

Acquisition and management of government documents in the National Library of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Government documents are essential publications found in academic, public and national libraries. Acquisition and proper management of government documents is important for effective use by patrons. This paper discusses acquisition and management of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja. A case study approach was adopted for the study. The target population were staff of the Government Document Unit of the National Library of Nigeria who were six in number as at the time of survey, August 2012. A questionnaire structured by the researcher was used to collect data which were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages. The findings amongst others revealed that the most acquired government documents were circulars, debates, directories, gazettes, newsletters, reports and accounts as well as rules and regulations acquired mainly through Legal Deposit and preserved by air conditioning, binding, fumigation and effective security devices. The study recommends amongst others an improved funding for the National Library of Nigeria and digitisation of government documents.

Keywords: Acquisition management, government documents, National Library of Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a major feature of human civilization and it is an art that preceded Libraries. The idea of writing was brought about by the need for man to transmit his thoughts and visions in an external medium to others and for the preservation of culture. Libraries developed from the need to collect writings for preservation so that they can be passed from one generation to another. Aina (2004) defined library as an institution responsible for the collection, processing and storage of recorded knowledge for purpose of reading, studying and consultation. According to Aguolu (1989), the library is a collection of records of human culture in diverse format and languages, preserved, organised and interpreted to meet the broad and varying needs of individuals for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment.

Libraries are broadly categorised into different types based on the target audience, and these are academic libraries, school libraries, special libraries, public libraries and national libraries. A National Library serves as a nation's or a country's repository of information. It is the

apex library of a country. The national library is in the executive arms of government. According to Aina (2004), the national library serves the following functions:

1. Depository of all copyright publications within the country.
2. National bibliographic centre, national centre for translation, national lending and document delivery centre, national referral centre, coordinating centre for library co-operation and resource sharing.
3. Produces union catalogues and directories of library in the country.
4. Responsible for assigning the international standard book number (ISBN) and the international standard serial number (ISSN) to publishers and authors in the country.
5. Provides cataloguing-in-publication (CIP) data to authors and publishers.
6. Is expected to provide leadership role, advice government on library development and policy as well as support major researches and development programmes in librarianship in the country.

The National Library of Nigeria came into effect in the mid-1960 with the enactment of the National Library Act of 1964. In 1970, a new legal precedent was set with the creation of the National Library decree, the decree was partly enacted on the advice of the National Library Board which wanted to expand the library to other state capitals in order to create a network of repositories of knowledge. The collections of National Library of Nigeria are limitless ranging from textbooks, journals, reference collections and government documents among others.

According to Ajidahun (2006), the terms "government publications," "government documents," or "official publications" are often used synonymously because as the names indicate, they are publications that emanate from government, whether at the local, state or federal level. Odumosu (1988) defined government documents as records of public authorities, be they local, state, national or multinational, issued in printed form, usually released for consumption by all and sundry for whatever purpose be it information, education, entertainment, research, reference, report of tribunals, investigating panels, or feasibility studies. They are very important because they are the primary sources of materials of government activities and planning. The National Library of Nigeria has large collections of government documents; however, it was observed that in spite of the quantities of these collections in the government publications unit of the National Library of Nigeria, the patronage is low. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the acquisition and management of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the methods of acquisition of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.
2. To find out the types of government documents being acquired into the National Library of Nigeria.
3. To find out the methods used in the organization of government documents at National Library of Nigeria.
4. To identify the methods of preserving government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.
5. To determine the utilization of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.
6. To identify factors that constitutes challenges in acquiring government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ogundana et al. (2002), government publications are fundamentally information resources generated by the different arms of government, including ministries, parastatals and government agencies. Government documents are publications that are issued or printed at government expense or published by

authority of a government body (Aina, 1981; Katz, 1982; Edoka, 2000). Edoka (2000) classified government publications into executive, judicial, and legislative publications. In Nigeria, most government documents are being published at the national or state level by the state government printer and at the federal level by the Federal Government Printer. Every state government has its own printer located in the state capital and empowered with the publication of government official documents. In some instances, the government departments or organs can authorize or use commercial printers or publishers to issue government documents.

Omolayole (2002) expressed that government publications are a mine of information on the socio-political and economic life of any nation. Government publications are therefore indispensable materials for research. Publication and availability of government documents in libraries therefore become very important and significant.

The acquisition of these in the library especially the national library is inevitable. Government documents are acquired by the acquisitions department in to the library through various means. The Bibliotheca Alexandria in Egypt acquires publications through various means including through donations. However, the library has written policy on gifts to the library. Some of the donations come from governments, institutions, or individuals based on the nature of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina as an international institution.

The National Library of Australia acquires published and unpublished Australian material through legal deposit, donation and purchase. Copies of all works published in Australia are received by the Library under the legal deposit provisions (s201) of the Copyright Act, 1968 - which cover books, journals, maps, newspapers and printed music. Commonwealth, State and Territory Government publications are also received by deposit under a variety of special directives and circulars. Material issued in microform is normally purchased by the Library to supplement its collections in other material formats. Electronic formats, such as CD-ROM, are also acquired through voluntary deposit or purchased. The Library's Australian collections have developed over time through generous donations and bequests. Some donations of culturally significant items are eligible as a tax deduction for the market value of the gift under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

The National Library of Korea as stated in its publication (2010) is a collecting centre of all books and literature in Korea, the National Library of Korea collects national literature, contemporary knowledge products, as well as cultural heritage in a holistic and systematic way. Collecting resources is the most important basic function of the library. Books are collected through submission by publisher, purchase, donation or international exchange. The library collects an annual average of 530,000 volumes through Legal deposit, purchase, donation,

international exchange, and other methods of collection.

Papers and books deteriorate over time as a result of use and improper storage devices. Like other information materials in the library, government publications need proper preservation. Preservation of information-bearing materials prevents deterioration and maximizes their usefulness in the library. Librarians have however tried to preserve library materials against threats such as, theft, mutilation, insects, fungi, fire, flood and so on. The importance of preserving government documents for reference services is immeasurable. Some of the preservative measures for library materials include air conditioning, shelving, fumigation, off-site storage, binding and microfilming and ICT.

The UGC net stated that conservation can be preventive or interventive. It stated further that many cultural works are sensitive to environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity and exposure to light and ultraviolet light. Taking sufficient measures to protect materials in a controlled environment where such variables are maintained within a range of damage-limiting levels is called preventive conservation. Interventive conservation refers to any act by a conservator that involves a direct interaction between the conservator and the cultural material. These interventive treatments could involve cleaning, stabilizing, repair, or even replacement of parts of the original object or consolidation such as securing flaking paint

According to the Wikipedia, environmental controls are necessary to facilitate the preservation of organic library materials and are especially important to monitor in rare and special collections. Key environmental factors to watch include temperature, relative humidity, pests, pollutants, and light exposure. In general, the lower the temperature is, the better it is for the collection. Books and other materials take up and give off moisture making them sensitive to relative humidity. Very high humidity encourages mold growth and insect infestations. Low humidity causes materials to lose their flexibility. Pests, such as insects and vermin, eat and destroy paper and the adhesive that secures book bindings.

According to the publication of Arizona State library (2013), libraries of all types face several kinds of preservation problems. Some of the most common ones for small libraries relate to climate control, biological pests, and brittle books. The three most important factors in environmental control are humidity, temperature and light. Preservation solutions as stated in its paper include binding of materials, handling of materials carefully, and repairing materials.

Matwale (1993) stated that inadequate funds and lack of qualified personnel are the major causes of archival underdevelopment in Kenya, including the absence of proper conservation work in the national archival and library institutions.

There is the need for proper organisation of library collections in order to facilitate access of needed

materials, most especially government documents which traditionally is done by classification using the various classification schemes like Library of Congress, Dewey Decimal or Universal Decimal. Adebimpe (2006) observed that the Library of Congress Classification Scheme and the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) Scheme do not adequately cater for the government documents published in Nigeria. According to him, the Library of Congress Classification Scheme was purposely designed for technical processing of the American government publications that invariably emanated from the American Congress. Although the scheme is updated on a yearly basis, it is still grossly inadequate for processing of the government documents being published in Nigeria.

Oke (1992) expressed that some libraries in Nigeria developed their own home made classification schemes in order to integrate the government documents in the country into their various collections. Among the schemes developed by the Nigerian Libraries are: Moses classification scheme for African government documents named after Sybil Moses, the African American Librarian who was at a time in charge of government documents at the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. The National Library of Nigeria, University of Lagos and University of Jos also developed their own Home made classification schemes (Oke, 1992) Acquisition and processing of government documents is however, not without some challenges which Ajidahun (2006) identified as inaccessibility of government publications, inadequate production of the National Bibliography of Nigeria, lack of funds, and lack of bibliographic control of government documents.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is survey using the National Library of Nigeria Abuja as case study. The population of study were all the six (6) Government Documents Librarians of the National Library as at the time the survey was conducted (August, 2012). The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages.

RESULTS

Table 1 showed that out of the six respondents, three (50%) were Chief Librarians, 1 (16.7%) was an Assistant Chief Librarian, 1 (16.7%) was a Librarian 1 and the remaining 1 (16.7%) was an Assistant Librarian. This implied that majority of the respondents were higher rank officers.

Table 2 revealed that 1 (16.7%) of the respondents had a master degree (MLS), 4 (66.7%) had first degree (3 BLS and 1 LIB-Law) and 1 (16.7%) had HND.

Table 3 revealed that 2 (33.3%) out of the six respondents had between 1 and 5 years of work

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by rank.

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Chief Librarian	3	50
Assistant Chief Librarian	1	16.6
Librarian 1	1	16.6
Assistant Librarian	1	16.6

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by years of work experience.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	2	33.3
6-10 years	3	50.0
Above 20 years	1	16.7

Table 5. Types of government documents acquired at the National Library of Nigeria.

Items	Yes	No
Abstracts	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)
Bulletins	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Circulars	6 (100.0)	0 (0)
Debates	6 (100)	0 (0)
Digest	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Directories	6 (100)	0 (0)
Gazettes	6 (100)	0 (0)
Handbooks	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Instructions	3 (50)	3 (50)
Manuals	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Newsletter	6 (100)	0 (0)
Reports and accounts	6 (100)	0 (0)
Economic and statistical review	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Rules and regulations	6 (100)	0 (0)
Statistics and graph	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Survey and yearbooks	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)

experience as a government document librarian, 3 (50%) had between 6 and 10 years of work experience while only 1 (16.7%) had thirty (30) years of work experience and is presently the head of the unit.

Table 4 revealed that all the respondents 6 (100%) affirmed that the library acquires government documents through legal deposit. 4 (66.7%) agreed that the library purchased government documents while 2 (33.3%) disagreed. The table also revealed that 5 (83.3%) of the respondents agreed that the library acquires government documents through gifts while 1 (16.7%) disagreed. Also, 2 (33.3%) respondents agreed that the library acquires government documents through exchange while 4 (66.7%) disagreed. 4 (66.7%) of the respondents agreed that the library acquires government documents through

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by academic qualifications.

Item	Frequency	Percentage
MLS	1	16.6
BLS	4	66.6
HND	1	16.6

Table 4. Methods of acquisition of government documents.

Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
Legal deposit	6 (100)	0 (0.0)
Purchase	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Gifts	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Exchange	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)
Donations	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Subscription	0 (0.0)	6 (100)

Table 6. Frequency of acquisition of government documents.

Frequency	Yes (%)	No (%)
Weekly	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Monthly	6 (100)	0 (0)
Quarterly	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Biannually	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Yearly	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)

donations while 2 (33.3%) disagreed. Finally, the library does not acquire government documents through subscriptions as indicated by the respondents.

Table 5 revealed sixteen types of government documents, respondents were requested to indicate which the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja acquires. Responses indicated that circulars, debates, directories, gazettes, newsletters, reports and accounts as well as rules and regulations, all 100.0, digests 5 (83.3%), economic and statistical review 5 (83.3%), and survey and yearbooks 5 (83.3%) were the most acquired; followed by bulletin 4 (66.7%), handbooks 4 (66.7%), manuals 4 (66.7%), statics and graphs 4 (66.7%) while instructions 3 (50.0%) and abstracts 2 (33.3%) were the least purchased as signified by the respondents. The number of respondents agreeing to each of the items acquisition can be attributed to the quantity of such items in the library, thus by implication all the items listed were available in the library but in varying quantities.

Table 6 revealed that all the respondents 6 (100.0%) indicated that government documents were purchased on a monthly basis, 5 (83.3%) indicated quarterly while 4 (66.7%) indicated weekly, bi-annually and annually.

Table 7 indicated that all the respondents 6 (100.0%)

Table 7. Methods used in organization of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.

Items	Yes	No
Government documents are catalogued and classified	6 (100)	0 (0)
Government documents are arranged according to subject	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)
Government documents are arranged according to organizations	0 (0)	6 (100)
Government documents are arranged according to nations	0 (0)	6 (100)
Government documents are arranged according to ministries	0 (0)	6 (100)
Government documents are arranged according to states	1 (16.7)	5 (83.3)

Table 8. Preservations of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.

Items	Yes	No
Air conditioning	6 (100)	0 (0)
Binding	6 (100)	0 (0)
Microfilming	0 (0)	6 (100)
Digitization	3 (50)	3 (50)
Fumigation	6 (100)	0 (0)
Effective house keeping	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)
Adequate storage space	3 (50)	3 (50)
Security	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)

Table 9. Challenges of preservation of government documents in the National Library of Nigeria.

Challenges	Yes	No
Insufficient air conditioners	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Lack of constant electricity supply	0 (0)	6 (100)
Lack of funds	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)
Inability to electronically store documents	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Lack of trained personnel on preservation skills	3 (50)	3 (50)
Lack of space	6 (100)	0 (0)
No bindery facilities	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)

signified that the acquired government documents are being catalogued and classified at the National Library of Nigeria. However, 2 (33.3%) of the respondents indicated that government documents are being arranged according to subject, 1 (16.7%) signified according to state while arrangement by organizations, nations and ministries were not signified, indicating that the three arrangement method are not being embarked upon.

Table 8 indicated that air conditioning 6 (100.0%), binding 6 (100.0%), fumigation 6 (100.0%), and security devices were the most used preservation methods followed by digitization 3 (50.0%), adequate storage space 3 (50.0%) and house-keeping 2 (33.3%) while microfilming was never used at the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja.

Table 9 revealed that lack of space 6 (100.0%), insufficient number of air conditioners 5 (83.3%), inability

to store document electronically 5 (83.3%), lack of bindery facilities 4 (66.7%) and lack of trained personnel on preservation skills 3 (50.0%) were major preservation challenges being experienced at the Government Document Unit while funds 2 (33.3%) is not a major problem. Electricity is however not a problem as signified by the respondents.

Table 10 revealed that all the respondents 6 (100.0%) signified that the library clientele make use of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria on a daily basis 6 (100.0%), weekly 3 (50.0%), fortnightly 3 (50.0%), monthly 3 (50.0%) and 3 (50.0%) on a yearly basis.

Table 11 indicated that non-compliance to legal depository law 6 (100.0%), inadequate funds 4 (66.7%) and logistics problems such as transportation 4 (66.7%) were major challenges being experienced in the acquisition of government documents at the National

Table 10. Utilization and frequency of use of government document at National Library of Nigeria.

Items	Yes	No
Do clientele make use of government documents unit	6 (100)	0 (0)
Frequency of use		
Daily	6 (100)	0 (0)
Weekly	3 (50)	3 (50)
Fortnight	3 (50)	3 (50)
Monthly	3 (50)	3 (50)
Yearly	3 (50)	3 (50)

Table 11. Challenges in acquiring government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.

Items	Yes	No
Lack of funds	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Logistic problems such as transportation	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Non-compliance to legal deposit law	6 (100)	0 (0)
Unprofessional publishers	3 (50)	3 (50)
Too many publications	0 (0)	6 (100)

Library of Nigeria, Abuja. Unprofessional publishers 3 (50.0%) was not considered a major challenge while too many publications or information explosion was not a challenge at all as signified.

DISCUSSION

The study found that legal deposits 6 (100.0%) was a major means of acquisition of government documents followed by gift 5 (83.3%), donations and purchase both 4 (66.7%). Subscription to government agencies, ministries and offices was never utilized. Circulars, debates, directories, gazettes, newsletters, reports and accounts, rules and regulations (100.0%), digests, economic and statistical reviews and survey and yearbooks (83.3%) were the most acquired followed by bulletins, handbooks, manuals as well as statistics and graphs (66.7%). The least purchased were the instruments (50.0%) and abstracts (33.3%). The frequency of purchase of government documents were on a monthly basis (100.0%), quarterly basis 5 (83.3%), while weekly, bi-annually and yearly were 4 (66.7%) as signified by respondents.

The study further revealed that cataloguing and classification and arrangement by subjects were the major form of organizing government documents in National Library of Nigeria, Abuja. Further findings revealed that air conditioning, binding, fumigation and effective security devices were used for preservation of government documents while conclusion could not be

reached for digitization and adequate storage as indicated by the respondents. Effective housekeeping and microfilming were not being embarked upon. Findings also indicated that insufficient numbers of air conditioners, inability to electronically store documents, lack of bindery facilities and inadequate storage space were major preservation challenges. Funds and electricity supply were not considered as problems. It was also found that clienteles make use of the government documents unit on daily basis while some others make use of it weekly, monthly, quarterly and others biannually and yearly. The categories of people that make use of the unit are the researchers, lawyers, and civil servants (both actively serving and retired). The main challenges of acquisitions of government documents were found to be non-compliance to legal deposit law, lack of funds and logistic problems, such as transportation. Unprofessional nature of publishers was not considered a major problem while too many publications or information explosion was not a problem at all at the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn: An effective method of acquisitions of government documents through legal deposit, gifts, donations and purchase is in place at the National Library of Nigeria, Abuja. Bulletins, circulars, debates, directories, gazettes, newsletters, reports and

accounts, rules and regulations, digests, handbooks, economic and statistical reviews, manuals, statistics and graph as well as survey and yearbooks were considered the major government documents and they were the ones acquired by the National Library of Nigeria. Means of weekly purchase of these government documents should be harnessed and improved upon, most especially the newsletters, bulletins, circulars, debates and reports. Cataloguing and classification with arrangement by subjects was the major form of organizing government documents at the National Library of Nigeria. Air conditioning, binding, fumigation and security devices were major preservation methods of government documents in the Library. Electronic storage like digitization and microfilming should also be implemented in order to ensure preservation and permanent storage of government documents of the country. Insufficient air conditioners, inability to electronically store documents, lack of bindery facilities and inadequate storage space were major preservation challenges at the National Library of Nigeria. Clientele make use of the government documents unit majorly on a daily basis and sometimes weekly, monthly and yearly. Non-compliance to legal deposit law, lack of funds and logistic problems, such as transportations were the challenges to acquisitions of government documents at the National Library of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions reached, the following recommendations are being proffered:

1. An improved level of funding that will enable and encourage the librarians of the Government Document Unit to go out and source for publications emanating from government agencies, departments, offices and so on.
2. The National Library of Nigeria, Abuja should from time to time make paid advertisements on radio and television to sensitize the various government agencies, departments and offices to submit willingly publications emanating from them.
3. All efforts need to be made by the National Library of Nigeria to enforce the legal deposit law on government document publishers
4. Long term preservation methods such as digitization should be embarked upon to enable permanent storage and accessibility to the country's government documents for generations.
5. The National Library of Nigeria should provide more air conditioners, space and personnel to cope with the challenges of preservation.

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