

Inclusive Librarianship for Learners with Special Needs: rethinking the public and academic library system

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Abstract

This paper is a discourse on inclusive librarianship for learners with special needs in the era of inclusive education with emphasis on public and academic library systems. The paper presents highlights on: libraries and the principle of inclusive librarianship, a synopsis of the current situation in public and academic libraries, rationalization for inclusive library services in public and academic libraries, the analysis of people with special needs. There are expectations and challenges of librarians towards driving inclusive librarianship for inclusive education such as lack of well-defined policy for inclusive librarianship, low level of technological development, low level of funding, dearth of skilled librarians, poor understanding of the concept of inclusive librarianship, low level of ICT literacy skills and poor interpersonal communication skills. These were identified as challenges to effective inclusive library services in support of inclusive education. The paper concludes that a nexus between inclusive librarianship and inclusive education are inseparable entities of inclusion theory that fosters development in any society.

Keywords

Inclusive Education, Inclusive Librarianship, Special Needs, Public Library, Academic Library System

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Introduction

From the time of creation to this very day, different people have lived in the various ages with some classes of persons being at advantage when compared to others. Right from the primitive age till modern age, there are classes of people who unless they are provided with specialized services, could not meet up with their expectations in the society. In other words, these set of persons must be given due attention in order to have a sense of belonging in the society or environment where they belong. This has brought about the principle of all inclusiveness. In every sector of contemporary society, the principle of inclusiveness is gradually becoming the norms. Today, we hear of "Association of Disabled Persons". In a recent development, there was agitation for certain number of employment slots to be given to the physically challenged persons and this is a pointer of having the need to be part and

parcel of the society where they belong. Also, in the area of sports, there have been series of competitions organized for these set of people with special needs and this has a way of giving them sense of belonging in the society where they find themselves. Undoubtedly, in every setting, there are people who either by act of omission or providence seems to be at disadvantage position, even when they are highly gifted. In which case, their contributions and relevance in societies may be undermined. This therefore points to the need for providing library services to meet the demand of people with special needs.

Libraries work as service organizations, which facilitate all their users without discrimination, including persons with special needs as well (Bashir *et al*, 2017). Libraries are natural supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, and can be developed to increase community capacity, thereby enhancing the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in

the communities where they live, work and learn (Moisey, 2007). Access to library resources has been seen as a valuable resource. It is a key element of inclusion, which involves much more than placement in a particular setting. The relationship of access and inclusion may not be obvious to individuals who are not familiar with the educational and social impact of vision loss (Zaid, 2018). Various libraries have been acting in line with this principle which is aimed at ensuring that all have access to education and information resources. Prominent among these libraries ensuring compliance with this principle is the public library.

Public libraries can encourage social inclusion and increase life quality for everyone including persons with disabilities (Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim, 2017). As rightly noted by Zaid (2018), inclusive library services have educational implications on students with visual impairment. More so, realizing the challenges that students with physical challenge face, various government have enacted laws that guarantee equal access for students with special needs.

Inclusive education has been internationally recognized as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and equality for all children, especially those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream education for reasons of disability, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics. Inclusive education is not a new idea. Communities have practiced inclusion for centuries and it is important to acknowledge and build on this wherever possible, so that inclusion becomes sustainable, with community ownership and involvement (Stubbs, 2008). It is in line with this, that this paper is presented under the following sub-headings:

- Libraries and the principle of inclusive librarianship;
- A synopsis of the current situation;

- The place of inclusive librarianship in the context of inclusive education;
- An analysis of people with special needs;
- Inclusive librarianship for inclusive education: expectation of librarians; and
- Challenges to effective inclusive library services in support of inclusive education

Libraries and the Principle of Inclusive Librarianship

Inclusion can mean different things to different people. An inclusive library is a vital community resource, addressing the diverse information needs of all members in the community (Ezeabasili & Umeji, n.d.). Undoubtedly, the subject of equality and inclusion has been on the international agenda for a number of decades now. This according to Samkange (2013) has been confirmed by the different frameworks for action in order to address the different forms of inequality and disparities in education. In the words of Oladele, Ogunwale & Dawat (2016), inclusionary practices are anchored on the principle of fundamental human rights and fundamental human rights here implies all students, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities have a right to be educated in the same classroom setting where possible. There are people in our society that are at disadvantaged by virtue of being physically challenged or otherwise. However, despite that these set of people are classified as physically challenged, there is need for public institutions such as the library to make room for such people. A major role of libraries serving the physically challenged is the development of the standards for fully accessible, highly functional information systems that is effective in meeting their information and educational needs (Igwebuike & Agbo, 2015). Evidently, inclusive librarianship aligns with the principle of social inclusion; Social inclusion

according Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim (2017) is the core of social development, which is expected to produce similar social life and to be included in the welfare of all communities. As aptly captured by Fourie (2007), social inclusion refers to all efforts and policies to promote equality of opportunity to people from all circumstances and from all socially excluded categories. Inclusion therefore, implies that students with special needs meet in a mainstream education system that embraces a wide diversity of learners. It is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all children, youth, and adults through increasing participation in learning cultures, and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education (Mugambi, 2017).

Inclusive library service means the library having users living with disability in mind during the conceptualization of its service. This however, starts from the construction of the library building by putting them into consideration as well as adding some aids like lifts and flat climbing steps for wheel chairs, acquisition of their information resources and employment of trained staff specifically for them. Inclusive librarianship is about ensuring all library users have the same opportunities, and this requires an analysis of the state of library facilities services, activities, collections and programmes on offer through the prism of users with disabilities.

Libraries sit at the heart of our communities every day, people of all ages visit their local library for reading, learning conducting research, communication with others, or for just socializing with others (Moisey, 2007). Provision of equitable access to information in whatever format is critical to creating an inclusive environment in the university libraries (Zaid & Zaid, 2017). According to Malenia Abdullah, Dube & Chaura (2018), inclusive academic libraries provide services that enhance access, increase meeting the

needs of all library users and improve use of information for their academic tasks. Also, inclusive academic libraries provide service that enhance access, increase meeting the needs of all library users and improve use of information for their academic tasks (Malemia *et al*, 2018.). According to Ezeabasili & Umeji (n.d.), there are so many inclusive services libraries provide to help meet the information needs of students with disabilities.

Looking at the need to give people with special needs an inclusive education, it is imperative that there should be a rethink towards the public and academic library system; this rethink will help in repositioning the public and academic library system for inclusive library services.

A Synopsis of the Current Situation in Public and Academic Libraries

Libraries and information centres around the world have developed specialized information services to meet the library and information needs of their clients that are challenged (Malenia, Abdullah, Dube & Chaura, 2018). For instance, the visually impaired clientele needs Braille books, which is a system of reading and writing whereby raised dots are use to represent letters which are read by touch, talking books, which are audio versions of books that could be recorded on cassettes, CD- ROM, DVD and on the internet as e-books and are preferred by majority of the visually impaired, talking newspapers, large printed materials in form of documents printed in large fonts for use by partially sighted users; and electronic texts, in form of computer text-files (Rayini, 2017 as cited in Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade, 2018).

Chaputula & Mapulanga (2016) citing Nassimbem & De Jager (2014), Mayinge & Stilwel (2013) affirmed that libraries in developing countries are beginning to provide assistive technologies as well as reading materials to people with disabilities.

More so, libraries have put in place working lifts and ramps to assist with the mobility of people with disabilities. Whereas, information resources in Braille and large print are being procured to enable people with disabilities to access information sources more easily. According to Benson, Onuoha & Mbagwu (2018), public libraries as a social institution in Nigeria just like most developing countries hardly meet up to the expectations of school children, especially those with special needs such as being physically challenged or internally displaced.

From the above, there is a clear indication that there is a paradigm shift in the provision of information services, whereby efforts are being made to ensure that people from different stratum of the society are being catered for in the educational sector as well as in the delivery of library and information services.

Rationalization for Inclusive Library Services in Public and Academic Libraries

Promoting inclusion is the key for reducing or removing barrier affecting the provision of library and information services. Libraries, as the providers of information should be at the forefront of removing the barriers hindering access to information and must be designed to be universally accessible, and universal access should be the norm, access for people with disabilities should not be an add on to existing service (Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade, 2018). According to Ezeabasili & Umeji (n.d.), promoting inclusion is the key for reducing or removing several barriers facing students with disabilities, and common disabilities include blindness, deafness, dumbness retardation, muscular, nervous, and sensory disorders. Igwebuike & Agbo (2015), posit that every person, be it normal or challenged is to be given free access to information. In other words, users living with any form of disability have the same or similar information needs as every other member of the community that host the library.

More so, Iroeze, Umunnakwe & Eze (2017) contend that libraries as centre of knowledge, whose basic role is to educate the population cannot leave out the physically challenged. In which case, the physically challenged needs special library service to limit their obvious inhibition in the use and exploitation of the information contents of the library. This is because people with disabilities are not able to access library services in the same way as others. Moisey (2007) further contend that for people with developmental disabilities, like other citizens, access to and the ability to use web-based information and communication technology is important for inclusion and social participation as well as for both formal and informal online learning.

Similarly, Sambo & Bwoi (2015) as cited in Benson, Onuoha & Mbagwu (2018), affirmed that children with disabilities like all children are individuals and have their own needs and abilities, while boys and girls with mobility impairments may have trouble entering inaccessible school building, children with sensory impairment may primarily face communication issues. Children with disabilities have a right to access public libraries; however, there are barriers to the reality of this for children with disabilities and their families (Kaeding, Velasquez & Price, 2017). Given the importance of equal access to information by all members of society for education, civic participation, employment, interaction with the government, and many other vital functions, it is essential to frame the study of information in the most inclusive terms possible (Jaeger *et al*, 2011).

However, Zaid (2018) argues that placing a student with visual impairment in a regular academic setting does not, necessarily, provide access to library services, and the student is not, necessarily, included. A student with visual impairment who does not have access to library service to support learning and research activities because of

visual impairment, is not included, regardless the physical campus setting.

No doubt, the issues of social inclusion cannot be divorced from library services in relation to inclusive education. The inclusive libraries project according to Cruz (2018) seeks to respond to one of the major objectives of public libraries, providing a service, being accessible to all citizens and giving an opportunity for present and future development for everyone, particularly for persons with a disability, whether it be physical, intellectual and/or sensory. As rightly noted by Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim (2017), library services, especially public library service is universal and such services can be enjoyed by anyone without any exception. Public library services should be able to accommodate the information needs of all users, including person with disabilities, likewise, academic libraries.

Disability in this context is broadly defined to include physical, perceptual, and development challenges; this is a phenomenon of the interface between personal characteristics of the individual and the specific design of the social and physical environment that the individual inhabits. Disabilities are "long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders full and effective participation in society (Hill, 2013). Todaro (2005) in Chaputula & Mapulanga (2016) defined disability as a physical or mental condition that in some way prohibits an individual from performing daily tasks.

People with disabilities are not able to access library service in the same way as others (Chaputula & Mapulanga, 2016). Library services delivery for students with visual impairment has continued to be a challenging task in Nigeria (Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade, 2018). Persons with visual impairment have long suffered exclusion in the provisions made in different types of

libraries to satisfy the needs of users, through service and structural designs.

Enhancing the accessibility of local public libraries helps build social capital, increasing the capacity of the community to meet the needs of all its citizens including those with disabilities and particularly those with developmental disabilities, the focus of the project reported herein (Moisey, 2007).

The Place of Inclusive Librarianship in the Context of Inclusive Education

The inclusion movement believes that children with special needs should be placed in the regular school classroom which they would have otherwise attended, if they had been normal children. In other words, each child belongs to the regular classroom and therefore, there should be no condition imposed, to exclude him/her from that environment (Garuba, 2003). Garuba noted further, that inclusive education promotes a sense of cooperation and the feeling of togetherness in the learning; promotes favourable completion among school children of different abilities, endowment and background; it also provides a means of building a cooperate school community, where all are accommodated and able to participate. As noted by Akinbola (2011), given the importance of education in any society, it would be a great disservice to exclude a segment of society from this benefit.

Ajuwon (2008) affirmed that supporters of inclusion use the term to refer to the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the ancillary services to the child, and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). Soriano, Watkins & Ebersold, (2010) conceptualized inclusive education as a process for increasing participation and reducing exclusion, in a way that effectively

responds to the diverse needs of learners. Inclusive education system means that the whole education system considers the measures it must take to be able to provide an appropriate education with all children learning together. Mitchell (2015) views inclusive education as a multifaceted concept that requires educators at all levels of their systems to attend to vision, placement, curriculum, assessment, teaching acceptance, access, support, resources and leadership. According to Nandini & Taji, (2014), inclusive in education is an approach to educate students with special educational needs and under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all their time with non-disabled students. The objective of inclusive education is to allow every student the chance to learn and participate in a class that provides challenges and opportunities for success (Dipace, 2013). Dipace (2013) further averred that inclusive education represents a significant change in the world of school and more generally of all the educational settings, with the core aim of promoting the integration of students with special needs in the group of their peers; therefore, schools are required to adapt to accommodating a heterogeneous group of students with a variety of needs.

The library serves a bridge for people with special needs to obtain information and education as well as a space for social interaction between persons with disabilities with other communities (Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim, 2017). Librarianship long ago made the commitment to diversity and inclusion as foundational elements of the profession (Jaeger *et al*, 2011). Iroka & Ndulaka, (2018), acknowledge that libraries have since ages been associates with education and that they serve as tool for sustainable development through the support they offer to the educational sector.

Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim (2017) pointed out that there are still many public facilities which do not accommodate the needs of

person with disabilities because of the lack of thorough understanding of person with disabilities, its limitation as well as their needs. In the view of Igwebuike & Agbo (2015), every person, be it normal or challenged is to be given free access to information and those users with disabilities face various challenges in the quest to satisfy their information needs.

Promoting inclusion is the key for reducing or removing several barriers facing students with disabilities (Ezeabasili & Umeji, n.d.). They further conclude that students living with disability have the same information needs as every other student in the academic environment, but they need a more convenient format to access that information from the library.

Libraries as centre of knowledge, whose basic role is to educate the population cannot leave out the physically challenged. In which case, the physically challenged needs special library services to limit their obvious inhibitions in the use and exploitation of the information contents of the library (Iroeze, Umunnakwe & Eze, 2017). According to Chaputula & Mapulanga (2016), people with disabilities face numerous challenges when it comes to using different types of libraries. The challenges include access to the physical library buildings, access to information resources, and lack of services that are tailor made for them. Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade (2018), opined that the category of handicapped people are often excluded from social activities and are not treated in the same way as their able-bodies equals.

Inclusive education becomes important for every community member to access education as this will lead to an increase in social and political awareness, heightened aspiratory self-assurance and assertiveness (Olofunke & Oluremi, 2014). Olofunke & Oluremi noting further, contend that it is also discovered that when put into proper practice, in inclusive education, all students attend and are welcome by their

neighborhood schools and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. Therefore, the provision of an inclusive education to all is necessary because it is linked to human, economic, and social development goals (Mugambi, 2017).

An Analysis of People with Special Needs

In the context of providing library services for persons with special needs, it is important to explain the various categories of people with special needs that library services should be provided for in line with the principle of social inclusion or inclusive education. Abdelrahman (2016) in Benson, Onuoha & Mbagwu (2018) explained the term "Special needs" in the context of library services as relating to the need of people who cannot make use of conventional libraries, library materials and services. There are different categories of library users with special needs. They are:

Physically challenged persons - these are those who are disabled by physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medical conditions or mental illness and these impairments being permanent or transitory in nature. Physically challenged is the term used to describe those individuals with various forms of disabilities like: blindness, deafness, loss of weakness of limbs and mentally retardation etc. The major role of libraries serving the physically challenged is the development of the standards for fully accessible, highly functional information systems that is effective in meeting their information and educational needs (Igwebuike & Agbo, 2015)

Handicapped: within the context of libraries the handicapped are defined as those whose health problems interfere with learning to such an extent that special services, training equipment, materials or facilities are required (Iroeze, Umunnakwe & Eze, 2017).

People with visual impairment: Visual impairment is a severe ophthalmological

challenge that some people are born with or develop sometime in life due to a number of diverse causes. As noted by Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade (2018), of all the physiological and related morbidities, many people consider visual impairment as one that presents the most handicapping threats because it limits physical movement and the perception of information through sight. They noted further that there are various categorisations that have emerged for persons with visual impairment, basically aiming at differentiating those whose vision loss is total, final and absolute from those who have some impaired form of vision acuity. Also, it can be categorised into people who are partially-sighted or completely blind as well as the fully certified blind, individuals with low vision, astigmatic patients and the partially sighted. Whichever they are categorized, the truce remain that they are part of the society and despite their challenges, there is need to recognize them and make provisions for them in the overall scheme of activities of both private and public institutions. Visually impaired category are often excluded from social activities and are not treated in the same way as their able-bodied equals (Aramide, Lawal & Odumlade, 2015).

Library service to persons with visual impairment in libraries refers to the specific professional assistance and other various forms of guidance given to them in the process of serving their information need (Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade, 2018). Exclusion of persons with visual impairment for virtual environment has become more pronounced in the digital era unlike the situation in pre-electronic era when the university library environment was described in terms of its location, quality of collections, services, operating hours and attitude of personal in the library (Zaid & Zaid, 2017).

Providing equal access to library resources and service for students with special needs such as visual impairment involves much

more than providing ramps. Zaid (2018) noting further averred that students with visual impairments will not assume to be included unless their unique information needs are addressed by specially trained library personnel, and granted equal access to library service through alternative formats.

Internally displaced adolescents: Another category of people with special needs are internally displaced adolescents who are faced with various educational problems and these include inaccessibility to library/laboratory facilities (Durosaro & Ajiboye, 2011). These children with special needs must be given sense of belonging in the society by giving them educational opportunities among other privileges (Benson, Onuoha & Mbagwu, 2018).

From the above, one could see the different categories of people with special needs that public and academic libraries should provide inclusive library services for, as part of the inclusive education process.

Inclusive Librarianship for Inclusive Education: Expectation of Librarians

Library and information professionals can adopt different strategies in ensuring that the drive for inclusive library services towards sustainable inclusive education is achieved. Some of which include but not limited to the followings:

- a. **Intensive lobbying and advocacy:** effective library service delivery for people with special need is dependent on fund, which is required for the acquisition of tools and facilities needed to provide all inclusive library services. Heads of libraries could harness lobbying and advocacy initiatives in engaging management of public and academic libraries into ensuring that all inclusive library service is delivered. No wonder, Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim (2017) posit that social inclusion for person with

disabilities also requires comprehensive cooperation between various lines of the wider society and it can be accomplished by promoting disability awareness to give explanation about the different characteristics of the disability to the public.

- b. **Reviving of handicapped library services in public libraries:**

Handicapped library services are activities or programmes undertaken in order to satisfy the information needs of the handicapped. According to Iroeze, Umunnakwe & Eze (2017), the handicapped within the context of libraries are those whose health problems interfere with learning to such an extent that special services, training equipment, materials or facilities are required. There is need to fully revive the handicapped library services section of public libraries. There is need to give this section of public library system a new face through the integration of ICT to the services provided in the handicapped section of the library.

- c. **Collaborating with non-governmental organizations/other specialised agencies.**

If librarians are to fully drive inclusive librarianship to full reality, it is pertinent that library and information professionals collaborate with non-governmental agencies /organizations or other agencies with similar objectives or areas of interest

- d. **Organizing of special activities for groups of people with disabilities:**

It is pertinent that special activities should be organized for group of persons with special needs in both public and special libraries. Cruz (2018) suggested the following as special activities for group of people with disabilities:

- Book club for people with intellectual/vision disability with regular meetings in the library
- Activities to normalize disability
- Family reading and writing workshop in Braille given by a blind person
- Story telling in sign language and signing classes for babies aged 0-2
- Story telling interpreted in sign language
- Author's presentation of books featuring main characters with disability.
- Virtual access to library services for those not able to visit the actual building.

Most library staff is not aware of talking books, braille books, sign language and telecommunication, devices for deaf persons (Bashir *et al*, 2017).

Furthermore, library service to persons with visual impairment in libraries refers to the specific professional assistance and other various forms of guidance given to them in the process of serving their information need (Aramide, Lawal & Odunlade, 2018). They noted further that because of their peculiarities of being totally sightless or partially sighted, the media formats used to satisfy the information needs of persons with visual impairment differ in formats. Here, the provision of media formats has to be done taking cognizance of the fact that their handicapping condition makes it impossible for them to read "ink print" that is usually on paper. According to Ezeabasili & Umeji (n.d.), there are so many inclusive services libraries provide to help meet the information needs of students with disabilities. Some of the services include inclusive circulation services, inclusive reference services. Also, the doors to the library should be wide enough to ensure that clients using wheel chairs and walkers are able to access the library.

Malemia, Abdullah, Dube & Chaura (2018) averred that libraries can engage in the following as part of inclusive librarianship

e. Matching inclusive library service with needs of people with special needs:

Through the provision of innovative creative library services, libraries can adopt a strategic approach towards modelling inclusive library services with the needs of people with special needs. Igwebuike & Agbo recognized that different types of disability require different types of specialized library services. For instance, Watson as cited in Igwebuike & Agbo (2015), articulated the ways of improving access and services provided by libraries for the physically challenged, which include:

- Physical access to buildings, service counters, workstations, reading rooms, and shelves where possible
- Intellectual access to the content of information carriers, including the availability of alternative format materials, adapted workstations and special software.
- Training for library staff members in helping physically disabled.

1. Provision of materials in different formats like Braille, large print materials and audio textbooks so that the visually and learning impaired can use whenever they are using the library.
2. Provision of shelves, table and chairs of good height especially for the mobility of impaired and those with short height.

3. Provision of policies that will guide the provision of library services to physically challenged students.
4. Allocate enough money in the budget for the procurement of equipments and resources for the physically challenged students

Challenges to Effective Inclusive Library Services in Support of Inclusive Education

The tasks of implementing inclusive library services in support of inclusive education are not without challenges. Outlined below are some of the challenges to inclusive library services in both public and academic libraries

- a. **Lack of well-defined policy for inclusive librarianship:** Though there is an existing principle of public libraries providing inclusive library services as defined in several documents but the reality is that most public libraries in Nigeria and other developing countries do not have an internally well-defined policy to guide the provision of inclusive library services.
- b. **Low level of technological development:** Most public and academic libraries do not have the necessary technologies that can be incorporated into meeting the needs of people with special needs. Technological devices that will assist the visually impaired library users are hardly available in both public and academic libraries. The popular Braille resources are not available, in few instances, where such is available, it is usually outdated.
- c. **Low level of funding:** over the years, funding of libraries has been a continuous recurring challenge. Most state governments in Nigeria hardly pay librarians in public libraries, let alone to provide for equipment or training of staff. The academic libraries are under the same situation, as the parent institution. More often than not, monies released for library development are often diverted to other projects. Adequate funding of libraries is a must, if libraries are to contribute significantly to the success and sustainability of inclusive library service delivery.
- d. **Dearth of skilled librarians:** Most library staff in public and academic libraries lack the prerequisite skills necessary to deliver inclusive librarianship. Alemma (1995) as cited by Ezeabasili & Umeji identified the problems of inclusive library services as lack of skilled manpower to produce materials needed by the handicapped. This may result in poor production of the materials. Lack of properly trained library personnel importation often poses the problem of obtaining material that do not relate to the culture and background of the students as well as architectural barriers.
- e. **Poor understanding of the concept of inclusive librarianship:** the poor perception of inclusive education and role of libraries among librarians is an inhibiting factor to all round inclusive education. This has led most librarians and libraries towards not making necessary provision for people with special needs.
- f. **Low level of ICT Literacy skills:** The low level of ICT literacy among most librarians is an inhibiting factor to the realization of inclusive library services for sustainable inclusive education. In line with this, Benson, Onuoha & Mbagwu (2018) pointed out that there are several challenges limiting the extent public libraries can fully provide library services to children and young people with special needs. These include lack of trained librarians in provision of specialized library services, low level of ICT literacy skills and low level of the technological facilities.

- g. **Poor interpersonal communication skill:** The absence of good interpersonal communication skill is a hindrance to the fulfillment of inclusive education. As aptly captured in Ekaputri & Susetyo-Salim (2017), library staff must be equipped with interpersonal communication skills that can be useful in order to know the needs of persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

Libraries over the years have served as instrument of knowledge acquisition as well as instrument for all round education. The paper has discussed inclusive librarianship for learners with special needs in the era of inclusive education. It is the position of the paper therefore for a nexus to exist between inclusive librarianship and inclusive education; they are inseparable entities of inclusion theories that foster development in any society.

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