

An assessment of rural libraries and information services for rural development: A study of Delta State, Nigeria

By:

Saturday U. Omeluzor;

Gloria O. Oyowwe-Tinuoye

Uche Emeka-Ukwu

Abstract:

Purpose

This study aimed to assess the rural libraries and information services for rural development in Delta State, Nigeria.

Design methodology/approach

The study adopted both descriptive and exploratory research designs. Questionnaire, observation and structured interview guide were the major instruments for data collection. Total enumeration was used to gather data from respondents in 16 functional rural libraries in Delta State.

Findings

The study revealed the challenges that surround the rural people in accessing information in rural libraries. It showed that only 16 rural libraries were established and functional in 16 communities within the 25 local government areas. Findings also showed that the rural libraries were not able to fulfil their roles. It was evident that the information needs of the rural people which made them to access the library were not adequately met because of some hindrances such as inadequate up-to-date information materials, lack of awareness, illiteracy, language barrier, inadequate skilled personnel and inadequate infrastructure and facilities.

Practical implications

The important finding in this study is that rural libraries are the most relevant institution to disseminate information about government policies, inculcating reading habits and developing skill and knowledge of people. Therefore, underdevelopment of rural libraries and inadequate information sources and facilities will hinder access to information and development of the people who need them.

Originality value

This research is the first of its kind to assess rural libraries and information services for the development of rural people in the 16 rural libraries in Delta State of Nigeria.

Keywords:

Nigeria, Information provision, Delta state, Rural development, Information access, Information services, Public rural libraries, rural libraries assesement, Rural people