seen to have the same reading interests and information needs as other people; but with a good number of them having low educational skills, they often experience difficulties in meeting their information needs. Ajagwa (2005) enumerated prisoners' information needs as ranging from legal needs, religious, health, educational, vocational, and recreational to financial needs. They also need to acquire further education as well as occupational and vocational skills to help them re-adapt into the society.

Among all the possible ways of providing information to prisoners, the prison library takes the lead in providing services and materials through which the prisoners can meet their various information needs. The recognition of the place of the prison library in meeting the prisoners' information needs contributed to the development of prison libraries. Changes were fueled by the prison reform movement that advocated rehabilitation over punishment, education for re-entry to the society and the rights of the prisoners. Also, the recognition of the prisoners' right to information is contained in the United Nations (Rule 40) standard Minimal Rules for the treatment of prisoners. It was recommended that every institution shall have an adequately stocked library for use of all categories of prisoners and the prisoners shall be encouraged to use it. Eze and Dike (2014) aligning with IFLA (2005) agree that prison library collection should include materials to meet the informational, educational, cultural, recreational, and rehabilitative needs of the prison population.

While Lehmann (2000); Dike (2002); Mayrink da Costa (2003) all made it clear that prison libraries through their information resources and services, play a significant role in the rehabilitation of prisoners. A prison library according to IFLA (2005), provides resources for prison education, rehabilitation programs and specific requirements like legal collections. The prison library also provides the inmates the opportunity to develop literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests and life-long learning. IFLA (2005) stated that the prison library collection should include materials in print and other formats to meet the informational, educational, cultural, recreational, and rehabilitative needs of the prison population. The collection should include a wide variety of current print and non-print materials, audio and video recordings and gadgets to play them similar to those found in a public or school library. These reading resources, according to Dike (2002), should include a wide range of materials – fiction and other literature; general nonfiction; magazines and textbooks. Effective library service according to Shirley (2003), is reflected in programmes, services and collections. When the prisoners are provided with certain services and

materials, they will find ways of keeping themselves busy, even while still in custody. The recognition of the place of the prison library in providing for the prisoners' information needs contributed to the development of prison libraries.

Becker (2007) also revealed that in spite of the fact that the prison library is to be funded for the provision of facilities and services for the prisoners, unfortunately, the library programmes are usually the first to be reduced or done away with when the prison's overall budget is cut. In some areas, little or nothing is left for the library and its services and materials in the prison budget. The prison library cannot do without sound facilities and resources – both human and material in meeting up the prisoners' information needs.

Factors affecting the available and accessibility of information by the prisoners

Although the prison service cannot do without library and information services in achieving the objectives of rehabilitation and re-socialization of the prisoners, sound services to prisoners have not been attained due to certain problematic factors. Prisons and libraries; at first glance, there seems to be an almost inherent contradiction between the two. "Prisons are associated with confinement, degradation and punishment of miscreants while library on the other hand, are spaces of freedom and light, where individuals exercise their basic human rights to information; education; freedom of thought and expression" (Dike, 2002). In most places, like in Nigeria, the other prison activities are given priority before any allowance is made for library use. Some problem areas pin-pointed by Dike were lack of professional staff to serve the prisoners and inadequate funding especially in those parts of the world, like the developing countries, where prison libraries are yet to be developed. Specifically some problem areas exist that hinder the provision of library and information resources and services to satisfy prisoners information needs.

Conflict between the philosophy of the prison environment, staff and that of the librarianLehmann (2000) revealed that the library programme does not function independently but operates within the larger prison environment, whose mission and security policies often conflict with the library profession s code of ethics and its belief in free access to information. How does one provide information freely in a tightly controlled environment with rules and regulations governing almost all aspects of daily lives? Prison is an inhospitable environment that challenges all that one has learned at the library school. Safety and security are given a higher priority than intellectual freedom. According to Lehmann (2003), those who enter the prison as librarians are often ill-prepared for what they find inside. Isolation, burnout, and a feeling of insecurity loom as ever present dangers. This scares and discourages librarians from working in prison libraries.

Censorship and prison policies

Lehmann (1999) asserted that censorship is a touchy subject with prison librarians. In spite of their personal commitment to free access to information, they must recognize that certain materials may pose a threat to the institution security, for example, topics on bomb making or prison escapes e.t.c. While the library along with other programme departments as recreation, chapel, education focus on the rehabilitative aspect of incarceration, conflicts routinely arise over the types and quality of information delivered to inmates. This is censorship. (Singer, 2000). In addition, Singer said, certain books and types of materials are strictly banned by security on the basis of "penological interest"; for example books on martial arts, firearms, Satanism etc. Also, pornographic materials, both visual and written, are being controlled in a more stringent manner by the prisons.

Problem of the prisoners' reading capability and educational level

The prisoner s level of education and reading skills or capabilities create problems that hinder sound service provisions for meeting their library and information needs. In the words of Lehmann (1999), most prisoners are not traditional library users and need to learn how to use the library and any available information technology before they can meaningfully seek and get information for their needs. As Lehmann (2000) put it, there are many prisoners who seek help in developing their artistic and musical skills, in learning to read for the first time, or in improving their reading and math skills amongst other activities. These demand for extra task for the librarian before the prisoner can make meaningful use of 55 the library and its information materials. Medina (2000) noted as an inmate that prisoners lack interest, motivation, intellectual hunger, drive and desires to learn. Meeting up the information needs of such prisoners or guiding them towards that becomes difficult. London (2000) remarked that a number of prison library clientele are not literary types. Many are not even literate and some of them do go to the library just for relaxation.

Staffing problems

The IFLA's section for Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) survey (2005), identified lack of professional staff as a major problem to the provision of library and information services to the prisoners. Staffing problems have been observed in many prisons in different parts of the world and this affects the provision of library and information services to the prisoners. Shirley (2006) agreed that although the standards (American Library Association and IFLA standards) recommended minimum staffing based on size of the inmate population, many prison libraries are understaffed, functioning with a one-man manager.

Inadequate library facilities and materials

Poor library facilities, accommodation as well as reading materials cause major hindrance in the provision of library and information needs of the prisoners. The prison libraries must have an open design which allows the librarian to have a clear line of sight which allows him/her to observe all patrons and provide for them at all times (Reese ,2007). As has been remarked before, Lehmann (2003) noted that countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Scandinavian countries have a long history of providing 59 organized prison library services but Singer (2000) as well as Shirley (2006) agree that prison library generally lag behind other libraries in services, materials amongst other things.

Problem of funding of the library and its services

Funding of the prison library affects the provision of required reading materials and services to satisfy the prisoners' information needs. Whereby the library is not given enough fund to keep their resources up- to- date and in sufficient quantity, then the they make do with what they have, whether they satisfy the needs of the users or not. Lehmann (2000) clearly stated that keeping up with the latest best-sellers for instance is quite expensive, adding that often times the budget is also insufficient. Without adequate funding for the prison libraries to provide enough facilities and resources, the information needs of the prisoners will not be met. Enuku (2001) cited a survey of prisons by the Vanguard newspaper which showed that in the Nigerian context for instance, paucity of funds has made the upkeep of the inmates through provision of facilities of which library facilities are among, a near impossible feat while facilities for rehabilitation of prisoners which is a major reason for imprisonment today, are virtually lacking or grossly inadequate. (Vanguard, 1998).

Empirical review

Victoria (2016) studied Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Prisoners' At the Medium Security Prison in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The findings of the study revealed that the major information needs of the prisoners understudy was health information needs, followed by legal information needs, educational information needs, religious information needs to mention but a few. Ajogwu (2005) noted that in Nigeria prisoners' information needs include religious and spiritual needs amongst others.

Eze (2014) carried out a study on the information needs of prisoners in Southeast Nigerian prisons. This study delved into the information needs and information seeking behavior of prisoners in the prisons of five states in Southeast Nigeria. Major findings showed that the prisoners have a good number of information needs ranging from educational, legal, vocational, spiritual, to recreational and financial information needs which are not provided for adequately through library and other information providers. Similarly, Saliu, Saliu & Rabiu (2017) undertook a study on Prisoners and their Information Needs: Prison Libraries Overview. The findings of the study revealed that the information needs of prisoners includes; health conditions, financial (99%), spiritual and moral (88%), life after prison/information on legal issues (86%), family/friends (68%), literacy education (65%), skill acquisition (63%), right in prison (42%), prison rules (34%), and others information needs (26%).

The study of Mwuese, Terfa& Victoria (2015) also found out that the preferred information source of prison inmates is their lawyers, TV/ Radio broadcast, prison waders, health workers to mention but a few. More so, Rafedzi and Abrizah (2014) studied information needs of male juvenile delinquents. The findings of the study revealed that formal information channels such as the library are not preferred maybe because they are perceived as ineffective by inmates, regardless of their types of information needs and its objective validity. The Internet and informal networks among inmates were the most preferred source of information.Nacro (2009) researched on the Information needs of women in prison with mental health issues.The study took the form of an enquiry on what information was available for women in prison with mental health problems and what more could be made available. From the study it was clear there is a lack of information available for women prisoners, and particularly those with mental health problems.

However, Cobb and Farrants (2014) studied male prisoner s constructions of help- seeking. This study is concerned with how male prisoners talk about help-seeking in order that treatment programmes can be developed that better address their needs. The researchers interviewed nine prisoners in relation to help seeking. One key finding of the research is that prisoners resist formal help because of a perceived injustice in the system, disrespect for staff and feeling helpless when they are "bombarded with medication to keep quiet". When they do engage with formal help-seeking behaviours it is frequently "to work the system"

Consequently, Mwuese, Terfa and Victoria (2015) carried out a research on Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Prisoners At the Medium Security Prison in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The study revealed that a number of factors inhibited access to information which include among others: high cost of information materials, high rate of illiteracy, lack of awareness on the part of the prison inmates, radio/television programmes totally absent and no information centers, and public libraries services to them. The study concludes that prisoners need and seek information materials like other citizens and that the information needs and seeking behavior varies from person to person. Emesealu (2010) affirm that user s attitude and emotions constitute barriers to accessibility of library information materials. Prison inmates are people believed to suffer from various emotional instabilities, such as fear, anxiety, irritability and depression. Emasealu (2010) further stressed that the challenge of accessibility and utilization results in series of attendant problems, which impair the psychological well-being of prison inmates. Conclusively, the study of Sambo, Usman and Rabiu (2017) revealed that the factors affecting the prisoner s information seeking behaviour is problem of uncomfortable nature of the prison/ long delay before trial, poor funding of the library and prison as a whole, little time allowed prisoners for interaction with outside information providers and lack of free access to the libraries, building used for library is unfavourable, prison policies and law that restrict certain reading materials, lack of current materials and lack of professional staff, lack of training for available workers, lukewarm attitude of staff, lack of access to court, other factors.

Theoretical Framework

This research is on information needs and seeking behaviour of inmates in Ilaro prison. Three theoretical frameworks have been provided in discussing the variables of interest. These are: the psychological theory of Specific Deterrence, Ellis' Behavioural Model of Information Seeking and Dervin's Sense making approach.

The theory of Specific Deterrence postulated by Andenaes, (1968) predicts that individuals experiencing a more severe sanction are more likely to reduce their criminal activities in future. This theory has severally been replicated and supported by economists (von Hirsch, Bottoms, Burney, & Wikstrom, 1999). They insist that incarceration imposes direct and indirect costs on prison inmates, e.g., loss of income, stigmatization (Nagin, 1998; Orsagh& Chen, 1988; Pyle, 1995; Wood & Grasmick, 1999). That is to say that, prison inmates having experienced life in prison, the rational individual would choose not to engage in further criminal activities. Incarceration also has psychological „cost implication in that, if prison life is degrading, dehumanizing experience, then it must be considered as an additional psychological cost of serving time which in most cases leads to psycho- social problem such as depression, a feeling of alienation paranoia and neurosis (Gendreau, Goggin,& Smith, 2002) The specifics deterrence theory is related to this study because prison inmates during incarceration are mandatorily engaged in different treatment programmes. The implication is that prison authorities, while administering treatment programmes on inmates must first, identify causes of crime committed and, based on individual information needs, library information resources are provided.

The Ellis' Behavioural Model of Information Seeking postulated by Ellis (1989), Ellis & Haugan (1997), is a general model of information seeking behaviour crafted from studies in the literature on information seeking patterns of social scientists, research physicists, chemists, engineers, research scientist to mention but a few. Today, this same theory can be used to study individuals in different fields as well as prisoners. Ellis derived eight generic characteristics of the information seeking patterns of humans and they includes; starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. Starting is the first step employed by a user to begin seeking information, for example asking knowledgeable colleagues, going online etc. Chaining involves following and connecting new leads in an initial source, Browsing has to do with scanning content of identified sources for subject affinity, Differentiating is the process of filtering and assessing sources for usefulness, Monitoring involves keeping up to date of an area of developments in a given subject area, Extracting involves systematically working through a given source for material of interest, Verifying is the process of checking the accuracy and reliability of information, while Ending is concluding all activities.

The Dervin's Sense making approach was propounded by Dervin (1983) which focuses on behaviour and as such assumes that the important things that can be learned about human use of information and information systems must

be conceptualised as behaviour: the "step-takings", or "communicating", that humans undertake to construct sense of their worlds (Dervin, 1992). This kind of communicating behaviour is then the link between individuals and structures, institutions, and cultures (Dervin, 1992). As such the Sense-making approach can be used to acquire an understanding of information, communication, and meaningful relationships in these forms of behaviour (Tidline, 2005).

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research method. The sample for this study comprise of one hundred and twenty inmates randomly selected from the Ilaro Correctional Center. All of the participants were inmates who have been convicted of one crime or the other. The area of study was the Ilaro Correctional Center, Ilaro, Ogun state. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire adapted from related studies**.** The data collected are analysed using The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean). All the statements were scored on a 4-point Likert type rating scale. The decision rule is that any with 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted while below 2.50 is rejected.

Data Presentation and Analysis.

Table 1: Information needs of inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State?

Information Needs	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Information about legal process	93	100%
Family information	93	100%
Health and well-being information	82	87%
Information on money matter	78	83%
General information about the outside world	64	69%
Spiritual/religious information	42	45%
Fundamental Human Rights information	21	23%
Skill and Vocational Information	11	13%
Learning/literacy information	10	11%

Data presented in table 1 shows that the main information needs of the inmates is legala information as 93 (100%) of the respondents responded that they all seek information about how to become free again and how to keep in contact with family and friends. Also, 82(87%) of the respondents indicate that they health and wellbeing information to be physical and mentally prepared to face the challenges of incarceration. Furthermore, 78(83%) of them indicated that they need information on money matter. This is followed by 64 (69%) of them who need information about what is going on in the larger society outside the prison. In addition, 42 (45%) need information on spiritual and religious matters, 21(23%) reported that they need information about fundamental human rights in the prison. Only 11 (13%) of the respondents indicated that they need information on skills and vocations, 10 (11%) need information and learning and literacy.

Table 2: the preferred information sources for inmates at the Ilaro Correctional Facility, Ogun State

Information Sources	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Family and Friend	89	95%
TV/Radio	84	90%
Correctional Officers	62	66%
Others	53	57%
Legal Practitioners	44	47%
Fellow inmates	12	13%
Prison Doctors	9	10%
Prison Library	7	8%

The data presented in table 2 outlined the preferred source of needed information among the inmates. The data shows that 89 (95%) of the respondents obtain majority of the information they need from family and friends, 84 (90%) prefer to get information by watching TV and listening to radio programs. Apart from these sources, 44(47%) of the

respondents get needed information from legal practitioners; 62 (66%) prefer to obtain needed information from correctional officers, 12 (13%) prefer information from fellow inmates, while 53 (57%) of the respondents reported that they get information from other sources. The prison library is the least preferred source of information as only 7 (8%) of the inmates indicated that they prefer the library as their source of information.

Table 3: How adequate is the library to meet the information needs of inmate?

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Highly effective	-	--
Effective		
Ineffective	26	28%
Highly Ineffective	67	72%
Total	**93**	**100**

Table 3 shows the perception of the inmates regarding the effectiveness of the library in the Ilaro Correctional facility. The responses show that 26(28%) of the respondents perceived that the library resources and services available to them is ineffective in meeting their information needs while 67(72%) of them reported that the services and collection are highly ineffective. This speaks to the deplorable state of library services in the correctional center.

Table 4: Factors Affecting the Available and Accessibility of Information by Inmates at Ilaro. Correctional Facility, Ogun State

Factors	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Inadequate reading materials	89	96%
Restricted access to information	87	94%
Limited access to family and friends	84	90%
Unfriendly attitude of correctional officers	81	87%
Lack of time to interact	35	37%
Lack of trained librarians in the correctional center	62	67%

The data presented in table 4 indicates that the inmates face several challenges in meeting their information needs. The major challenge, as indicated by 96% of the respondents is lack of adequate reading material in the library or anywhere else in the correctional center. There is also restricted access to the available information resources as indicated by 94% of the inmates. Other challenges include information, limited access to family and friends (90%); unfriendly attitude of correctional officers (87%); lack of trained librarians in the correctional center (67%) and inadequate time to interact with fellow inmates (37%) respectively.

Discussion.

The study has shown that the information needs of the respondents are mostly utilitarian in nature rather than recreational. This is shown by the fact that the highest information need is legal information mainly focused on how they can get themselves freed from incarceration. They also seek information relating to their families which is understandable in that they need financial and emotional support by those who are close to them. Also, majority of them seek information about their health. However, it should be a matter of concern that only a few of them are interested in vocational skills acquisition of information about learning and education. This shows a lack of understanding of what is necessary to turn their lives around after serving their sentences. This can be a function of their preferred sources of information.'

The top three sources of information among the inmates are; Family and Friends , TV/Radio, and Correctional Officers. The nature of information that can be obtained from these sources vary in nature as it depends on the need of the inmate. The library is the least preferred source of information which means the inmates are missing out on the services that a trained librarian can provide. However, the low preference for the library as a source of information is as a result of poor condition of the library. All of the inmates either view the library as ineffective or highly ineffective.

Conclusion

Access to information is one of the fundamental human right which should not be denied to anyone irrespective of their status in the society. This study has further highlight the information poverty that exist in Nigerian prisons. The poor library services provided to inmates in Nigeria is not only a denial of fundamental human right but a booby trap for the society. Developed countries have used books and other information materials to rehabilitate convicted inmates and help them maintain mental and physical well-being during the course of their incarceration. The absence of library services therefore mean that the government would have to pay more in managing poor mental and physical health among the prisoners. Also, the society may also bear the burden of the emotional damage that could have been prevented by bibliotheraphy while the inmates were still incarcerated.

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