Standard Public Information Centre for Effective National Development: Case Study of Communities Dwellers in Kogi-West Senatorial District, Kogi State, Nigeria

Stephen Adeyemi Bello[1], Helen Remilekun Oluleye[2], and Mercy I. Omojola[3]

[1]Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

[2]Kogi State College of Education Technical, Kabba, Kogi State, Nigeria

[3]Kogi State University Library, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: Public information center store information resources to meet information needs of public. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether the communities' dwellers in Kogi-West Senatorial District in Kogi State of Nigeria need standard public information center. Also to know their information needs and preferred information resources. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Instruments for data collection are questionnaire and personal interview. Simple percentage was used for data analysis; where 50% and above is considered agreed and accepted while 50% and below is considered not agreed and rejected. At of 700 respondents accidentally selected 683 (97.5%) want establishment of standard public information center while, 27 (3.8%) show no interest. Those that want the establishment their information needs cut across agriculture, business, health, politics, and education; and their preferred information resources are books & papers, television, radio, resource persons, and Internet. Recommendations were proffered to enable effective establishment of standard public information centers in the communities understudy.

KEYWORDS: Public information center, Public library, Information needs, Information sources, Kogi- west senatorial district, Kogi state, Nigeria.

1 INTRODUCTION

The levels of development of every nation solely depend on their level of having access to information. Information is life; light; and knowledge. When there is no information people are deformed, blind, mislead, unexposed and fall victim of avoidable mistakes. Information is needed in all spheres of life to facilitate decision making and engender progress [1]. In the same vein, information is not a luxury; nor is it fashionable gadgetry but an essential instruction for development [2]. So, one cannot but agreed that everybody need information for decision making and development. It is also imperative to note that information needs of every individual in a society vary. Information needs are basically depend on the nature of jobs or activities individual engaged in; and they use different information seeking behaviors to acquire their precise information needs. Information seekers in a community acquired their information needs strategically from print and electronic information resources which are housed in public information center. This mean that standard public information center must have adequate information resources to cover all occupations and activities of people where it is established while, the building of the center most be properly designed to suit the needs. This is essential for communities' dwellers in states of a nation.

1.1 KOGI-WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

Kogi State is one of the 31 states in Nigeria. It was created under the regime of Major General Ibrahim Badamasi Babagida in 1991. At Present, the state has 21 Local Government Areas which are divided into three senatorial districts. These are:

Kogi-West, Kogi-East and Kogi-Central. The communities' dwellers in the districts are not different from others in the world at large. Though there might be variation in languages, cultures, status, exposure to education and possibly the climatic changes but their information needs can still be group under distinct categories and acquired from standard public information center. Hence, the communities' dwellers in Kogi-west senatorial district are grouped under the following local government areas: Ijumu, Kabba-Bunu, Yagba-West, Yagba-East, Mopamuro, Kogi, Lokoja. So, it is very imperative to access the communities' dwellers in Kogi-west senatorial districts from their local government area head quarters. Because it is believes that all under communities more have representation in their local government area.

2   BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER

Public information center is synonymous to public library. It is a centre where information resources and services are readily made available to both literate and non-literate members of a community or public. In Nigeria, its services oriented mostly established and funded by State and Local Government Authorities. They are largely classified as non-income generating government establishment; but to make people acquire their information needs [3]. That is, its' stored both print and non-print information resources to promote the intellectual and recreational activities of people in a community. "Reference [4] noted that, the center housed both print and non-print information resources which have both education and social roles to play in people's life as it is doors are widely opened to all people regardless of the race, religion, languages, racks or status and occupations". In the same view, public information center is a place where people can go to make talk, hear, listen to varieties of discussion, music and watch cinema shows [5]. Hence, one cannot but agreed with the opinions of the scholars that public information centers can help a nation to development. More to these, the objectives of public information center as recommended by UNESCO are:

- To promote and stimulate reading for pleasure and recreation;

- To support and reinforce programmes such as adult and fundamental education;

- To provide education services for children;

- To provide service for special groups of people in the community, as disabilities; and

- To assist rural educational transformation measure [6].

However, to achieve the above objectives there must be a well established public information center equipped with different information resources that can be used or consulted to meet the information needs. Public library- public information center requires special governance from qualified professionals for administrative and casual works; while its' building is not a thing apart, but three dimensional representation of service concept [7]. That is; site selection must involve critical evaluation to avoid excessive slop, powerful drainage pattern and noise. While, fund rising can be from philanthropists, and government [8]. It is also imperative to note that, the basic design of the building structure such as forms and functions, style and space allotment, equipments and furniture should be considered based on the activities or occupation of the current population and future advancement of the community. "Reference [9] noted that staff to work in public information center should be both non-professionals and professionals who will able to manage its activities effectively". This implies that the staff should be ready to work and use interpersonal, conceptual, analytical and technical skills in their designated responsibility.

2.2   INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Both literate and non-literate members of a community desire information to meet their needs. This is because information is a product that provides knowledge or intelligence about a need. It is worth noting that, the nature of activities everyone engaged in defined their information needs. Hence, information needs can be referred to as necessity of life to achieve happiness and fulfillment. It is important to note that, the information needs of people in a defined community include agriculture, education, health, politics and business while, the information gathered and preserved on these needs can be made available in public information centre for the seekers through television, internet, radio, books and papers [10]. It is also worthy to note that, public information center doors are widely open for children, pupils, students, adults, professionals, researchers and lecturers, policy makers and planners, artisans, and physically challenge people [11].

3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Public information center is a designed for information accumulation and dissemination through available information resources. A standard availability of information resources will enable everybody to acquire their information needs. Hereby, leads to development. However, if there is no standard public information center in a community, the dwellers will not have access to information to meet their needs. Hereby, put them into state of information darkness, not current, unexposed to new knowledge and innovation on their interest while, development will remain unachieved. Hitherto, affect national development. Despite all these, it is of great concern that no study seems to have been holistically carried out on it in Kogi-West. This justifies the present study and the problem of the study put in question form is: what is the state of public information center, if any, in Kogi-West senatorial district, Kogi State, Nigeria?

4   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives guide the study. To know:

1.   if the communities dwellers understudy want establishment of standard public information center

2.   educational qualification of the communities' dwellers understudy

3.   information needs of the communities' dwellers understudy

4.   preferred sources of information for communities' dwellers understudy

5   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will be of benefit to groups of people such as Kogi State government, library & information providers, researchers, and library & information science students. To Kogi state government, they we know if the communities' dwellers in the constituency understudy need standard public information center. To library and information providers, it will help them to know the information needs of communities' dwellers and hereby provide the public information center with information resources to meet their needs. To researchers and students of library and information science it will be a reference point.

6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The instruments of data collection are questionnaire and personal interview. A total copy of questionnaire used is Seven hundred (700). The total 700 copies were divided into 7 for each of the local government areas in Kogi-west senatorial district to have 100 copies. Accidental method was used for administered and collection of data. This was carried out in each of the local government headquarters. As its' believed that each community under each local government must have representative in their local government head quarters. The data gathered was analyzed using simple percentage on each item in the tables. Where 50% and above were considered Agree (considerable) while, below 50% where considered disagree (not considerable). Hence, the data collected through interview from the respondents were used to buttress the discussion of the findings.

7   DATA ANALYSIS

7.1   WANT ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARD PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER

Table 1: Whether the Respondents Understudy Want Establishment Standard Public Information Center

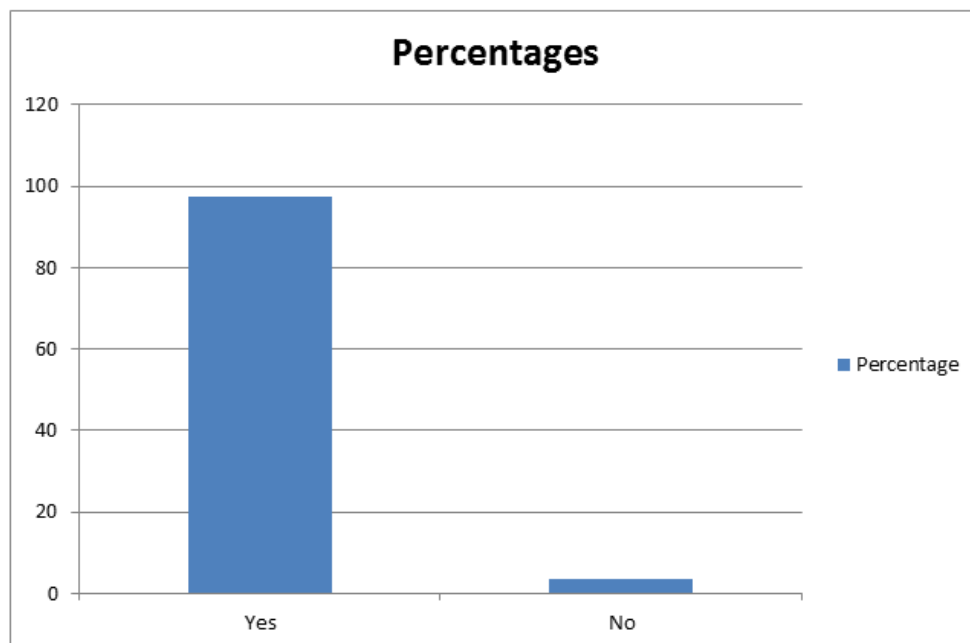|	Response rate	Percentage (%)
Yes	683	97.5
No	27	3.5
Total	700	100

Source: Field Survey

Fig.1: Colum Chart Showing the Percentage of the Respondents on Establishment of Standard Public Information Centre

From table 1 and its chart above, "Yes" has 683 (97.5%) while, "No" has 27(3.8%). Yes option is higher. This shows that the communities' dwellers want establishment of standard public information center.

7.2   EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS UNDERSTUDY

Table 2: Educational Qualification of Respondents Understudy

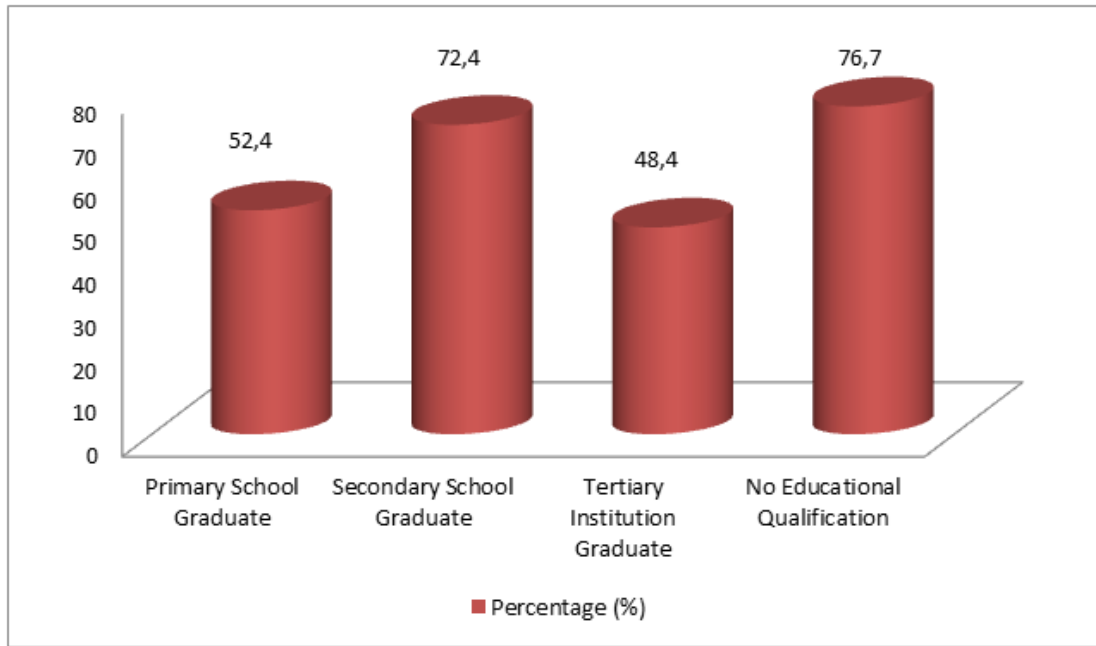| Education qualification	Response rate	Percentage (%)	Rank
Primary School graduate	367	52.4	3rd
Secondary School graduate	507	72.4	2nd
Tertiary institution graduate	339	48.4	4th
No education qualification (uneducated)	537	76.7	1st

Source: Field Survey

Fig. 2: Column Chart Showing Educational Qualification of Respondents Understudy

From table 2 and its chart above, "uneducated" has 537(76.7%), "secondary school graduate" has 507 (72.4%), "primary school graduate" has 367 (52.4%) and "tertiary institution graduate" has 339(48.4%). The uneducated constitute the highest percentage while, tertiary institution graduate is the least.

7.3 INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE RESPONDENTS UNDERSTUDY

Table 3: Information Needs of the Respondents Understudy

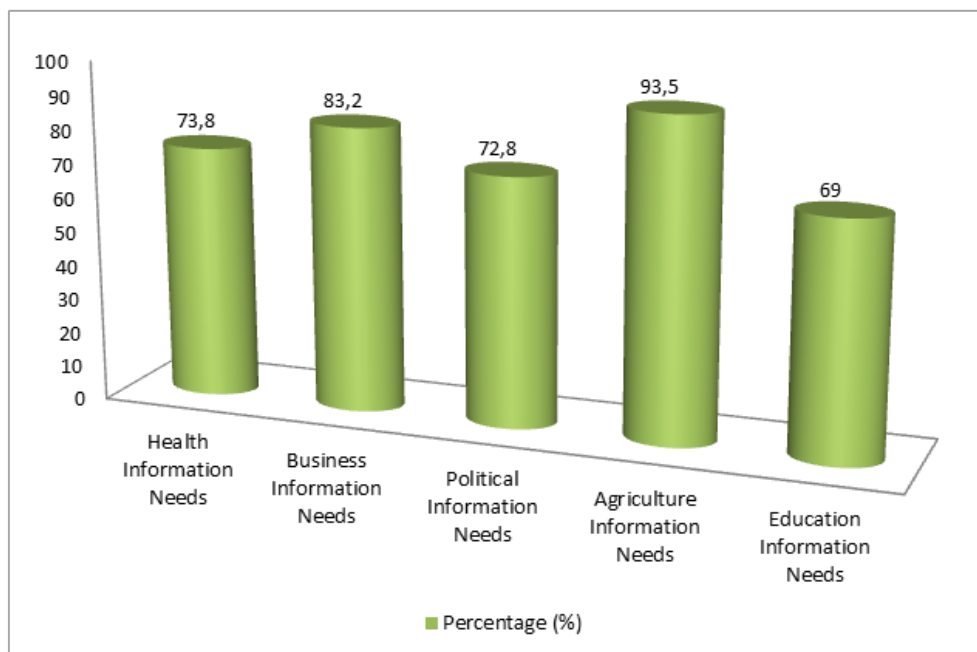| Information Needs	Numbers of respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank	Remark
Health Information Needs	517	73.8	3rd	Agreed
Business Information Needs	583	83.2	2nd	Agreed
Political Information Needs	510	72.8	4th	Agreed
Agriculture Information Needs	655	93.5	1st	Agreed
Education Information Needs	485	69.0	5th	Agreed

Source: Field Survey

Fig. 3: Column Chart Showing Information Needs of the Respondents Understudy

From table 3 and its chart above, "agricultural information needs" has 655(93.5%), "business information needs" has 583 (83.2%), "health information needs" has 517(73.8%), "political information needs" 510(72.8%) and "education information needs" has 485 (69.0%). Agricultural information needs ranked highest, while educational information needs ranked least. But they are all considered needed because they are all above 50% as a cut off percentage for consideration.

7.4   PREFERRED SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE RESPONDENTS UNDERSTUDY

Table 4: Preferred Sources of Information for the Respondents Understudy

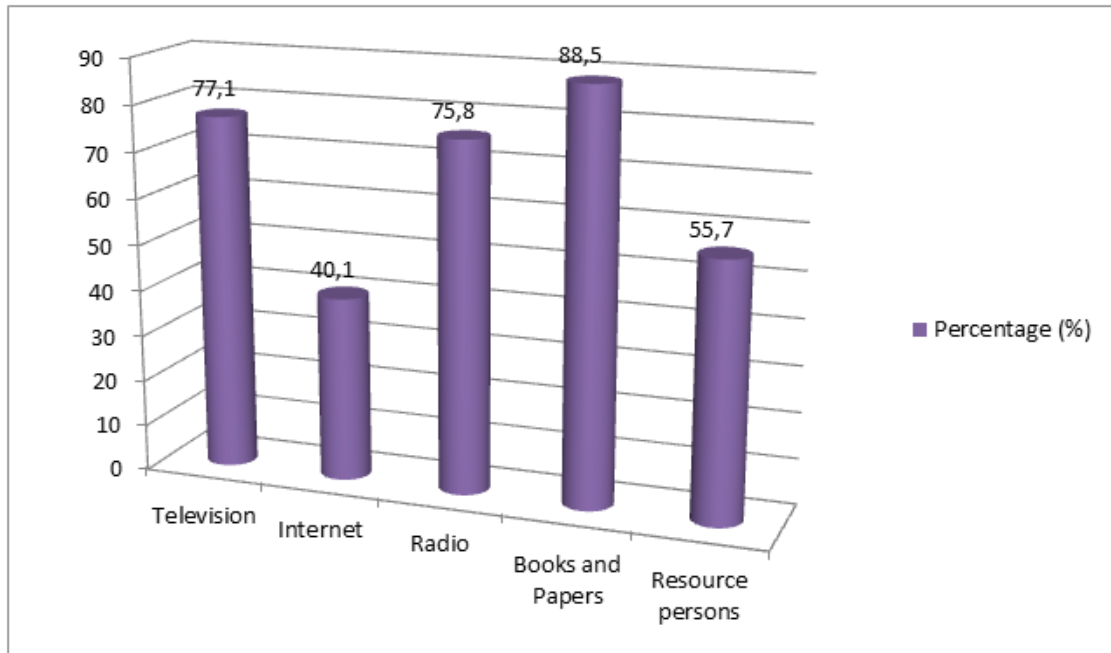| Sources	Numbers of Respondents	Percentage	Rank	Remark
Television	540	77.1	2nd	Accepted
Internet	281	40.1	5th	Not Accepted
Radio	531	75.8	3rd	Accepted
Books and Papers	620	88.5	1st	Accepted
Resource person	390	55.7	4th	Accepted

Source: Field Survey

Fig. 4: Column Chart Showing the Preferred Sources of Information for the Respondents Understudy

From table 4 and its chart above, "books and papers" has 620 (88.5%), "television", has 540 (77.1%), "radio", has 531(75.8%), resources persons" has 390(55.7%) and "Internet" has 281(40.1%). Hence, they are above 50% as cut off percentage, considered accepted except Internet.

8 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

8.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER, EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Based on the findings of the study and the interpretation of the data obtained from questionnaire and personal interview the researchers discovered that the communities' dwellers in local government areas in Kogi-West senatorial district of kogi State, Nigeria need establishment of standard public information centers while, they delighted much on information related to agriculture, education, business, politics and health regardless of their educational qualification. On agricultural information, the study reveals that, there were literate farmer in the areas. This categories need information on latest implements, seedlings, presented in a book form, magazine, journals, bulletins, CD- Rom, hand bills while, the illiterate want information presented in pictorial form, audio visual, audio. On business information, most of the community dwellers engaged in buy and sell of goods and services. Interview shows they're interested on commercial related advertisement this would help them to obtain information on sources and application of goods and services.

Furthermore, on health information, World Health Organization says "health is wealth". The service of the public health department in the state could not be over emphasized. This was demonstrated in the way the respondents appreciated the effort of the health department in the dissemination of health related information services. Nevertheless, in the public information center all the materials both print and electronic format that are related to health are needed. On educational information need, education is not receiving proper attention in the area. This was further understood when interview shows that there are dilapidated school buildings, lack of books, teaching aids and inadequate infrastructures. All these culminate to a great number of school drop outs in the areas. On politics, people need information on political issues in the country. From interview the way people are into politics is getting much both the literate and non-literate members of the community. Some people in the community have chosen politics as their occupation.

8.2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION NEEDS

It was discovered that not all the dwellers has different information sources on their own to generate their information needs. Despite they referred television, resource person, internet café, radio, books and paper as their sources of information. Therefore, majority of the community dwellers want information from television but it's expensive to purchase

and maintain. Moreover, outage of light does not allow those that have television set to use it effectively. Substitute to this, is generator plants and with the economic turbulence of the country causing escalation of petrol price. Using of internet café, the respondents that uses this source complains on how expensive it is. Moreover, is rarely available within the local communities. Finally, facts generated through interview shows that there is no good library in schools also they did not have public information centre.

9   SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

1. It was discovered that, majority of the respondents want standard public information center to be established.

2. It was discovered that the number of illiterate are higher but they need education; while the educated respondents also need information. These call for establishment of standard public information center

3. The information need of the dwellers cuts across agriculture, business, health, politics and education. This shows that, the information to be acquired and stored in the public information system after its establishment should covered all the information needs of the respondents

4. The research shows that books & papers, television, radio, resource persons are the preferred sources of information to meet their needs. While, internet were less considered though is needed.

10   IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Everyone in a community needs information. Having standard public information center is of great important to the general public regardless of status, educational qualification or otherwise [5]. More to this, adequate information resources both print and non-print based on occupations or activities of the people to be made available in public information center is of great value [4]. Hence, it is very imperative to note that, if there is no standard public information center with well equipped information resources will cause the communities dwellers not to acquire their information needs. Hereby, affect the national development because information is a powerful holistic product to support development.
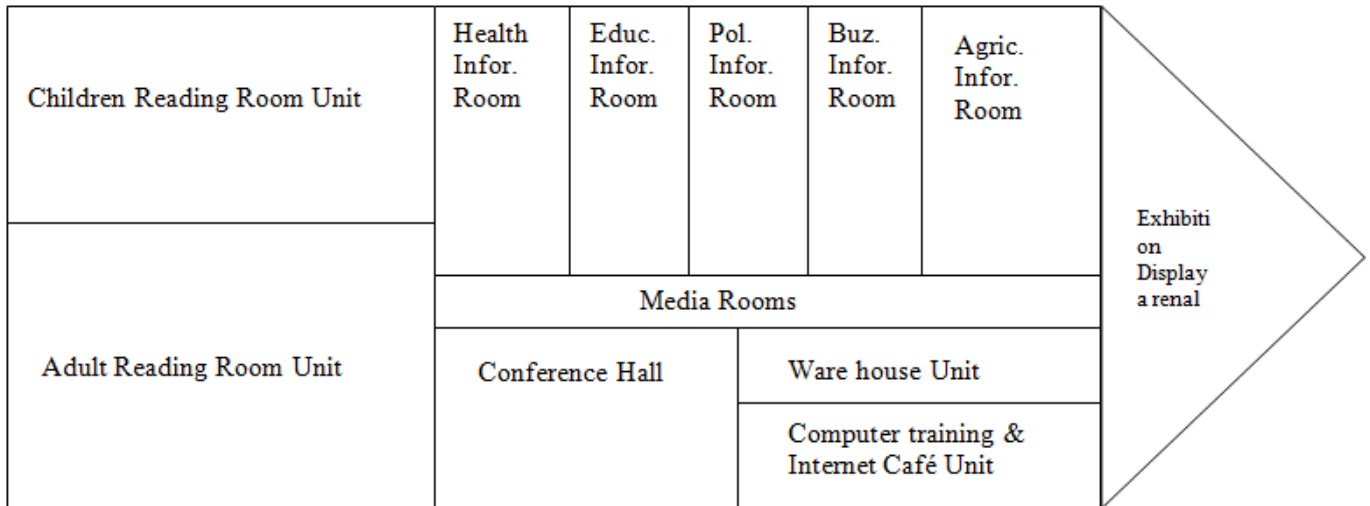
11   CONCLUSION

For effective national development, information services must be duly felt by everyone through standard public information center in every community. This is because information needs of every group can be determine, acquire, and store at the center for use; and its doors are widely open to general public. Finally, it was discovered that, there is no standard public information centre in local communities in Kogi-West senatorial district. This is a pathetic issue because it could have been the store house to make information needs of the communities' dwellers available in different sources and also present them in the best format needed.

12   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proffered to enhance achievement of the research findings

1. The philanthropist, local and state government of Kogi State should endeavor to establish standard pubic information centre in the communities and site them where there is less noise and the area should be of good drainage pattern.
2. Both paraprofessionals and professionals librarian should be employed in order to meet up the demands for efficient and effective of local community information dissemination.
3. Library management should sensitizing the general public on the existence and importance of the public information centre materials and services available through bulletin, public lecture, exhibition and film show.
4. Information resources to be provided at the center should include books and papers, television, radio, internet, resource person that will cover the dwellers information needs.
5. There should be provision for standby generator in case of power outage in the centers.
6. There should be human and electronic security system in the established centers
7. The management should work with local cultural institutions, ministries, such as Ministry of Education, Agriculture, Health and Commerce on domestic and International issues, in order to have up-to-date information in the centre
8. Architectural design of the standard public information centre should be built on below skeletal outlay.

Children Reading Room Unit	Health Infor. Room	Educ. Infor. Room	Pol. Infor. Room	Buz. Infor. Room	Agric. Infor. Room	Exhibiti on Display a renal
Adult Reading Room Unit	Media Rooms					
	Conference Hall		Ware house Unit			
			Computer training & Internet Café Unit			

REFERENCES

[1]   E. A. Aloli, "Information needs of Rural Business Women in Plateau State, Nigeria". *Zaria Journal of Librarianship,* vol.7, no.1&2, pp. 2, 2004.

[2]   M. Elmadre, "Information as the Fourth Vital Element and Its Influence on the Culture of People", *Journal of information Science*, vol. 13, no. 3 pp.150-151, 1985.

[3]   I. M. Ogbonna, Public Library Services Provided by the Enugu State Library Board from 2007-2010: A Statistical Report. *Nigerian Libraries,* vol. 44, no.1, pp.73-88, 2011.

[4]   N. Yusuf, *National and International Library planning,* London: Dowes & Bowes, 2002.

[5]   B. Luckham, *Library and Society.* London: Wonson Makinta, 1981.

[6]   H. O. Iwuji, "Librarianship and Oral Tradition". *Africa International Review*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp.53-55, 1990.

[7]   K. Krishan, *Library Administration and Management,* 2nd Ed. New Delhi, Mc Graw-Hill, 2004.

[8]   P. E. Edwin, *Local Public Library Administration,* 2nd Ed. Chicago, American Library Association, 1980.

[9]   L. O. Aina, *Library and Information Science Text for African.* Ibadan, Third world information service Ltd., 2004.

[10] L. O. Aina, *Agricultural Information in Africa.* Ibadan, Third world information service Ltd., 1995.

[11] K. Whittaker, *The Basic of Library Based on User Services*. London: Association Publishing Ltd., 1993.