

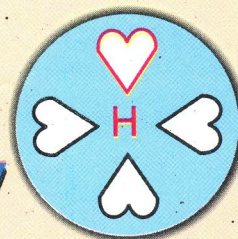
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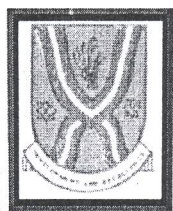
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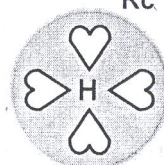


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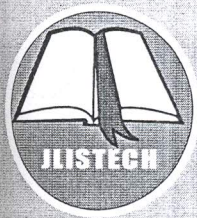
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THE BEARING EFFECT OF HEALTH INFORMATION IN ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN SELECTED PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper surveys the bearing effect of Public libraries played in the attainment of health Millennium Development Goals, using the South-West region of Nigeria. The bid to reduce infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, Malaria level worldwide led to the declaration of Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. Methodology adopted is the survey design in which questionnaires were used for obtaining data from library staff and users. Result shows that Public libraries played significant role towards the attainment of health MDGs. In addition, library users make significant demand for all categories of health information especially in the area of maternal and childcare. The paper recommends that there should be paid to Public libraries in Nigeria by government and individuals. In addition, library staff should also be saddled with the responsibility of providing services geared towards the attainment of health Millennium Development Goals.

Keyword: Public libraries; Millennium Development Goals; Health; Nigeria

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came as a venue or means through which governments are struggling to implement and succeed in transforming the lives of their citizenry into attaining to good health. Libraries as an important agent for information dissemination and other services have a vital role to play in the actualization of the MDGs. All stakeholders in the implementation of the MDGs projects need to collaborate with libraries to achieve the goals by the year 2015.

Universal access to information on health related issues is a prerequisite for meeting the health Millennium Development Goals and achieving Health for All. Lack of access to information remains a major barrier to knowledge-based health care in developing countries. The development of reliable, relevant, usable information can be represented as a system that requires cooperation among a wide range of professionals including Librarians, health-care providers, policy makers, researchers, publishers, indexers, and systematic reviewers. The system is not working because it is poorly understood, unmanaged, and under-resourced. It is essential that Public Libraries take the lead in championing the goal of "Universal access to essential health-care information by 2015" or "Health Information for All" of the Millennium Development Goals. Strategies for achieving universal access include funding for research into barriers to use of information, evaluation and replication of successful initiatives, support for interdisciplinary networks, information cycles, and communities of practice, and the formation of national policies on health information.

The bid to reduce infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, Malaria level worldwide led to the declaration of Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. Countries, especially developing countries, were mandated to cut by half the incidence of poverty by 2015 among other goals. In Western and Central Africa, mortality rates for under-fives are among the highest in the world (Oyelude and Oti, 2007).

Libraries have long been described as knowledge institutions as they provide the public with environment study for information and learning. This space is (should be) accessible to all groups of society, irrespective of age, gender and ethnic affiliation (IFLA 2003). This role of the library must be seen against the backdrop of the fact that the development of society and individuals can only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society (Drotner, 2005). Libraries have rightfully staked their claims as gateways to participation in society through lifelong learning. However, if libraries themselves have very limited access to information and knowledge, as is the case of developing countries especially Nigeria, how would they be able to perform well their function as gateways and keeper of information especially now that there is a target on the attainment of some certain goals.

In view of these, libraries have the fundamental function of providing efficient management of information and knowledge.

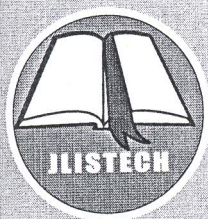
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Public library is a library, which is accessible by the public and is generally funded from public sources, such as tax money, and may be operated by civil servants. Taxing



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bodies for public libraries may be at any level from local to national central government level. Public library can also be defined as a library wholly designed for the purpose of rendering services to the general public irrespective of status, occupation, sex, age and these services are meant to be free or attract little fee. It lends out its materials in accordance with the rules and regulations of the library. Public libraries typically focus on popular materials such as popular fiction and movies as well as educational and non-fiction materials of interest to the public. In addition to print books and periodicals, most public libraries today have a wide array of other media including audio tapes, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, and video games as well as facilities to access the internet and inter-library loans. Public libraries are at the heart of their communities, providing free, accessible space, resources and services for everyone. The millennium development goals are about inclusion and working together at a global level to achieve a common vision and libraries play a significant role by increasing access to information in support of the inclusion process.

UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS ON HEALTH

According to Stuckler, and Basu (2010) The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which underpin the global development agenda, include the reduction of child mortality, improvements in maternal health, and decreasing the burden of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, but few of these targets are going to be met by 2015. David Stuckler of the University of

Oxford, Sanjay Basu at the University of California, San Francisco, and Martin McKee at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine re-examined the progress that countries have made towards these targets to understand why some countries are falling behind. They found that the traditional explanations, such as economic under-development, low priority of health, inadequate spending by governments, and weak health infrastructure accounted for only a fifth of the inequality in progress. In contrast, more than half of the inequality in progress in poor countries could be explained by the prevalence of HIV and the burden of non-communicable diseases non-infectious diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes that are often associated with environmental and lifestyle factors such as smoking. Globally, child mortality continues to fall. In 2008, the global annual number of child deaths fell to 8.8 million, down by 30% from the 12.5 million estimated in 1990 (WHO Report, 2009). The report continued, stating that the under-five-year-old mortality rate in 2008 was estimated at 65 per 1000 live births. Despite these encouraging trends, further efforts will be needed to achieve the target of a 66% reduction from 1990 levels by the year 2015, especially in countries facing economic crises or conflicts. Reducing child mortality increasingly depends on tackling neonatal mortality; globally, about 40% of under-five-year-old deaths are estimated to occur in the first month of life, most in the first week. Regional and national averages mask inequities: the greatest reductions in child mortality have been recorded among the wealthiest households and in urban areas.

In 2008, there were an estimated 247 million cases of malaria causing 863

000 deaths, mostly children under five years old. Despite increases in the supply of insecticide-treated bed-nets, their availability in that year was far below need almost everywhere. The procurement of anti-malarial medicines through public health services increased, but access to treatment, especially artemisinin based combination therapy, was inadequate in all countries surveyed in 2007 and 2008. Although definitive evidence of impact is not yet available, there are indications that nine African countries and 29 countries outside Africa are on course to meet the targets for reducing the malaria burden by 2010 (World Health Organization, 2009).

Public Libraries and Millennium Development Goals

Today's Public Libraries as social institutions look vastly different, since a variety of forces, such as Social, Technological, Economic and Political (STEP) developments have reshaped and redefined their roles as community activities center, community information center, formal education support center, independent learning center, popular materials library, preschoolers' door to learning, reference library, and research center. To fit into in the above-depicted roles, assuring 'equitable access to information and/or knowledge' to the public should be the prime motive for Public Libraries (Indira, 2006).

However, the public library, which is already considered as the main hub to which the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved especially in on health aspect of the goals, is expected to amass a sufficient collection on health related materials to achieve the health goals of MDGs. The library has many roles to play in achieving the MDGs. Hence, they provide extensive services, which

include user education, document delivery, reference services, Internet services, consultancy and advisory services etc.

However, Public libraries have been overlooked in this regard. Undermining the role of the public libraries in the community, they are not considered when decisions are made which cannot survive without the provision of information in that respect. Therefore, the role of public libraries in the attainment of MDGs health issues becomes a daunting task for these institutions. The non-inclusion (nation's developmental processes) of Libraries, especially public Libraries, where users of all categories can have access to up to date information is another challenge retarding the attainment of MDGs in Nigeria.

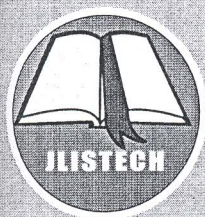
Brief History of Public Libraries in Nigeria

Elaturoti (2001) in Akpotiade (2002), in his paper titled "Development of Public and school libraries in Nigeria" delivered at Rabat in Morocco stated that "The UNESCO seminar on the development of Public libraries in Africa held at the University College Ibadan from 27th July 21st August 1953, laid the foundation for public library development in Nigeria. The seminar was the fourth in the series of seminars on Public library developments organized by UNESCO: Manchester (1948), Malmo (1950), San Paulo (1951) and Ibadan (1953). UNESCO chose Africa as the region for its 1953 Public library seminar because of the clear-cut and urgent need for Public library in most part of the continent. The Ibadan seminar advocated for library legislation to empower the appropriate authorities to provide library services and ensure adequate financial support and efficient administration according to a



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national standard. It also ushered the National library schemes in addition to autonomous local authority library service. Consequently, the Ibadan seminar ushered in new era for Public library development in Nigeria. In 1955, the Eastern Region of Nigeria library act was enacted and in 1964, the National library act was enacted in Lagos. The Western Regional library was established in 1954 and this coincided with the introduction of free primary education in the region in 1955. Other regions and later states in Nigeria started setting up their own state Public library boards and necessary edicts and decrees were enacted and passed respectively. Presently, Public libraries have flourished all over the country. Although, many of them may be suffering neglects, but they continue to strive in keeping their existence through several legal means.

Since the Millennium Development Goals is expected to be attained in 2015, the library is expected to acquire the following information that can meet the health needs of the users:

- HIV/AIDS
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Typhoid fever
- Malaria
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Influenza/cold
- Maternal and child care
- Diarrhea

For public libraries to play their rightful roles in reaching the ideals of the inclusive Information Society, the sector needs an overhaul, anchored on progressive policies, programmes and leadership. Library issues deserve being regarded as a core component of national information and communication

policies. For once, adequate and sustained funding of libraries by all tiers of government should receive great attention; viewing such allocations as a profitable investment in both development and public goods.

As a result, the public library who is always updated and provides different categories of information are making less effort because of they believe that they have less significant role to play in achieving the health-focus of the MDGs. No programme can succeed without information, and the public library is the custodian of information, hence, it is expected that all forms of information are to be available in the library for users. In addition, financial challenges have deterred public libraries where government pays little or no attention to the running of such libraries. Thus, they lack adequate information resources and services that would properly address MDGs health related issues.

As earlier stated, there are eight MDGs, but the paper focuses on the health elements which include; Reduce child mortality, Improve maternal health and Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases. Therefore, the paper aims to survey the relevance of public libraries in achieving the health element of the Millennium Development Goals.

Objectives of the study

1. To determine the role public libraries played in achieving health related issues in the Millennium Development Goals.
2. To identify the health information needs of users of public libraries.
3. To know the type of information services, offered by public libraries.

Research questions

- 1. What role has the library played in achieving the health focus in the MDGs?
- 2. What sort of health information relating to MDGs do users demand?
- 3. What types of information services are available in the libraries?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the survey design. The target populations of this study were users from six (6) public libraries in Oyo, Ogun and Lagos State, Public libraries are chosen for the study because they are at the forefront in

the provision of educational and information services to the various categories of users in their respective communities. The libraries cut across the local governments in the selected states. The questionnaire method was used to elicit information. The sampling method was used to select fifteen (15) library staff and two hundred (200) libraries patrons. The selected libraries are Oyo state library board, Bodija Public Library, Ogun State Library Board, Ijebu Public Library and Lagos State Library Board, Surulere Public Library. Data analysis includes simple descriptive statistics and standard deviation



Results of the Study

Table:1. Gender: Library Users

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	122	61.0
Female	78	39.0
Total	200	100

From Table 1: 61.0% of the library users are male which shows a less significant difference with the female (39.0%) counterpart.

Table.2. Gender: Library Staff

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	8	53.3
Female	7	46.7
Total	15	100

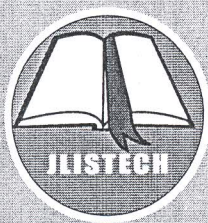
Table 2 shows that 53%, which is the majority of the library staff is male, while 46% are female.

Table: 3. Role played by library in achieving the health focus of the MDGs

	Roles Of Libraries In Achieving health focus of MDGs	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	There is relationship between public libraries and the health aspect of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	2 (13.3)	13 (86.7)	-	-	3.13	.35
2	Public Library services can contribute to the attainment of health issues in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	5 (33.3)	10 (66.7)	-	-	3.33	.49

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3	We organise campaigns and other sensitization programmes on HIV/AIDS	3 (20.0)	10 (66.7)	-	2 (13.3)	2.93	.89
4	MDGs has been part of our objectives since its inception	7 (46.7)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	2 (13.3)	3.07	1.09
5	Provision of community health information by libraries can promote the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	4 (26.7)	9 (60.0)	2 (13.3)	-	3.13	.64
6	We frequently organise forum on Child maternal health in our library	5 (33.3)	2 (13.3)	6 (40.0)	2 (13.3)	2.67	1.11
7	Our Library has partnership and collaboration with other agencies like NGOs ,health workers and so on in contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	2 (13.3)	6 (40.0)	5 (33.3)	2 (13.3)	2.53	.92
8	We have partnered with international organizations in the distribution of mosquito net to rural dwellers	3 (20.0)	7 (46.7)	3 (20.0)	2 (13.3)	2.73	.96
9	We organize programmes on environmental sanitation around our community	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
10	Our Library acquire materials related to health focus of the MDGs	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.93	.26
11	Public Libraries services has contributed to the attainment of the health MDGs	14 (93.3)	1 (6.7)	-	-	3.40	.51
12	Our Library have organize seminar, lectures, talks shows and so on , on Health Information to their patrons	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	-	-	3.07	1.09
13	Our Library is connected adequately and effectively to the internet at all times for ease of access to information	7 (46.6)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	2 (13.3)	2.93	1.03
14	Materials, both hard and soft copy are current and adequate on health related matters in our library	5 (33.3)	6 (40.0)	2 (13.3)	2 (13.3)	2.60	.91
15	Our Library have relevant materials on Millennium Development Goals health issues	2 (13.3)	7 (46.7)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	2.80	1.01
16	We provide other forms of health information services to our patrons	4 (26.6)	6 (40.0)	3 (20.0)	2 (13.3)	3.53	.52
17	To combat HIV/Aids and other diseases is a goal of the MDGs which all information rendering institutions must support	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
18	Public libraries will always be accessed based on the roles in the attainment of the MDGs	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.47	.64
19	Child and maternal health is one of the goals of the MDGs that needs more focus by public libraries.	8 (53.3)	6 (40.0)	1 (6.7)	-	3.33	.62
Weighted Average Mean =		3.31					

The table shows that majority of the library staff claimed that the Library has acquire materials related to health focus of the MDGs (Mean = 3.93; SD = .26). While other responses were of significant affirmation to the roles, the library has played in attaining the health issues of MDGs.

From the overall response with the weighted average mean of **3.31** out of the maximum of 4.00 means the Public library has played a significant role in achieving the health Millennium Development Goals.



Table: 4. Types of Health Information demanded by the User

NO.	Health information needs	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	HIV/AIDS	92 (46.0)	61 (30.5)	27 (13.5)	20 (10.0)	3.13	.99
2	Sexually Transmitted Diseases	101 (50.5)	57 (28.5)	30 (15.0)	12 (6.0)	3.24	.92
3	Typhoid fever	118 (59.0)	45 (22.5)	29 (14.5)	8 (4.0)	3.37	.88
4	Malaria fever	106 (53.0)	51 (25.5)	33 (16.5)	10 (5.0)	3.27	.91
5	Cancer	102 (51.0)	46 (23.0)	38 (19.0)	14 (7.0)	3.18	.98
6	Headache/Migraine	100 (50.0)	43 (21.5)	41 (20.5)	16 (8.0)	3.14	1.01
7	Hypertension	119 (59.5)	33 (16.5)	31 (15.5)	17 (8.5)	3.27	1.01
8	Diabetes	110 (55.0)	38 (19.0)	39 (19.5)	13 (6.5)	3.23	.98
9	Influenza/Cold	102 (51.0)	43 (21.5)	44 (22.0)	11 (5.5)	3.18	.96
10	Old age diseases	103 (51.5)	36 (18.0)	41 (20.5)	20 (10.0)	3.11	1.06
11	Hepatitis	117 (58.5)	38 (19.0)	34 (17.0)	11 (5.5)	3.31	.94
12	Maternal and Child care	120 (60.0)	49 (24.5)	25 (12.5)	6 (3.0)	3.42	.82
13	Food and Nutrition	113 (56.5)	53 (26.5)	28 (14.0)	6 (3.0)	3.37	.83
14	Diarrhoea	122 (61.0)	38 (19.0)	26 (13.0)	14 (7.0)	3.34	.95
Weighted Average Mean		=			3.25		

Table shows that library users demands health information on Old age diseases (Mean = 3.11; SD = 1.06), HIV/AIDS (Mean = 3.13, SD = .99), Headache/Migraine (Mean = 3.14; SD = 1.01), Cancer (Mean = 3.18; SD = .98), Influenza/Cold (Mean = 3.18; SD = .96), Diabetes (Mean = 3.23; SD = .98), Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Mean = 3.24; SD = .92), Malaria Fever (Mean = 3.27; SD = .91), Hypertension (Mean

= 3.27; SD = 1.01), Hepatitis (Mean = 3.31; SD = .94), Diarrhoea (Mean = 3.34; SD = .95), Typhoid fever (Mean = 3.37; SD = .88) and Food and Nutrition (Mean = 3.37; SD = .83). However, Maternal and childcare gained the highest response with Mean = 3.42; SD = .82. The overall weighted average is 3.25, shows that library users demands a significant level of health information in the library especially in the area of maternal and childcare.

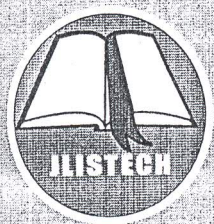
Table: 5. Types of Information that Are Available For Users

Type of Information	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
Agriculture	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	-	-	3.27	.46
Maternal and child health	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	-	-	3.27	.46
HIV/AIDS	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
Malaria	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
Typhoid fever	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
Food and nutrition	5 (33.3)	10 (66.7)	-	-	3.33	.49
Family planning	5 (33.3)	10 (66.7)	-	-	3.33	.49
Environmental	6 (40.0)	9 (60.7)	-	-	3.40	.51
Housing	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
Information on diseases	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Treatment and curative	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Personal hygiene	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Drug use	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	-	-	3.40	.51
Job advertisement	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	-	-	3.47	.52
Economic matters	3 (30.0)	12 (80.0)	-	-	3.20	.41
Politics	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	-	-	3.27	.46
Religion	-	13 (86.7)	2 (13.3)	-	2.87	.35
History	-	13 (86.7)	2 (13.3)	-	2.87	.35
Welfare(water supply , security, electricity)	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	-	-	3.40	.51
Fashion and style	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Hypertension	10 (66.7)	5 (33.3)	-	-	3.67	.49
Sexually transmitted diseases	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Cancer	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	-	-	3.53	.52
Weighted Average Mean =		3.38				



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From table responses shows that all the categories of information are available in the library, with the highest on Hypertension (Mean = 3.67; SD = .49). Therefore, it can be

concluded from the overall response, with the weighted average mean of 3.38 out of maximum of 4.00 that the library provides varieties of information in the attainment of Millennium Development Goals.

Table: 6. MDGs Information Requested by the Library Users

NO.	Categories of Information	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	Food processing	100 (50.0)	20 (10.0)	47 (23.5)	33 (16.5)	2.94	1.18
2	Soap making	87 (43.5)	23 (11.5)	29 (14.5)	61 (30.5)	2.68	1.31
3	Education	141 (70.5)	51 (25.5)	6 (3.0)	2 (1.0)	3.66	.59
4	Environment	110 (55.0)	78 (39.0)	3 (1.5)	9 (4.5)	3.45	.74
5	Religion	105 (52.5)	85 (42.5)	7 (3.5)	3 (1.5)	3.46	.64
6	Health	98 (49.0)	53 (26.5)	37 (18.5)	12 (6.0)	3.79	5.06
7	Fiction/Novels	113 (56.5)	53 (26.5)	14 (7.0)	20 (10.0)	3.30	.98
8	Politics	114 (57.0)	42 (21.0)	22 (11.0)	22 (11.0)	3.24	1.03
9	Housing	108 (54.0)	29 (14.5)	46 (23.0)	17 (8.5)	3.14	1.05
10	Fashion/styles	116 (58.0)	34 (17.0)	32 (16.0)	18 (9.0)	3.24	1.02
11	Future career	135 (67.5)	48 (24.0)	11 (5.5)	6 (3.0)	3.56	.73
12	Agriculture	124 (62.0)	50 (25.0)	15 (7.5)	11 (5.5)	3.44	.85
Weighted Average Mean=						3.33	

Table 6 shows that the type of information sought for in the library is Soap making (Mean = 2.68; SD = 1.31), Food processing (Mean = 2.94; SD = 1.18), Housing (Mean = 3.14; SD = 1.05), Politics (Mean = 3.24; SD = 1.03) Fiction/Novels (Mean = 3.30; SD = .98), Agriculture (Mean = 3.44; SD = .85), Environment (Mean = 3.45; SD = .74), Religion (Mean = 3.46; SD = .64), Future career (Mean = 3.56; SD

= .73) and Education (Mean = 3.66; SD = .59).While majority of the library users claimed that they request health information from the library (Mean = 3.79; SD = 5.06). Therefore, the weighted average of 3.33 shows that the users significantly seek various categories of information geared towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Table: 7: Information Services Rendered in the Library to Users

Information Services	Frequency	Percentage
Internet services (1)	111	55.5
Photocopying (2)	14	7.0
Statistical data analysis (3)	40	20.0
Video rental (4)	2	1.0
Loaning of materials (5)	7	3.5
Canteen (6)	12	6.0
Technical Report Writing (7)	14	7.0
Total	200	100

From the above table, it can be seen that majority of the respondents claimed that the library renders Internet services (55.5%). Other responses had lower percentages such as; Statistical data analysis (20.0%), Photocopying (7.0%), Technical report writing (7.0%), Canteen (6.0%), Loaning of materials (3.5%) and Video rental (1.0). Therefore, it can be concluded that the library renders more of Internet services than other form of information services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In relation to the research questions and the objective of the study, the analyzed data fully shown that, Public libraries has played significant role in the attainment of health Millennium Development Goals. Public libraries offered range of services, which include other forms of non-information related services. Hence, they fits into the role of assisting the government in achieving any set target since they are at the heart of the community. This finding is in tandem with Abba Iya (2007) who states that libraries facilitate in reducing HIV/AIDS and malaria fever through the provision of such materials like, the newspapers that give or announce opportunities of campaigns and immunization, place of study, health organizations that give health services. In order for different sectors of society to appreciate and mitigate possible MDGs health impacts, access to reliable maternal health, child mortality and HIV/AIDS information is vital (Godfrey and Benson, 2008). The finding also reveals that public libraries render more of Internet services than other form of information services. Thus, Libraries are playing a role in ensuring

Millennium Development Goals Health attainment.

From the result of the findings in the study, the paper recommends that:

- There should be more attention from government and individuals on the Public libraries in Nigeria.
- Public libraries should be considered as the hub towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Public libraries should be adequately funded so as to contribute significantly towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Library staff should also be saddled with the responsibility of providing services geared towards the attainment of health Millennium Development Goals.

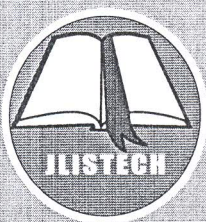
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