



## Stella Obasanjo Library and Information Literacy as Catalysts for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Fish Farmers in Lokoja, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study investigated the role of Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja, in promoting information literacy for enhanced socio-economic conditions among fish farmers in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to all 60 registered fish farmers in Lokoja, drawn from an estimated population of 201 fish farmers in the study area. The data were analyzed using mean ratings and ranking. The findings revealed that the library plays a significant role in promoting information literacy by providing access to knowledge resources, keeping fish farmers informed about modern aquaculture practices, and offering extension and training services. The benefits of these information literacy initiatives included enhanced self-development, improved knowledge of innovative fish farming techniques, increased sales and profits, and career advancement among fish farmers. Furthermore, strategies identified to improve information literacy included continuous provision of relevant resources, organizing workshops and seminars, using local dialects for information dissemination, and conducting awareness campaigns on modern fish farming practices. The study concludes that Stella Obasanjo Library is a vital partner in advancing the socio-economic well-being of fish farmers in Lokoja. It recommends strengthening library services through targeted literacy programs, user-friendly policies, and sustained outreach efforts to further empower fish farmers and promote sustainable development in the fisheries sector.

### Introduction

Libraries play an important role in all aspects of societal development, whether educational, political, or economic, especially when viewed through the lens of their users, who encompass all categories of people in society. A library is a collection of print and non-print materials, organized and kept for reading, studying, and consultation. It is an institution responsible for

the acquisition, organization, and storage of recorded knowledge in various media for study, research, and consultation (Itsekor & Nwokeoma, 2017). Libraries are agents of educational, social, economic, and political changes in the communities where they are established. They serve as cultural and generational heritage, recreational centers, and houses of knowledge. They are organized and set up to meet the informational, educational, social, and recreational



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needs of their users. Public libraries have been defined variously. Many see it as a place built for the collection of books and other print resources. Personnel provide and interpret such resources as required to meet the information, research, educational, recreational, cultural, and aesthetic needs of the varied users. It is usually financed with public funds.

The public library is the local center of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2022) says that it is an essential component of knowledge. It provides a publicly accessible space for the production of knowledge, sharing and exchange of information and culture, and promotion of civic engagement. Libraries are creators of community, proactively reaching out to new audiences and using effective listening to support the design of services that meet local needs and improve quality of life (Adepoju & Akobe, 2023). The public trusts their library, and in return, it is the ambition of the public library to proactively keep their community informed and aware of relevant information, opportunities, and developments that affect their lives. The services of the public library are provided based on equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Specific services and materials must be provided for users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials (IFLA, 2022).

Public libraries are an important entity in local communities in any state or district, and particularly can play a significant role in a community's economic and social development. Mallik and Nayek (2018) postulate that information dissemination through public libraries is an essential factor for community development. Public libraries have been defined variously. Many see it as a place built for the collection of books and other printed resources and the personnel to provide and interpret such resources as required to meet the information, research, educational, recreational, cultural, and aesthetic needs of the varied users, and it is usually financed with public funds. Enamudu et al. (2021) stated that a public library is established to provide materials that communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people. The public library is

established, supported, and funded by the community, either through local, regional, or national government, or by varied community organizations. It provides access to knowledge, information, and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. The public library serves the general public without any surcharge.

Chiegou et al. (2020) view public libraries as expected to provide access to knowledge in printed and other formats to support formal and informal education. Throughout their lives, people require education either at formal institutions: schools, colleges, and universities, or in a less formal context related to their employment and daily life. Learning does not end with the completion of formal education, but for most people, it is a lifelong activity. In an increasingly complex society, people will need to acquire new skills at various stages of their lives. The public library has an important role in assisting this process. The public library should provide materials in the appropriate media to support formal and informal learning processes. It should also help make these learning resources used effectively, as well as provide facilities that enable people to study. The ability to access information and make use of it effectively is vital to successful education, and, where possible, public libraries should co-operate with other educational organizations in the dissemination of the use of information resources. The public library should also actively support literacy campaigns, as literacy is the key to education and knowledge, and to the use of libraries and information services. This cultivates and encourages reading, thereby reducing the illiteracy rate in society (Adepoju & Akobe, 2023).

Promoting a reading habit has long been a major theme in many countries, yet despite all these efforts, one common threat emerges: no country is satisfied with the number of active readers among its population (Ogwu, 2017). In most countries, the methods and teaching used to boost reading must be tried again and again to bring people and books together in a lasting, fruitful relationship. Eisenmon (1997) asserted that if reading is left to continue unabated, the number of illiterates would tend to increase in the future. Promotion of information literacy aims to encourage reading among members of the general public. Reading habit or culture is an activity that is meant to popularize reading and make it a lifelong hobby (Sethy, 2018). The promotion of reading habits cannot take place in a vacuum. It



has to be initiated (Chiegwu et al., 2020). The necessity for reading among fish farmers arises from the reality that aquaculture is a knowledge-based industry needing ongoing education to stay productive and competitive. Reading provides fish farmers with current insights on optimal practices, contemporary fish-rearing methods, water quality control, disease management, feed preparation, and sustainable harvesting techniques. It also exposes them to regulations from the government, trends in the market, and advancements in aquaculture technology.

In locations such as Lokoja, where fishing and aquaculture are crucial for income, having access to appropriate reading materials, be it through books, extension bulletins, or online resources, allows farmers to address practical issues, enhance productivity, and minimize losses. In addition, developing a reading habit enables them to assess information critically, adjust to climate-related challenges, and capitalize on new opportunities within the fisheries value chain. Without consistent reading, fish farmers may depend solely on outdated, conventional techniques, which could restrict productivity and earnings. Cultivating a good reading habit is necessary for the development of fish farming in the nation at large and in Lokoja in particular.

In Nigeria, fish farming development has been driven by social and economic objectives, such as nutrition improvement in rural areas, generation of supplementary income, diversification of income activities, and the creation of employment. This is especially true in rural communities, where opportunities for economic activities are limited. Only in recent years has aquaculture been viewed as an activity likely to meet national shortfalls in fish supplies, thereby reducing fish imports. According to Udeze and Nwuba (2021), statistics indicate that Nigeria is the largest African aquaculture producer, with production output of over 2.7 million metric tons (mmt) per annum; this is closely followed by Egypt with output of about 2.1 million tons. Five other countries produce: Zambia (over 70,000 tons of fish annually), Madagascar (over 12,700 tons per annum), Togo (28,000 tons per annum), Kenya (24,000 metric tons of fish annually), and Sudan (2,000 tons per annum). Hundreds of Lokoja dwellers and their environs depend on fishing conditions for survival. A great number of

fishermen can be seen on the river at any time of the day with their fishing tools and canoes, trying to catch fish from the river. Research from Ogun State suggests that many fish farmers are unable to comprehend and apply improved farming information effectively (Aremu et al., 2024). This is a result of the fact that they don't know the benefits of reading to their fishing profession. This is why this study investigates the role of Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja, in promoting information literacy for improved socio-economic conditions among fish farmers in Lokoja, Kogi State.

### **Background of Stella Obasanjo Library**

The Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja, is a state-owned public library established to provide information resources and literacy services to residents of Kogi State. It is named in honor of Stella Obasanjo, Nigeria's former First Lady, reflecting a tradition of commemorating national figures through public institutions that embody community service and education. As a public library, its mission is to democratize access to knowledge and serve as a hub for learning, creativity, and socio-economic empowerment for diverse groups, including students, civil servants, traders, and fish farmers who form a significant part of Lokoja's local economy.

The library's role must be situated within the broader vision of the National Library of Nigeria (NLN), which was established in 1964 through an Act of Parliament as the apex library institution in the country (National Library of Nigeria, 2022). The NLN functions as the legal deposit repository and central coordinating body for all library development in Nigeria. Its mandate emphasizes the promotion of literacy, lifelong learning, and access to knowledge for national development. Through its branches and affiliated state libraries, the NLN ensures that information resources are extended to grassroots communities where they can make the most direct impact.

Anchored on this national framework, Stella Obasanjo Library reflects the goals of the NLN by promoting information literacy, facilitating community development, and supporting socio-economic conditions in Lokoja. Its services resonate with the IFLA (2022), which recognizes public libraries as gateways to knowledge, lifelong learning, cultural heritage, and civic engagement. By providing access to aquaculture resources,



hosting workshops and training sessions, and disseminating relevant information in user-friendly formats, the Stella Obasanjo Library functions as both an educational and developmental institution.

In this way, the library is not only a repository of books but also a catalyst for local empowerment. Its engagement with fish farmers in Lokoja demonstrates how public libraries can bridge information gaps in specialized areas such as agriculture and fisheries, thereby advancing the objectives of the National Library of Nigeria in supporting sustainable socio-economic development.

The main objective of this study is to assess Stella Obasanjo Library and Information Literacy as Catalysts for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Fish Farmers in Lokoja, Nigeria. However, the specific purposes of the study are to: identify the role of Stella Obasanjo Library in promoting information literacy to fish farmers of Lokoja, Kogi State; establish the benefits of information literacy in improving the socio-economic conditions of fish farmers of Lokoja, Kogi State; determine the strategies Stella Obasanjo Library in improving literacy skills of fish farmers in Lokoja, Kogi State.

In an increasingly complex society, people will need to acquire new skills at various stages of their lives. The public library has an important role in assisting this process. The public library should provide materials in the appropriate media to support formal and informal learning processes (Sethy, 2018). It should also help users use these learning resources effectively, and provide facilities that enable people to study. The ability to access and use information effectively is vital to successful education, and, where possible, public libraries should coordinate with other educational organizations in teaching the use of information resources. The public library should also actively support literacy campaigns, as literacy is the key to education and knowledge, and the use of libraries and information services. Newly literate people need easy access to appropriate reading materials to maintain and develop their skills (Enamudu et al., 2021). Public library plays the following role in the community: (1) the rural public library offers participatory opportunities to the community members within its delivery of services, and conditions in ways that the local people prefer. This includes the community of

fish farmers; (2) rural public libraries facilitate learning and change in a rural community through the process of accessing and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and values. Through these opportunities, individuals will later develop and share empowerment and relevant abilities within their own community; (3) they promote lifelong learning among adult rural community members; (4) Public libraries inspire members of the community to read, to use books, to use information and knowledge access, and to enjoy all materials in the library for education and recreation; and (5) public libraries help a rural community understand the country's social, political and economic endeavors and nation-building efforts.

The public library also provides community information. Among the roles of public libraries is community information. Information is everywhere, but information needs differ from one to another. From the study it is depicted that information needs for a particular community like ours are like agriculture and related information, education related queries, job related news, health issues, self-employment programs, query related to animal husbandry, financial assistance programs, government programs, legal aids, social welfare programs, housing related issues, horticulture, local and political news, etc. (Asif & Yang, 2021). The following information services can be given from the public library regarding agriculture and related information, education related notifications, job related guidelines, internet and mobile services, drinking water facility, blood donation and health camps, self-help group programs, financial assistance programs, information regarding government programs, legal aids information, social welfare programs of different NGOs, Local and political news, consumer information, environment related news and others. The library plays a vital role in the success of any economic activity and in entrepreneurial development; fish farming in general is no exception. Obi et al. (2024) affirm that every fish farmer depends on information for success in the fishing business. This is done through reading. Therefore, the library plays a crucial role in promoting information literacy among fish farmers in the study area.



## **Impact of Information Literacy on the Socio-Economic Status of Fish Farmers**

Reading is the process of getting information from printed materials. Reading is a literacy skill basically concerned with meaning and the reader's responsibility for getting meaning out of the text (Olaoye, 2017). Since reading is a literacy skill that enables a person to be functionally literate, the materials to be read should be purposeful, goal-oriented, and easy to comprehend. Apart from reading to meet the daily needs of contemporary Nigeria, good reading skills are necessary for adults to function successfully in career development, such as fishing, and in their personal lives. Chiegwu et al. (2020) describe reading as a term often simply referred to as communication between the mind and printed materials, which involves understanding the meaning, message, and thought. It enriches readers' imagination and stimulates their intellectual growth faster. It can best be explained as a learned practice of seeking knowledge, information, or entertainment through the written word. Such practice can be acquired by reading books, journals, magazines, and electronic information resources. According to Aremu et al. (2024), to be effective and successful in fish farming, farmers need to read extensively. Information literacy, especially reading ability, is vital for fish farmers. It allows them to locate and interpret critical content on improved cultivation methods, disease control, feeding regimes, market dynamics, and pond management. For instance, in Adamawa State, many fish farmers could not use such information effectively due to literacy barriers, including illiteracy and information illiteracy (Musa, 2019). Similarly, in Ogun State, those who understood and implemented improved techniques nearly doubled their productivity, from 0.29kg to 0.68kg per fingerling (Aremu et al., 2024). In Oyo State, a higher level of information-seeking enabled by literacy was significantly linked to increased farm production (Akinbile & Alabi, 2008). In Kogi State, limited reading skills prevented many fish farmers from benefiting from extension materials and printed information (Mundi et al., 2024). The role of reading in enhancing the socio-economic status of fish farmers becomes meaningful when we look at Kumar's (2015) reasons for reading, which state that we read to find out how things are done and how to increase knowledge and broaden experience. On entrepreneurship, Kumar's (2015) opinion on reading stated good reading skills are

necessary for an adult to function successfully in career development and personal life.

Despite the socio-economic benefits that reading offers to fish farmers and the nation, many fish farmers struggle to read and understand essential written materials. For example, they may be unable to interpret market reports and pricing updates published in newspapers, making it difficult to sell their fish at competitive rates. They might also have difficulty completing job application forms for government support programs, aquaculture grants, or cooperative society membership, which limits their access to funding and training opportunities. Furthermore, some cannot follow written instructions on fish feed packaging, pond treatment chemicals, or manuals for operating aerators and water pumps, which can lead to poor pond management, reduced yields, and even fish mortality. This inability to comprehend practical, work-related documents means they often rely on guesswork or verbal explanations from others, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation and costly mistakes. To address the above-identified problems, the public library has the role of inculcating information literacy in the farmers' minds by providing the necessary materials that will meet their career needs. This should receive urgent attention if farmers are to embrace the modern techniques in commercial and industrial sectors, which widen the available economic opportunities for entrepreneurship, like fish farming (Hashim, 2021).

There is a need for fish farmers to improve their production skills. Hashim (2021) also noted that fish farmers have had to learn to cope with computers, calculators, machinery, new job situations, and opportunities as they bring forth the need for new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The great sweep affects all categories of workers, including those who are self-employed, millions of large and small farmers, craftsmen, and people in different kinds of trade learn to be conversant with new and strange techniques. Fish farmers, through reading, will learn several other skills which will help them in handling machines and equipment like computers, the use of the internet, and several others, which will help to improve their fishing trade (Adelakun et al., 2015).

Reading improves skills in spoken and written language, which promotes interpersonal relationships between the fish farmers, their



customers, or their workers and colleagues, who are fellow fish farmers. This makes knowledge gained from reading go beyond the library. This is evidence that the education the farmers received through reading is functional to them and the society. Olaoye (2017) stressed this when he said that functional literacy is the magic word for the building of a total man and for every form of development. Functional literacy refers to the practical ability to read, write, and use information in ways that enable a person to perform everyday tasks, participate fully in their community, and carry out work-related responsibilities effectively. It goes beyond basic literacy by focusing on applying reading and writing skills to achieve specific goals, solve problems, and succeed in one's occupation or livelihood.

The effect of reading on fishing productivity can also be described as cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive effects of education comprise basic literacy and numeracy that fish farmers achieve from reading. Literacy is essential for fish farmers, as it goes beyond the ability to read and write to include understanding and applying information for improved productivity and livelihoods. It enables farmers to read and interpret instructions on critical inputs such as fish feed, pesticides, and pond treatment chemicals, ensuring proper usage and minimizing losses. Literacy also facilitates access to and comprehension of market reports, allowing farmers to track price trends and negotiate competitive sales (Aremu et al., 2024). Furthermore, it empowers them to understand technical manuals for operating and maintaining equipment like water pumps and aerators, as well as to use extension materials, training guides, and government publications effectively (Musa, 2019).

In addition, literacy supports compliance with fisheries regulations and environmental guidelines, accurate record-keeping for farm management, and the use of digital tools such as mobile applications, online marketplaces, and social media for marketing and networking (Mundi et al., 2024). By enhancing these capabilities, literacy strengthens fish farmers' decision-making, fosters innovation, and promotes sustainable aquaculture practices. Numeracy allows for the calculation of the right proportion of inputs to be combined to get the desired output. In research conducted on 141 villages consisting of rice farmers within Bangladesh, it was found that schooling has positive effects on agriculture due to the skills of literacy and numeracy that give the farmers a

better understanding of agricultural issues (Olaoye, 2017). With regard to non-cognitive effects, there is a change in the attitude of farmers who attend school, and this is as a result of discipline of formal schooling in terms of punctuality, teamwork, timeliness, adhering to schedules, and so on. Nevertheless, non-cognitive effects on agriculture have not been widely studied, and the inference of its effect on agricultural productivity is limited, as it is assumed that a change in farmers' behavior as a result of education makes them more susceptible to new ideas and modern practices.

Reading influences agricultural productivity either directly, as indicated above, or indirectly. Indirectly, with the skills derived from education (Oduro-Ofori & Aboagye-Anokye, 2015). Literacy is an integral part of societal life; it is needed at home, in the classroom, in the workplace, for the development and preservation of the cultural heritage and that of history. Programs should be designed to function within a framework of relevance. To inculcate value and achieve desired goals dissemination of information. The libraries play a vital role in the provision of information (reading) materials for fish farmers.

### **Strategies for Improving Information Literacy Among Fish Farmers**

Strategy, as defined by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, is a planned series of actions for achieving something. Therefore, developing an active information literacy involves planning, and it takes time and effort. Olasehinde and Akanmode (2015) state that strategies to turn Nigeria into a reading nation must be developed since acquiring the culture of reading can help to find solutions to the socio-economic and political problems facing the nation today, leading to personal and national development.

According to Olasehinde and Akanmode (2015), the following are strategies to be employed for improving information literacy among fish farmers: improved funding for the establishment and equipment of libraries, particularly public libraries. Governments at all levels should make grants available for the purchase of good literature books for children and adults. This should be backed up by a policy to make it effective continued provision and access to books; associating reading with pleasure; excursions to libraries and book exhibitions; encouraging user-



friendly policies and reader-friendly environments in our libraries; teachers should be models by reading in class and making time for library users to read aloud in class; organization of reading clubs, reading competitions and reading days, thus young people can be encouraged to read by giving prizes to best readers; authors should be encouraged financially by the government to write books; and resuscitation of mobile library facilities as was done in the rural areas in the 1970s which has gone moribund since the 1980s.

Asif and Yang (2021) posits that fish farmers who excel in reading and writing should regularly get rewards such as prizes from the public. The internet and digital libraries must be made available to fish farmers. As a result, they would have more access to cutting-edge information. Fish farmers should have access to a wide range of reading materials, including novels, newspapers, and periodicals, during their free time. In this aspect, public library staff and librarians play a critical role. A reading-friendly setting in the library may help library staff encourage fish farmers to read (Chieguru et al., 2020).

### **Framework for the Study**

This study was anchored on the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education developed by the American Library Association (ALA, 2000) and reinforced by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2008). These standards emphasize that individuals must be able to: recognize when information is needed; locate and access it efficiently; evaluate its credibility and relevance; and apply it effectively to solve problems or make decisions. Applied to fish farming in Lokoja, these competencies are critical for improving productivity, adopting modern aquaculture techniques, and making informed market and financial decisions.

The framework aligns with the study's objectives in three ways. First, the Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja, plays a multifaceted role in promoting literacy, knowledge sharing, and socio-economic development. Its major roles include: serving as a knowledge hub; providing capacity building activities; and serving as community information center. The knowledge hub provides access to print and digital resources covering diverse subjects such as agriculture, aquaculture, business,

health, and education; and offers fish farmers relevant information on pond management, fish disease control, feed formulation, and marketing strategies, enabling them to adopt innovative practices for improved productivity and income (Aremu et al., 2024). Capacity building activities include organizing literacy programs, workshops, and seminars to promote skills acquisition and continuous learning, and provide platforms for peer learning and knowledge exchange among fish farmers and other community members. The Community Information Center keeps residents informed about government policies, development opportunities, and financial support schemes; it offers selective dissemination of information and current awareness services tailored to the needs of local communities, including farmers (Enamudu et al., 2021). In addition, the library fosters social inclusion and accessibility. This ensures equitable access to information for all, regardless of literacy level, age, or socio-economic status, and disseminates information using local dialects and reader-friendly formats to overcome literacy barriers, particularly for fish farmers.

These roles align with the principles outlined in the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2022), which emphasizes that public libraries are gateways to knowledge, lifelong learning, and civic engagement. Thus, Stella Obasanjo Library is not only a repository of knowledge but also a catalyst for socio-economic empowerment and sustainable development in Lokoja. Finally, the library serves as a facilitator of information literacy by providing structured access to resources, training, and extension services. This directly supports the first objective, which seeks to investigate the role of the library in promoting literacy among fish farmers.

Secondly, the framework highlights the benefits of information literacy or how improved access to and use of information enhances socio-economic wellbeing. For fish farmers, this means better decision-making in feed formulation, disease control, marketing, and compliance with regulations, which connects with Objective 2 on identifying the benefits of information literacy.

Thirdly, the information literacy competency standards tackles the strategies for improvement in information literacy. The standards stress that information use is a skill that must be taught, reinforced, and practiced. This provides a basis for



developing practical strategies such as workshops, awareness campaigns, and the use of local languages, which ties directly to the third objective of this study.

By situating the study within this framework, Stella Obasanjo Library is positioned not merely as a physical building but as a strategic knowledge hub. It can bridge the gap between raw information and practical application, thereby empowering fish farmers in Lokoja to achieve greater productivity, profitability, and socio-economic development.

## Meth o d o l o g y

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the role of Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja, in promoting information literacy for enhanced socio-economic conditions among fish farmers in Lokoja, Kogi State. The population of the study comprised 201 fish farmers operating within Lokoja metropolis, as identified through local agricultural extension records, cooperative associations, and community listings.

Out of this population, only 60 fish farmers were formally registered and accessible at the time of the study across three major fish farming locations in Lokoja. Given the manageable size of this accessible population, the study adopted a complete enumeration approach, whereby all 60 registered fish farmers were included in the survey, rather than sampling. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage of the registered fish farming community and eliminated sampling bias.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher, drawing insights from relevant literature on information literacy, public library services, and socio-economic development among farmers (e.g., ALA, 2000; UNESCO, 2008; Aremu et al., 2024; Enamudu et al., 2021). The instrument was organized into three main parts to directly reflect the study's objectives.

To address the first objective of the study, part one focused on the availability, accessibility, and type of information services offered to fish farmers (e.g., provision of resources, extension

services, and awareness creation). Part two of the instrument assessed the perceived outcomes, such as improvement in productivity, income, decision-making, and social status of fish farmers. The last part of the tool focused on the possible interventions to enhance information literacy, including training, workshops, policy support, and the use of local dialects. The face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by presenting the draft to two experts in library and information science, who reviewed the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean ratings, to summarize responses in relation to the study objectives. Frequencies and percentages were employed to describe demographic characteristics and general trends, while mean scores were used to determine the level of agreement with each statement. The methodology ensured that results reflected the perspectives of fish farmers while providing a clear statistical basis for identifying gaps and opportunities in the role of public libraries. This approach not only provided insights into current information literacy levels among fish farmers but also highlighted areas where targeted interventions could lead to socio-economic improvements in Lokoja's fishing industry.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were duly observed in the conduct of the study. Prior to data collection, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to all respondents, and informed consent was obtained verbally from each participant. Respondents were assured that participation was entirely voluntary, that they could withdraw at any stage without penalty, and that all information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. No personal identifiers were collected, and responses were analyzed anonymously in line with standard social science research ethics.



## Results and Discussion

### The Roles of Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja in Promoting Information Literacy Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State

Table 1 presents fish farmers' perceptions of the roles played by Stella Obasanjo Library in promoting information literacy for improved socio-economic conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State. Overall, the results indicate that respondents generally agreed that the library plays a significant role in supporting their information needs and livelihoods. The most strongly perceived roles relate to access to knowledge and information and keeping fish farmers informed about modern developments in fish farming, suggesting that timely, relevant, and practical information is highly valued within the fishing community.

In addition, the provision of information resources, extension-related services, and the organization of workshops and seminars were also positively acknowledged. This reflects the importance of both resource-based support and capacity-building activities in enhancing fish

farmers' productivity and decision-making. Although services such as selective dissemination of information in local languages and tailoring services to local conditions ranked relatively lower, they were still accepted by respondents, indicating a continued need for more localized and inclusive information delivery approaches.

These findings reinforce the view that public libraries function not merely as repositories of information but as active partners in community development. Consistent with Enamudu et al. (2021) and Adepoju and Akobe (2023), the results demonstrate that when libraries provide access to relevant information and awareness services, they significantly contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of rural occupational groups such as fish farmers.

### Benefits of Information Literacy on Fish Farming Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State

As shown in Table 2, fish farmers recognized several benefits arising from information literacy facilitated through the services of Stella Obasanjo Library. The results reveal that personal development and knowledge acquisition were

**Table 1**

*Roles of Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja in Promoting Information Literacy Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State*

S/ NO	ITEMS	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1.	Provision of information resources to fish farmers	3.13	Agree	2
2.	Provision of access to knowledge and information of the community of fish farmers	3.2	Agree	1
3.	Provision of extension services and recreational outlets for the fish farmers	2.9	Agree	3
4.	keep their community informed and aware on modern development of fish farming i.e. current awareness service	3.2	Agree	1
5.	Selective dissemination of information service to fish farmers in their local languages	2.73	Agree	6
6.	Provision of High-Quality Service relevant to local needs and conditions	2.66	Agree	7
7.	Organization of workshops and seminars for fish farmers to enhance their production	2.8	Agree	5
8.	Increase and promotion of fish production	2.86	Agree	4

Key: SA: Strongly Agree (3.35-4.00); A: Agree (2.50-3.24); D: Disagree (1.75-2.49); SD: Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.74)



perceived as the most prominent benefits, indicating that access to information enhances farmers' confidence, skills, and ability to adopt improved fish farming practices. This underscores the role of information literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning and self-improvement.

Economic-related benefits were also strongly acknowledged. Respondents agreed that information literacy contributes to improved productivity, increased sales and profit, and better economic outcomes, highlighting the practical value of access to relevant and usable information. In addition, perceived improvements in career achievement, economic status, and social standing suggest that information literacy extends beyond technical gains to influence broader aspects of farmers' livelihoods and community recognition.

These findings align with earlier studies which emphasize that effective use of information enhances agricultural productivity and income generation (Aremu et al., 2024; Kumar, 2015). They further affirm that public libraries, by facilitating information literacy, play a critical role in strengthening both the human and economic capital of fish farmers, thereby supporting sustainable socio-economic development in Lokoja.

### **Strategies of Stella Obasanjo Library for Improving Information Literacy Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State**

Table 3 highlights fish farmers' perceptions of strategies for improving information literacy through library services. The results indicate strong agreement on the importance of continued provision of relevant fish farming resources and the organization of workshops and seminars, emphasizing the value of sustained access to information and practical learning opportunities. These strategies reflect farmers' preference for hands-on, interactive, and problem-oriented approaches to learning.

Furthermore, the use of local dialects in training and information dissemination and the organization of awareness campaigns on modern fish farming practices were also positively perceived, underscoring the need for culturally relevant and inclusive communication methods. Such approaches are particularly important in addressing literacy barriers and ensuring that information reaches a wider segment of the fishing community.

Other strategies, including encouraging user-friendly library policies, excursions to libraries and book exhibitions, and continuous training and retraining, were also accepted, though to a lesser extent. This suggests that while fish farmers value institutional support and exposure to library resources, they prioritize strategies that deliver

**Table 2**

*Benefits of Information Literacy on Fish Farming Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State*

<b>S/ NO</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1.	Increase in sale and profit	3.10	Agree	3
2.	Increase in social status of fish	2.73	Agree	7
3.	Enhancement of economic status of fish farmers	2.76	Agree	6
4.	Achievement in the career of fish farmers	2.80	Agree	5
5.	Self-development	3.23	Agree	1
6.	Acquisition of knowledge on new methods of teaching	3.13	Agree	2
7.	Improved funding for the enhancement and development of public libraries	2.90	Agree	4

*Key: SA: Strongly Agree (3.35-4.00); A: Agree (2.50-3.24); D: Disagree (1.75-2.49); SD: Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.74)*



**Table 3**

*Strategies for Improving Information Literacy Among Fish Farmers for Improved Socio-Economic Conditions in Lokoja, Kogi State*

S/ NO	ITEMS	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1.	Continued provision and access resources on fish farming	3.40	Agree	2
2.	Continuous training and retraining of fish farmers	2.76	Agree	7
3.	Organize workshop and seminar for fish farmers	3.36	Agree	1
4.	Excursions to libraries and book exhibitions	2.80	Agree	6
5.	Encouraging user friendly policies and reader-friendly environments in our libraries	3.00	Agree	5
6.	Organize awareness and campaign programs on modern fish farming conditions	3.20	Agree	4
7.	Use of local dialect to train and disseminate information to fish farmers	3.26	Agree	3

Key: SA: Strongly Agree (3.35-4.00); A: Agree (2.50-3.24); D: Disagree (1.75-2.49); SD: Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.74)

immediate, practical benefits to their farming activities.

Overall, the findings position Stella Obasanjo Library as an active agent of capacity building rather than a passive information provider. In line with Asif (2021) and Olasehinde and Akanmode (2015), the results demonstrate that targeted, accessible, and context-sensitive library interventions are essential for strengthening information literacy and enhancing the socio-economic well-being of fish farmers in Lokoja.

### Conclusions

The study has shown that Stella Obasanjo Library, Lokoja plays a pivotal role in promoting information literacy that supports the socio-economic conditions of fish farmers. The findings revealed that the library provides access to knowledge and information, current awareness services, information resources, and extension activities that fish farmers recognize as valuable for improving their productivity. Information literacy, as facilitated by the library, was further associated with benefits such as self-development, acquisition of new knowledge on modern fish farming methods, and improved income and career achievement. The strategies identified including continuous provision of resources, workshops, use of local dialects, and awareness campaigns

demonstrate that farmers view the library not only as a repository of information but also as an active partner in capacity building and empowerment. These results confirm earlier scholarly views that public libraries are critical agents of socio-economic transformation when their services are properly tailored to community needs (Adepoju & Akobe, 2023; Enamudu et al., 2021).

Based on these findings, the study concludes that enhancing the capacity of public libraries is essential to sustain and expand the socio-economic impact of information literacy on fish farmers in Lokoja. It is recommended that Stella Obasanjo Library and similar institutions should strengthen their outreach through regular workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, ensuring that information is disseminated in culturally relevant formats such as local dialects. Continuous provision of relevant resources on fish farming should be prioritized, alongside policies that promote user-friendly and inclusive services. Furthermore, government and stakeholders should provide adequate funding to libraries, as improved facilities and resources directly support farmers' technical knowledge, productivity, and income. Anchored on the evidence from this study, such measures will position libraries as strategic knowledge hubs that not only provide access to information but also foster innovation, self-reliance, and sustainable socio-economic development among rural populations.



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## Recommendations

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The study recommends that Stella Obasanjo Library and similar institutions should strengthen their outreach through regular workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, ensuring that information is disseminated in culturally relevant formats such as local dialects. Continuous provision of relevant resources on fish farming should be prioritized, alongside policies that promote user-friendly and inclusive services. Furthermore, the government and stakeholders should provide adequate funding to libraries, as improved facilities and resources directly support farmers' technical knowledge, productivity, and income. Anchored on the evidence from this study, such measures will position libraries as strategic knowledge hubs that not only provide access to information but also foster innovation, self-reliance, and sustainable socio-economic development among rural populations.

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