

## **ACCESSING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TWO SELECTED PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The dynamism in the activities of organizations has called for transformation to help and create development solutions that are culturally acceptable to society in decision making for sustainable national development. The study sought to investigate accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development in two selected public libraries in South East Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions. This study adopted survey research design. The total population of this study was 226 library staff from Anambra and Imo States Library Boards both in South-East Nigeria. The researcher adopted the entire population as sample size. Instrument for data collection was a web based structured (online Google form) questionnaire designed on a four –point rating scale. Out of the 226 copies of questionnaire sent, 208 responses were received showing a 92% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean(x) scores (using 2.50 midpoint) based on the research questions and presented in tables. The result of the analysis showed: that users needed to access indigenous knowledge in public libraries for sustainable national development; the public library plays an important role in accessing indigenous knowledge by disseminating information to the community users to participate more actively in sustainable national development though the public libraries face numerous challenges in playing these roles. Based on the findings, the study recommended among other things that: public libraries should ensure efforts toward strengthening the recognition of indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development; serve as custodians of IK, preserving and promoting cultural heritage for future generations, while also facilitating access to IK for sustainable national development.*

**Keywords:** Access, Indigenous knowledge, Sustainable, National Development, Public Library.

### **Introduction**

Public libraries are tax-supported libraries serving the generality of the public without bias to sex, age, race, or religion free of charge and on equal basis. They include materials on a wide range of subjects to cater for all levels of demand (Nwosu, 2000). The public library is a local

gateway to knowledge which provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making in cultural development and social group (UNESCO, 2005). It exists from civilization of mankind and acts as the important custodian of human culture, knowledge and social customs (Kaliya-Perumal & Banskam, 2010). The public library is a welfare centre which provides useful services to the community by fostering education, promoting culture, providing scope for healthy recreation and disseminates information to all sections of the society (Abraham, 2010). It is also the community education centre with traditional style in a wider canvas, it provides socio-cultural recreation and which often provides community information through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Public libraries are treasuries of indigenous knowledge (IK), centres on community commons by highlighting curated resources, tools, and stories that advance cultural renewal, intergenerational healing for the indigenous people. Public libraries acquire books and lend those books out to the community to improve literacy, share knowledge and provide education and entertainment. According to Abdulmumin, Bashorun, and Omopupa, (2012) libraries and archives are custodians of knowledge and cultural heritage. They hold drawings, paintings, and other documentary artifacts, including manuscripts, records books, and audio-visual items. Byrne (2005) viewed archives, libraries and museums as treasuries of indigenous experiences, knowledge and history. Nakata and Langton (2005) posited that the library and information profession has a great deal to learn if they are to effectively meet the information needs of the indigenous people and manage indigenous knowledge in an appropriate way. Many libraries recognize IK as an important source of developmental information. Indigenous people continue to be generous in sharing their knowledge with libraries, and so libraries must maintain the momentum (Nakata & Langton, 2005). According to Senanayake (2006), IK is the unique knowledge confined to a particular culture or society. It is also known as local knowledge, folk knowledge, people's knowledge, traditional wisdom or traditional science (Herbal Medicine). This knowledge is generated and transmitted by communities, over time, in an effort to cope with their own agro-ecological and socio-economic environments. Sarkhel (2016) sees indigenous knowledge as the knowledge that people in a given community developed over time, and has made positive contributions towards sustainable development.

In view of this, building on IK can be particularly effective in helping to reach the poor since IK is often the only asset they control, and certainly one with which they are very familiar. Public libraries utilize indigenous knowledge to increase the sustainability of national development efforts because its integration process provides for mutual learning and adaptation, which in turn contributes to the empowerment of local communities. Since efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability are key determinants of the quality of developmental work, harnessing indigenous knowledge has a clear development business case (Gorjestani, 2000; UNESCO, 2018). Indigenous knowledge is a valuable resource that has been passed down through generations, providing insights into the cultural, social, and environmental aspects of a community. Public

libraries, as repositories of knowledge, have a crucial role to play in preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the importance of indigenous knowledge, it remains largely inaccessible in public libraries, limiting its potentials to contribute to sustainable national development. The lack of systematic organization, documentation, and dissemination of indigenous knowledge hinders its utilization, perpetuating the knowledge gap between generations and perching the cultural heritage of communities at risk of erosion. Additionally, there may be issues related to intellectual property rights and ownership of indigenous knowledge. Many indigenous communities are rightfully concerned about the exploitation of their knowledge and resources without proper recognition or compensation. This can create barriers to sharing indigenous knowledge more broadly and utilizing it for sustainable development purposes. Furthermore, the language barrier can pose a significant challenge in accessing and understanding IK in public libraries. Much of this knowledge is passed down through non-mainstream languages or dialects, making it difficult for non-indigenous individuals to engage with and learn from it. Efforts to preserve and promote indigenous languages alongside their associated knowledge are essential for ensuring their continued accessibility and relevance. Accessing indigenous knowledge (IK) in public libraries is essential for sustainable national development. This endeavour, however, presents a complex and multifaceted challenge. A comprehensive and inclusive approach is necessary to overcome it.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to investigate accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development in two selected public libraries in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to;

1. examine the necessity of accessing IK for sustainable national development in two selected public libraries in South East, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the role of public libraries in facilitating access to indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development in South East, Nigeria
3. identify the benefits for accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development in two selected public libraries in South East, Nigeria
4. find out challenges for accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development in two selected public libraries in South East, Nigeria

### **Review of Literature**

Accessing indigenous knowledge in public libraries for sustainable national development is of paramount importance in today's globalized world. The integration of indigenous knowledge into public library systems has the potential of not only preserving valuable cultural heritage but also contributing significantly to the sustainable development of nations. This integration can bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern practices, leading to innovative solutions

to pressing societal challenges. According to IFLA (2018), public libraries have been recognized as essential institutions for preserving and providing access to indigenous knowledge. Jangkhohao and Bikika, (2021) posited that public libraries have a gigantic role in sustaining IK for national development as it is regarded as storehouses of knowledge, where recorded knowledge is collected, organized for retrieval, preserved and made available for use. Libraries have long been crowned knowledge institutions as they provide the public with spaces for information and learning. This space is accessible to all groups in the society, regardless of gender, age, and ethnic affiliation (IFLA, 2013). Salawn (2010) opined that libraries are potent instruments of creation, acquisition and dissemination of local content, thus preserving and promoting transmission of cultural practices and values from one generation to another. Public libraries help in collecting, preserving, and disseminating IK and publicizing the value, contribution, and importance of indigenous knowledge to both non-indigenous and indigenous people, involving elders and communities in the production of IK and encouraging the recognition of intellectual property laws to ensure the proper protection and use of IK. The National Library of South Africa deals with making recorded IK available for users (Lor, 2004). The importance of local/IK and its potential in the sustainable use of natural resources has been emphasized repeatedly in international discourse on sustainable development (Akesbejo-Samsons, 2009).

The concept of IK encompasses the practical approaches and local wisdom of communities, which are essential for achieving sustainable development. Actually, IK does not provide a single definition of the concept in academic platforms. Individuals perceive IK in different perspectives, but all connote the same meaning. Indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge that is unique to a culture or society. Indigenous knowledge can be called local knowledge, folk knowledge, people's knowledge, traditional wisdom, or traditional science. This knowledge is passed from generation to generation, usually by word of mouth and cultural rituals, and has been the basis for agriculture, food preparation, health care, education, conservation and the wide range of other activities that sustain societies in many parts of the world. Indigenous knowledge refers to the traditions, customs, and practices that have been passed down through generations within a specific community or culture. This knowledge often holds valuable insights and solutions to various challenges, making it essential for sustainable development initiatives. Indigenous communities preserve and transmit knowledge using techniques like oral storytelling and experiential instruction. Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze (2010) citing Battiste and Hendersen stated that IK systems can only be understood through the methods of a particular community, such as apprenticeships, ceremonies and practice and in the environment in which the system originates. Stevens (2008) observed that the channels for communicating IK have become inaccessible to the indigenous people themselves, especially young people, because of the modern dependence on the written word and loss of facility with indigenous languages. Furthermore, libraries should collaborate with indigenous communities to acquire, store, and make IK accessible. UNESCO, (2018) stated that IK refers to the understanding, skills, and

philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings.

For rural and indigenous people, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. Indigenous knowledge can be defined as “a body of knowledge built up by a group of people through generations of living in close contact with nature”. Nakata and Langton (2005), posited that IK is the knowledge, innovation, and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world, developed from experiences over centuries, and adapted to the local culture and environment, transmitted orally from generation to generation. They continue stressing that IK is collectively owned and exists as stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, norms, beliefs, rituals, local languages and agricultural practices including the development of plant species and animal breeds. IK is human experiences, organized and ordered into accumulated knowledge with the objectives to utilize it to achieve quality of life and to create a livable environment for both human and other forms of life (Serote, 2001). Ajibade (2008), Sharma (2014), and Ogbebor (2011) buttressed the fact that IK exists in all spheres of life for the basis of local-level decision-making such as in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, politics, land/ natural resource management, engineering, sports, cultural preservation /promotion, savings and lending, herbal medicine and a host of other activities in rural communities.

IK is embedded in community/sustainable practices, institutions, relationships and rituals. It is essentially tacit knowledge that is not easily codifiable. IK is usually adapted and specific to local ecological conditions and to community members’ social and economic situations and cultural beliefs. This knowledge can be simple or complex. It is not static, but evolves in response to changing ecological, economical, and socio-political circumstances, based on the creativity and innovation of members and as a result of the influence of other cultures and outside technologies. It facilitates communication and decision making and there is a growing appreciation of the value of IK. It has become valuable not only to those who depended on it in their daily lives but to modern industry and agriculture as well. Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze (2010) noted that IK has made a tremendous contribution to crop production by poor farmers. Okunye and Ayinde (2004) affirmed that small-scale resource farmers have good reasons for sticking with their local knowledge and farming practices, because modern technologies can only be successful and sustainable if IK is taken into consideration. It is now accepted that the concept of IK goes beyond this narrow interpretation. IK is now considered to be cultural knowledge in its broadest sense, including all of the social, political, economic and spiritual aspects of a local way of life for sustainable development.

IK is embedded in a dynamic system in which spirituality, kinship, local politics and other factors are tied together and influence one another. Spiritual beliefs about nature may influence how resources are managed and how willing people are to adopt new resources management strategies (Jangkhohao & Bikika, 2011 citing International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). The generation, adaptation and use of IK are greatly influenced by the culture, economic,

social, political and geographical contexts which also contribute to generating IK, but to a lesser extent. Indigenous knowledge systems showed great diversity not only among ethnic groups but among locations also. Since it is essential to development, it must be gathered, organized and disseminated in the same systematic way as modern knowledge (Agrawal, 2004)

Indigenous knowledge as a whole is based mainly on locally available resources such as land, water, local knowledge, culture and the way people organize themselves. Indigenous development strives to optimize the dynamics of these resources, thus enhancing cultural diversity, human welfare and ecological stability (Jaja, 2006). Tabuti and Damme (2012) observed the immense role that indigenous knowledge can play in socio-economic development, people outside the immediate community or sometimes even within the community are unaware of this potential and remain skeptical. Thus, there is also a need to raise awareness, through dissemination among the community, of the most appropriate knowledge and technologies, and the benefits of adapting them. Public libraries can promote access to IK by creating an environment which permits face-to-face forum and network formation to discuss and debate on issues that might be useful to members of the communities, for example public libraries can organize talk shows involving traditional rulers, elderly people, and professionals to gather and record information on various local vocations from different subject areas ranging from agriculture, ecosystem, medical care, and conflict resolution.

Kofi (2020) posed that in the realm of related literature, numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of incorporating indigenous knowledge into public libraries. One key aspect is the recognition of indigenous knowledge as a valid and valuable source of information. Indigenous knowledge encompasses a wide array of traditional practices, beliefs, and skills accumulated over generations. By making this knowledge accessible in public libraries, communities can tap into a rich repository of wisdom that offers unique insights into sustainable living, environmental conservation, and community resilience. Furthermore, research has shown that incorporating indigenous knowledge into public library collections can enhance cultural diversity and promote inclusivity. By providing access to indigenous perspective, libraries can foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation ultimately contributing to social cohesion and harmony within diverse societies. This inclusivity is essential for sustainable national development, as it ensures that marginalized voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes.

Moreover, studies have demonstrated that integrating IK into public libraries can empower local communities and strengthen their sense of identity and pride. By knowledge through library resources and programmes, communities can reclaim and celebrate their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and intergenerational continuity. This empowerment is vital for sustainable national development, as it nurtures a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the preservation of cultural practices and environmental stewardship. However, challenges persist in documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge due to issues of cultural sensitivity, intellectual property rights, and inadequate infrastructure. Aboyade, (2017) observed that effective strategies for accessing and utilizing indigenous knowledge are crucial for

sustainable national development. The basic component of any country's knowledge system is its IK. It encompasses the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood (Ogbebor, 2011). The integration of IK into the sustainable national development in Nigeria, is essentially a process of exchange of information from one community to another. The process of exchange of IK within and between developing countries, and industrial countries is an ideal outcome of a successful development process. IK is most effectively used in development projects as a source of innovative solutions because of its perspective of being intensely local and long term (Huysamen, 2003; Sarkhel, 2016; Sharma, 2014 citing Rouse). Mohamedbhai (2013) citing World Bank, asserted that the launching of IK for sustainable national development programme documented several cases to illustrate how IK can play a crucial role in development, which are:

- a. improving primary education by using local language as a means of instruction in West Africa
- b. provision of primary health care to help reduce child mortality in Eritrea and Maternal Mortality in Uganda.
- c. empowering women in Senegal to facilitate the eradication of female circumcision,
- d. helping communities in Mozambique to manage coastal natural resources, and
- e. using traditional medicinal plants in Zimbabwe to treat malaria.

The author further, added that IK is important for development research in that:- a. local knowledge can help find the best solution to a development solution, b. familiarity can help extensionists and researchers understand, and communicate better with local people, c. IK represents the successful ways in which people have dealt with their environments. IK can help to meet the broader objectives of society, for instance conserving the environment, developing sustainable agriculture and ensuring food security, while its protection encourages the maintenance of traditional practices and lifestyles.

According to Eyong (2020), tapping into the intellectual resources and increasing the economic value of IK is a viable tool for sustainable development in the region. Hence, it is at the level of economic sustainability, self-reliance and cost effectiveness that IK continue to prove their viability and strength. In Nigeria, IK is utilized for community-centered development and collecting knowledge, this is because the Nigerian people need to revisit and re-examine local knowledge and culture. Thus, during the national carnival in Nigeria, all states exhibit their own cultural knowledge. Therefore, the exhibition of national carnival also helps IK for sustainable national development in all aspects of human life in the society such as development activities, biodiversity, environment, and solution for a culture. Supporting local and regional networks of traditional practitioners and community exchanges can help to disseminate useful and relevant IK and to enable communities to participate more actively in the development process. Olatokun's (2017) study explored the relationship between indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable development in Nigeria, highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge in promoting sustainable development, particularly in areas such as environmental conservation,

health care, and economic development, and identifying challenges and opportunities for integrating indigenous knowledge into development initiatives, including the need for policy support and community engagement.

Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze (2010) examined the role of libraries in preserving and making indigenous knowledge accessible, arguing that libraries can play a crucial role in documenting, storing, and disseminating indigenous knowledge, and highlighting the need for libraries to develop strategies for preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge, including digitization, community engagement, and collaboration. Agbo's (2015) work provides a review of indigenous knowledge systems and their significance for sustainable development in Nigeria, highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge in promoting cultural diversity, supporting local economic development, and addressing environmental challenges, and identifying benefits and challenges of indigenous knowledge, including the need for policy support and community engagement. Okoro's (2018) study explored the challenges and opportunities for documenting and preserving indigenous knowledge in Nigeria, identifying the need for effective strategies for documenting and preserving indigenous knowledge, and highlighting the importance of involving local communities in the documentation and preservation process, while also addressing challenges such as lack of documentation, cultural erosion, and the need for community engagement, and identifying opportunities for promoting documentation and preservation through digital technologies and collaboration. By addressing the challenges associated with documentation, classification, and awareness, nations can unlock the potentials of indigenous knowledge to inform policy-making, promote cultural heritage, and foster community resilience. This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the implications of accessing indigenous knowledge in public libraries and proposing strategies to leverage this valuable resource for sustainable national development.

### **Methodology**

The study adapted survey research design. The total population of this study is 226 library staff comprising one hundred and fifty (150) staff of Anambra State Library Board and seventy-six (76) staff of Imo State Library Board both in South-East, Nigeria. The researcher adopted the entire population as sample size. Instrument for data collection was facilitated through a web-based, structured questionnaire, utilizing a four-point rating scale (SA=4, A=3, D=2, SD=1). The questionnaire was administered online through Google Forms, and also distributed via WhatsApp and emails. The questionnaire has four clusters in line with the four research questions that guided the study. The questionnaire contained fifty-one (51) question items. Out of the two hundred and twenty-six (226) copies of the questionnaire sent, two hundred and eight (208) responses were received. This shows a 92% return rate for the instrument. Analysis was based on the number returned and data obtained from the respondents were organized and analyzed using mean(x). 2.50 midpoint was used to determine items that received positive or negative rating. Results of the analysis are presented in tables as shown below.

## Presentation and Discussion of Result

**Table I:** Necessity of Accessing IK for Sustainable National Development in two selected Public Libraries in South East, Nigeria

| S/n               | Question Items                                                                      | Mean (x)    | Decision |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1                 | Improve creativity, innovation, and decision – making                               | 3.43        | Positive |
| 2                 | Poverty reduction/alleviation                                                       | 2.97        | Positive |
| 3                 | Increasing cultural pride development                                               | 3.28        | Positive |
| 4                 | Increasing self-sufficiency and strengthening self-determination                    | 3.27        | Positive |
| 5                 | Building partnership for development process                                        | 3.37        | Positive |
| 6                 | Foresight and discovery                                                             | 3.0         | Positive |
| 7                 | Identify commercial opportunities                                                   | 3.08        | Positive |
| 8                 | Family history research                                                             | 3.43        | Positive |
| 9                 | Public programs                                                                     | 3.48        | Positive |
| 10                | National carnival development                                                       | 3.44        | Positive |
| 11                | Public assessment                                                                   | 3.42        | Positive |
| 12                | Economic growth, social and political stability                                     | 3.40        | Positive |
| 13                | Identification of mother tongue                                                     | 3.36        | Positive |
| 14                | Gives legitimacy and credibility to the initiative both locally and internationally | 3.41        | Positive |
| 15                | Motivation to solve local problems with local resources                             | 3.44        | Positive |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |                                                                                     | <b>3.32</b> |          |

Table 1 presents the need for accessing indigenous knowledge in public libraries for sustainable national development in South East, Nigeria. All the items were positively rated with a mean score of 2.97 and above. Indicating that users needed to access indigenous knowledge in two selected public libraries for sustainable national development.

**Table 2:** Role of Public Libraries in Facilitating Access to Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable National Development in South East, Nigeria

| S/n | Question Items                            | Mean (x) | Decision |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 16  | Local empowerment/local capacity building | 3.47     | Positive |
| 17  | Reading culture,                          | 3.42     | Positive |
| 18  | Indigenous knowledge revitalization       | 3.40     | Positive |
| 19  | Ecotourism                                | 3.35     | Positive |

|                   |                                                  |             |          |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 20                | Conflict/peace Resolution                        | 3.40        | Positive |
| 21                | protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) | 3.38        | Positive |
| 22                | Building relationships                           | 3.30        | Positive |
| 23                | Reflection in national unity and identity        | 3.38        | Positive |
| 24                | Enhancement of moral and ethical values          | 3.45        | Positive |
| 25                | Indigenous civilization                          | 3.32        | Positive |
| 26                | Conservation and preservation                    | 3.22        | Positive |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |                                                  | <b>3.37</b> |          |

Analysis in **Table 2** shows that question items were positively rated with mean (x) score of 3.22 and above. This shows that the role of two selected public libraries for accessing indigenous knowledge is important as it serves users to achieve their goals for sustainable national development.

**Table 3:** Benefits of Accessing Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable National Development in two selected Public Libraries in South East, Nigeria

| S/n               | Question Items                             | Mean (x)    | Decision |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 27                | Food production/ Agriculture development   | 3.46        | Positive |
| 28                | Savings, and lending                       | 3.21        | Positive |
| 29                | Aquaculture                                | 3.02        | Positive |
| 30                | Birth control                              | 3.01        | Positive |
| 31                | Burial ceremonies                          | 3.29        | Positive |
| 32                | Marriage ceremonies                        | 3.26        | Positive |
| 33                | Land and resources management              | 3.29        | Positive |
| 34                | Education system                           | 3.43        | Positive |
| 35                | For infrastructural development            | 3.19        | Positive |
| 36                | Development of rural communities           | 3.26        | Positive |
| 37                | For improvement of health care             | 3.14        | Positive |
| 38                | Family planning                            | 3.06        | Positive |
| 39                | Medicine                                   | 3.27        | Positive |
| 40                | Environment conservation                   | 3.5         | Positive |
| 41                | Biodiversity                               | 3.39        | Positive |
| 42                | Forest and game management                 | 3.28        | Positive |
| 43                | Other vital economic and social activities | 3.33        | Positive |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |                                            | <b>3.26</b> |          |

All the items listed in Table 3 were positively rated with mean score of 3.00 and above. The result of the analysis shows that the benefits for IK have a positive effect in two selected public libraries for sustainable national development. This implies that IK have benefits on food production/ agriculture development, savings, and lending, aquaculture, birth control, burial ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, land and resources management, education system, infrastructural development, development of rural communities, improvement of health care, family planning, medicine, environment conservation, biodiversity, forest and game management, Other vital economic and social activities.

**Table 4:** Challenges of Public Libraries for Accessing Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable National Development in South East, Nigeria

| S/n               | Question Items                                           | Mean (x)    | Decision |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 44                | Inadequate finance by Nigeria Government                 | 3.26        | Positive |
| 45                | Lack of protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) | 3.29        | Positive |
| 46                | Negligent/reluctant of IK by Nigeria Government          | 3.16        | Positive |
| 47                | Lack of cooperation                                      | 3.49        | Positive |
| 48                | Problems Militancy                                       | 3.46        | Positive |
| 49                | Lack of social integration for national development      | 3.49        | Positive |
| 50                | Lack of exchange of IK information                       | 3.48        | Positive |
| 51                | Lack of awareness for IK Practices                       | 3.48        | Positive |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |                                                          | <b>3.89</b> |          |

All the items listed in Table 4 received positive mean ratings of 3.16 and above. This shows that two selected public libraries for the study see them as major challenges for accessing IK. Items 47, and 49 received the highest mean (X) scores of 3.49, and 3.49: an indication that lack of cooperation and lack of social integration for national development seriously affected the development of community's users of IK for sustainable national development. The second highest mean (x) scores were received by items 50, and 51. They had a mean (x) scores of 3.48, and 3.48. This rating shows that lack of exchange of IK information, and lack of awareness for IK practices poses numerous challenges in two selected public libraries for sustainable national development.

### Discussion of Findings

It was found that the necessity of indigenous knowledge (IK) in public libraries lies in its potential to inform development initiatives, preserve cultural heritage, and promote community engagement, ultimately contributing to sustainable national development. This finding is consistent with the views of Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze (2010), who emphasize the

importance of preserving and accessing indigenous knowledge in public libraries. Furthermore, highlights the significance of indigenous knowledge in promoting cultural diversity and supporting local economic development.

The role of public libraries in facilitating access to IK were revealed that IK is the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Ogbebor, (2020) posed that IK is the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making, and provides problem-solving strategies for local communities and helps shape local visions and perceptions of environment and society. While there may be many similarities of indigenous knowledge between communities, it is the experience of each community that informs indigenous knowledge. Sharma, (2014), also observed that it is the basis for local-level decision-making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities.

The analyses showed that the benefits for accessing IK does not require the validation of western science, but indigenous peoples/knowledge generally believe they are responsible for the well-being of the natural environment around them. UNESCO, (2018) Indigenous knowledge is rooted in a social context that sees the world in terms of social and spiritual relations among all life forms. All parts of the natural world are infused with spirit. Mind, matter, and spirit are perceived as inseparable. Also, Nakata and Langton (2005), refers IK to the knowledge, innovation, and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world, developed from experience over centuries, and adapted to the local culture and environment transmitted orally from generation to generation

It was found that the challenges of IK in Public libraries stems its value in documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge systems is a significant challenge to accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development. (Olatokun, 2017; Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze, 2010; Agbo, 2015; Okoro, 2018) have explored the significance of indigenous knowledge, highlighting its importance in promoting sustainable development, cultural diversity, and environmental conservation, while also emphasizing the need for effective strategies for documenting and preserving indigenous knowledge, including digitization, community engagement, collaboration, and policy support.

## **Conclusion**

Public libraries remain relevant for accessing indigenous knowledge for sustainable national development but a more positive move needs to be made for the integration of Indigenous knowledge in the development process. The integration of appropriate indigenous knowledge systems into development programmes will contribute to efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainable national development impact. Indigenous knowledge, like any other knowledge, needs to be constantly used, challenged, and further adapted to the evolving local contents. Indigenous knowledge plays a significant role in conservation and preservation of all aspects of human nature for sustainable national development such as reading culture, local empowerment/

capacity building, ecotourism, moral and ethical values, agriculture, food production, land resources management, health care etc. which demonstrate a holistic approach to the societies.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Public libraries should serve as custodians of IK, preserving and promoting cultural heritage for future generations, while also facilitating access to IK for sustainable national development.
2. Public libraries should develop culturally sensitive cataloging and classification systems to ensure respectful and accurate representation of indigenous knowledge, thereby promoting the preservation and accessibility of IK resources, which will enable the effective organization, retrieval, and dissemination of indigenous knowledge.
3. There should be access to indigenous knowledge in public libraries enriches cultural diversity and promotes sustainable development by supporting education, research, and community engagement.
4. Public libraries should provide a safe and accessible space for indigenous communities to share and preserve their knowledge, promoting cultural revitalization and empowerment. Also Public libraries must navigate cultural sensitivity and intellectual property rights issues when collecting, preserving, and providing access to indigenous knowledge.

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