

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

**LIS 321  
MANAGEMENT & USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

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**Ice Breaker**

Upload your passport and introduce yourself by stating your name, what you do for a living, your hobbies, your expectation in this course and the name you would prefer to be called during this Course.



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Welcome to the course on Management and Use of Government Publications. The course is designed to introduce you to the nature and concepts of government and government publications, the importance of government publications in library and information services; and the types, characteristics and history of government publications. In addition, it introduces you to acquisition methods and processes; acquisition policy; organisation; dissemination and use policy; preservation and conservation of government documents as well as the challenges of acquisition and organisation of government publications. The impact of the fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and Covid-19 pandemic on the management and use of government publications was also examined.

## **LIS321 MANAGEMENT AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Management and use of government publications is a 2-credit unit course for undergraduates in the Department of Library and Information Science at the National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria. The course is designed to introduce you to the nature and concepts of government and government publications, the history and importance of government publications in library and information services; and the types and characteristics of government publications. Furthermore, it introduces students to acquisition methods and processes; acquisition policy; organisation; dissemination and use policy; preservation and conservation of government documents as well as the challenges of acquisition, organisation and management of government publications.

The course examines the nature and concepts of government and government publications and highlights the importance of government publications in library and information services. It also studies the types, characteristics, history; acquisition methods and processes; acquisition policy; organisation; dissemination and use policy; and preservation and conservation of government documents. Finally, it takes a critical look at the challenges of management and use of government publications as well as the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and COVID-19 pandemic on the management and use of government publications in library and information services.

### **COURSE AIMS**

This course aims to introduce you to the nature and concepts of government and government publications as well as the importance of government publications in library and information services. In addition, the types, characteristics, history, acquisition methods and processes, and

acquisition policy are examined. Furthermore, the course takes a holistic look at the organisation, dissemination and use policy and preservation and conservation of government documents. Finally, the challenges of acquisition and organisation of government publications are discussed. The course consists of four modules with thirteen units of study. In this course, you will gain great insights into how valuable government publications are in library and information services and how they can be used more efficiently and effectively, especially in the post COVID-19 era.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Specific objectives of each module and unit will be provided to enable you check on the progress you are making while you are studying. At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain the nature and concepts of government as well as government publications
- Describe the various types and the characteristics of government publications
- Discuss the history and evolution of government publications
- Describe the acquisition methods and processes involved in managing government publications
- Discuss the acquisition policy of government publications
- Discuss the organisation of government publications
- Discuss the importance of government publications and their value in library and information services
- Discuss the dissemination and policy on use of government publications
- Discuss the preservation and conservation methods used in managing government publications
- Identify and discuss the challenges of acquisition and organisation of government publications
- Discuss the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic on the management and use of government publications in library and information services.

## **WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE**

To complete this course successfully, you have to go through all the modules and carefully read the study units, do all practical exercises and assessments and also open and read through the links provided by double-clicking on them. Read the recommended books and other materials available to you and ensure you attend the practical sessions. Always participate in the online facilitation and facilitation going on in your study centre. Each unit of study has an introduction, objectives that you should achieve at the end of the study, a conclusion and summary informing you

in a nutshell what you studied in the unit. It also has a main content section that discusses in details the issues in that unit. Above all, there is the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) to evaluate what you have learnt and further reading materials that you can study with. You can download the courseware into your device so that you can study it whenever you are offline.

## ASSESSMENT

There are two main forms of assessments namely; the formative and the summative. The formative assessments at the end of every unit of study will enable you to evaluate your learning output. The university uses the summative assessments to evaluate your academic performance in the courseware you studied. The summative assessment which is a Computer-Based Test (CBT) is made up of objectives and sub-objective questions. There are 3 continuous assessments, 10% each and final examinations are based on 70%. You are required to take all the computer-based tests and the final examination.

## STUDY UNITS

There are 13 study units in this course, divided into four modules. The modules and units are presented as follows:

### **Module 1    Concept of Government and Government Publications, Types, Characteristics and History of Government Publications**

- Unit 1        What is Government?
- Unit 2        Nature, Definition and Concept of Government Publications
- Unit 3        Types of Government Publications
- Unit 4        History and Characteristics of Government Publications

### **Module 2    Acquisition Methods and Processes, Acquisition Policy, and Organisation of Government Publications**

- Unit 1        Acquisition Methods and Processes of Government Publications
- Unit 2        Acquisition Policy of Government Publications
- Unit 3        Organisation of Government Publications

### **Module 3    Importance, Dissemination and Use, Preservation and Conservation of Government Publications**

Unit 1	Importance of Government Publications and Their Value in Library and Information Services
Unit 2	Dissemination and Use of Government Publications
Unit 3	Preservation and Conservation of Government Publications

**Module 4 Challenges of Acquisition and Organisation of Government Publications, and the Opportunities and Prospects Provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services**

Unit 1	Challenges of Acquisition and Organisation of Government Publications
Unit 2	Opportunities and Prospects Provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services.

## **HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE**

To get the most from this course, there is an urgent need for you to acquire a personal laptop and access to the internet. This will give you ample opportunity to study anywhere and at any time. The unit objectives of the course will guide your self-study effort. Always evaluate your learning at the end of the unit by attempting the tutor-marked assignment to find out your learning outcome in each unit. Endeavour to participate in all facilitations organised for this course for better understanding. If you run into trouble, arrange to meet your facilitator or the Librarian at the E-library for further clarification. To get the most from this course endeavour to do the following:

- Read the course guide thoroughly
- Develop a study schedule. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on it and write out dates for working on each unit.
- Always adhere to study schedule, the majority of the students fail because they do not have a study schedule or they may have but do not follow it religiously.
- Read the introduction and the objectives of any unit you want to study before going into the content of the unit.
- At the end of the unit, review the objectives and see how many of them you have achieved.
- Attempt the Self-Assignment Exercises.

- Do the same in every unit throughout the course.

## **SUMMARY**

The course on Management and Use of Government Publications is intended to make you understand the nature and concepts of government and government publications and their importance in library and information services. Also, the types, characteristics, history, acquisition methods and processes, acquisition policy; organisation, dissemination and use policy, and preservation and conservation of government documents were examined. Finally, the course will take a critical look at the challenges of acquisition and organisation of government publications as well as the opportunities and prospects provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and COVID-19 pandemic in the management and use of government publications in library and information services. At the end of the course, you will achieve the objective if you follow the instructions and do what you are asked to do. We wish you success as you adhere strictly to the instructions and advice given to you for this course.

**MAIN  
COURSE**

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## **MODULE 1      CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, TYPES, AND HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

This module introduces you to the nature, definition and concept of government and government publications. Societies, even in the ancient times, achieved peaceful co-existence by introducing sets of rules and regulations that governed the relationship between different spheres of life. Part of these regulations dealt with leadership positions and how such leaders were chosen, thereby introducing the concept of governance. The module also introduces the concept of government publications, describing them as documents published by government agencies. The types and unique characteristics of such publications as well as the history of government publications will also be discussed. The module is made up of five units, namely:

- Unit 1      Definition and Concept, Functions, Structures and Systems of Government
- Unit 2      Nature, Definition and Concept of Government Publications
- Unit 3      Types of Government Publications
- Unit 4      Characteristics of Government Publications
- Unit 5      History of Government Publications in Nigeria

### **UNIT 1      DEFINITION AND CONCEPT, FUNCTIONS, STRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Definition and Concept, Functions, Structure and Systems of Government
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit will introduce you to the concept of government and governance. It elucidates the definition of the term, the structure of

government as well as the importance of government and governance in society. It also describes the functions of government, various systems of government as well as e-government operations. It provides the context in which government publications are examined and their relevance to library and information services.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of government and governance, including electronic governance (e-governance)
- define the term “government”
- discuss the functions, structure and systems of government with specific reference to Nigeria.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Definition and Concept of Government**

The concept of government, like most social science concepts, is difficult to define precisely. Researchers have thus defined the concept in various ways, including using the terms “government” and “governance” interchangeably. We shall examine a few of these definitions in order to get a robust understanding of the concept. Frank Beasley (1999) defines government as “the particular group of people, the administrative bureaucracy, who control a (nation-) state at a given time, and the manner in which their governing organisations are structured” while Flint and Taylor (2007) submit that governments are the means through which state power is employed and that states are served by a continuous succession of different governments. In his contribution, Babatunde (n.d.) aptly explains the concept succinctly by stating that for a group of people to live together there is the need for rules guiding individual conducts in the larger society to ensure peace and stability. A central authority called “government” decides what is best for the individuals and groups and how to utilise its resources to provide the best living standard for members. Government is therefore responsible for the provision and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water, through the taxes it collects from members of that society and other income generating activities. Government is usually territorially-based and has responsibility for making decisions for which it has constitutional and legislative powers that are binding on the individuals, groups, businesses and other institutions/organisations within its territory. Government is usually represented by a symbol of authority and often has a flag that signifies which government authority it represents.



Figure 1: Example of the Symbol of Government of Nigeria  
Source: Google Images

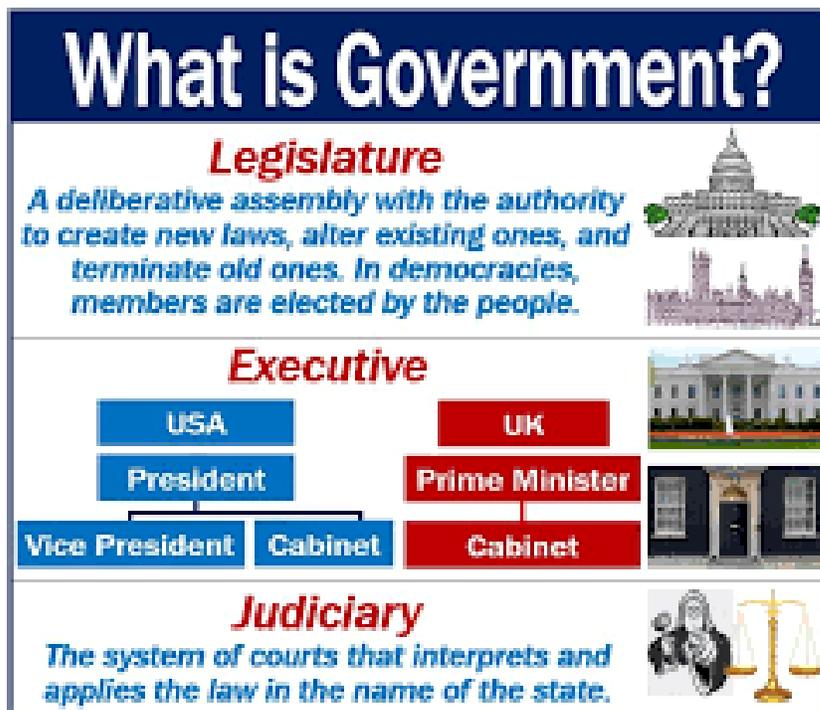


Figure 2: Example of Definition of Government  
Source: Google Images

In line with this view, Bradway and Shah (2009) defines governance as “the formulation and execution of collective action at the local, state and national levels, encompassing the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal

norms, networks, community organisations, and neighbourhood associations in pursuing collective action.” They stated further that this conception of government (the public sector) is nearly always involved and usually plays a vital role, but other sectors - non-profit organisations, foundations, civic elite organisations, business leadership organisations, labour unions, social service organisations, and the inter-organisational collaboration among these various groups - may play important roles as well. It can then be said that governance involves managing the process through which decisions are made that are intended to affect societal outcomes, including economic, social, environmental and other important outcomes. In this course, government and governance shall be used synonymously to infer a group of people who control the administrative bureaucracy of a state and have the legal rights to make rules that govern the members of the state and exercise authority over the actions and inactions of members with the main aim of providing a better quality of life. We shall not discuss non-governmental organisations, foundations, labour unions, the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and other such organisations here.

The key functions of government often explain further the duties, roles, responsibilities and obligations of government. For instance, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended) gives a glimpse into the functions of the Nigerian government where it states that WE THE PEOPLE of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: HAVING firmly and solemnly resolved ... TO LIVE in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble Sovereign Nation under God dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international co-operation and understanding: ... AND TO PROVIDE for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of Freedom, Equity and Justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the Unity of our people ... (Babatunde, n.d.).

### **3.1.1 Functions of Government**

Describing the functions of government provides a greater insight into the concept of governance. Some of the key functions of government include:

- maintenance of law and order
- providing for the welfare of society
- managing the state
- decision-making and policy implementation
- legislation
- providing security and safety/defence
- regulating public activities and operations
- providing information on issues relating to members of the society

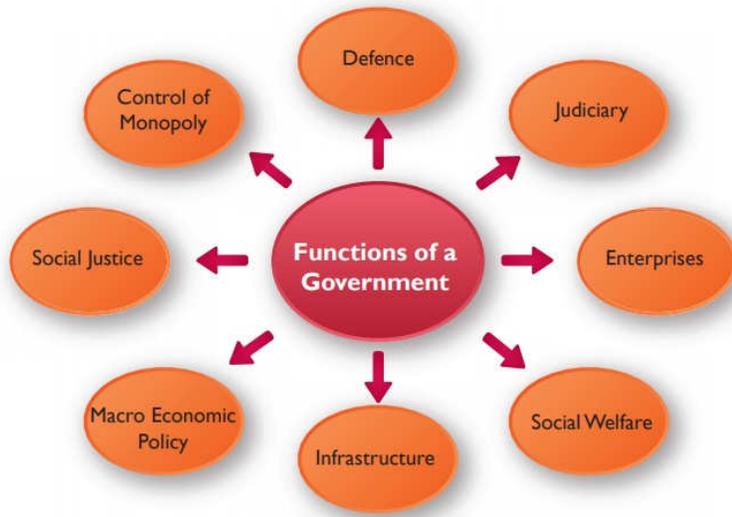


Figure 3: Functions of government  
 Source: Google Images

**3.1.2 Structure of Government**

A brief description of the structure of the Nigerian government is provided below. The government of Nigeria operates three tiers of government; namely the federal, state and local government levels. The federal government has an over-arching role and takes responsibility for issues that affect every citizen. In terms of hierarchy, the federal government is at the highest level, followed by the state and local government levels respectively. They all function independently although there is ample communication and cooperation amongst them in order for the country to function efficiently and effectively.



Figure 4: Structure of government in Nigeria  
 Source: Google Images

As part of the structure, there is also the executive arm of government, the legislative arm as well as the judiciary.



Figure 5: The three arms of government in Nigeria  
Source: Google Images

### 3.1.4 Systems of Government

There are many different systems of government around the world but only three types will be discussed in this unit.

- i. **Democracy:** this is a popular form of government in the modern era. Nigeria runs a democratic government. It is a system of government of a sovereign country whose leaders are elected by the people/citizens of the country and therefore power resides with the people. It is regarded basically as government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Globally, there are different variants of a democracy, including presidential, parliamentary and direct democracy.
  - **Presidential democracy** – Nigeria and the United States of America are good examples of a presidential democracy. In this form of government, there are three branches of government: executive, legislative and judiciary. The president is the elected head of the executive branch of government and the head of state while the legislative branch is made up of elected representatives in the Senate and House of Representative. However, the judicial branch is not elected by the people; rather it is headed by the Chief Justice of the Federation who is chosen by the President. A Republic is a country where the head of government is an elected president who also doubles as the Head of State. Presidents are usually elected for a specific period of time, called term of office.

In Nigeria, the term of office or tenure of an elected president and other elected officials is four years in the first instance, and it is renewable (by another election) for an additional term of four years and no more. Nigeria is both a federation and republic. In a federalism there is division or separation of powers. In this case, the government has a central or federal power but the states and local government councils have some specific powers within their geographical territories. This means that states have the powers to enact laws and have their own executive arms, State Houses of Assembly (legislature) and judiciary systems. As a republic, it means that Nigerian citizens have the power to make changes in government; they have the voting rights and as such it is said that power belongs to the people.

- **Parliamentary democracy** – The United Kingdom is an example of a country that runs parliamentary democracy. In a parliamentary democracy, the head of state is different from the head of government. In the United Kingdom, the head of state is the monarch, who serves a primarily ceremonial role, and the head of government is the prime minister. Executive power is exercised by the House of Commons and House of Lords on behalf of the monarch to represent the people. The members of parliament are elected by the people, and the party with the highest number of representatives appoints the prime minister, who then becomes the Head of Government.
- **Direct democracy**- A good example of this system of government is Switzerland which has practiced the system since 1846. Unlike other democracies, in a direct democracy, electorates may determine policy without legislative representatives, as opposed to electing representatives as proxies. For example, any citizen can challenge a law passed by parliament or propose an amendment to the constitution. A referendum is mandatory to make changes to the constitution.
  - ii. **Communism:** Communism is a theory created by Karl Marx where everything is publicly owned rather than privately owned like in capitalism. It is an attempt to create a classless society where everybody is treated equally. Example of countries that still practice communism to date are China, Soviet Union, Vietnam and Laos.
  - iii. **Monarchy:** This system of government is no longer very common or popular although it still exists in Europe and other continents. According to Yourdictionary.com, a monarchy is a system of government where one family rules, and their title is passed down through the generations. However, much like a democracy, the head of the monarchy is not always clearly defined. In an absolute monarchy, the

king or ruler is in control of all the government. The more common constitutional monarchy has a royal family, but they serve mostly as ceremonial figures. Examples of monarchies that exist today include:

- **constitutional monarchy** - In the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth is the figurehead monarch, but parliament has most control of the government.
- **absolute monarchy** - Vatican City is not only its own country, it is also a monarchy where only the pope rules as sovereign.



Figure 6: Forms of government

Source: Google Images

In the twenty-first century, especially with the advent of the Internet, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Post-Covid-19 pandemic, electronic government (e-government) is developing rapidly across many nations, including developing countries. The implication of this is that many government activities and operations are now electronically-driven, thereby necessitating the digitisation of print documents as well as the promotion of e-government publications. With the proliferation of government websites in the e-government environment, government information in speeches, statistical information, service announcements and other such advices now abound causing Kann-Christensen & Pors (2004) to declare that the introduction of these new media has changed the profile of library collections. Cramer (2002) describes the complexity of the phenomenon further by stating that to keep track of government material, a library might add a government page to its web-site, add catalogue records for the materials or link directly to umbrella sites such as the government's homepage. The challenge for libraries in Nigeria is that many librarians do not have the requisite Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills to function effectively in the twenty-first century, thereby compounding the issue of access, retrieval, management and use of government publications provided in e-platforms.

For instance, Adeyoyin (2006) in assessing the ICT literacy among the staff of West African University libraries, comparing Anglophone and Francophone African countries, concluded that in all the 28 university libraries surveyed, only 179 out of about 370 professional librarians were ICT literate. This is a serious cause for concern which must be addressed by library schools and the need for libraries to provide better opportunities for continuing professional development. On their part, librarians must take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new technologies and leverage on such platforms provided by MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) to up-skill themselves in order to be able to function more effectively in an e-government environment.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit takes a cursory look at the concept and definition of government. It briefly describes the functions of government, its structure as well as a few systems of government. These were done with a view to provide a contextual framework for the creation of government publications, including e-government publications. As will be discussed in other units, government publications emanate from government institutions or agencies of government. They therefore reflect the views of government in its bid to achieve its aims and objectives and to fulfil its mandate to the citizens of a country over which the government exercises autonomous control or power.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you were given a brief overview of the definition and concept of government. The views of various researchers on the concept of government were examined while the key functions of government were enumerated. The unit concludes by discussing structures of government and the different types/systems of government around the world, highlighting the Nigerian situation. The issues concerned with e-government were also examined.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Briefly discuss the functions of governments, using Nigeria as an example.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Discuss the concept “government”.
2. Briefly discuss the systems and structure of governments, using Nigeria as an example.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2 NATURE, DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Nature, Definition and Concept of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit will introduce you to the nature, concept and definition of government publications. Specifically, the unit will discuss the definition of the term “government publication” from a broad point of view.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the nature, definition and concept of “government publications”
- define the term “government publications”.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Nature, Definition and Concept of Government Publications**

Libraries have been known to provide its users access to information in various formats and media in order to meet their information needs. This primary role has not changed over time but has rather evolved in its nature, services and operations in response to the dynamic nature of society. Infact, Ajidahun (2006) described a library that cannot meet the information needs of its users as a moribund and anaemic information system because it has lost its vitality, honour and attractions. Libraries over time have identified, acquired, stored, organised, preserved and disseminated information resources from numerous sources, including government. Ogundana, Olowosejeje and Barkindo (2003) noted that governance is a two-way system between the government and the

governed, and that for governance to be effective, there must be an efficient and effective two-way communication system with information as the main currency of communication. They, therefore, concluded that government publications serve as a key conduit for the dissemination of such information which serve as very good materials for research, educational and propaganda purposes.

It is thus imperative to examine the term “government publications” further. Government publications, government documents and official publications are often used inter-changeably, and will be used synonymously in this course material. The term “government publication” has been defined in many ways by different researchers. Some of the notable definitions will be articulated here. Prytherch’s *Harrod’s Librarians’ Glossary and Reference Book* (2005) explained the concept of government publications as publications of an official character or of an instructional, descriptive or historical nature which are published by government departments. Similarly, Odumosu (1990) defined government publications as “vital or authoritative publication of documents issued by or on behalf of the government (federal, state or local), their departments and agencies”. He went further to explain that they could be views on any subject bordering on the progress of the country and well-being of the people, published by organs of legislative, the judiciary and/or the executive arms of government through which the functions of government are exercised. Adding to the literature, Ries (2021, p.1) expanded this definition by stating that government publications are:

“publications, regardless of physical form, issued or published by authority of a government body. Specifically, those issued or published by the executive, legislature, and judicial functions of government at all levels – international, national, federal, local government bodies and intergovernmental bodies. All levels of government from local governments to international treaty organisations, such as the European Union and the United Nations produce government documents and information. The publications range from primary source materials for scholarly research to informational pamphlets for the general public”.

In their contribution, Aina (1981), Katz (1982) and Edoaka (2000) stated that government publications are issued or printed at government expense or published by authority of a government body, including the executive, legislature and judicial arm of government. They further noted that the publications are issued periodically and printed by the Federal or State

designated printer even though in some instances, the government may engage commercial printers. Smith (2011) expressed a similar view by stating that government publications involve the gathering and publishing of data which occurs at all levels of government: local, state, national, and international.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that government publications are fundamentally information resources generated by different arms of government, including ministries, parastatals and government agencies (MDAs). They are issued by branches and organs of government, including the executive, judiciary and legislature. Also, publications of regional and international organisations and intergovernmental agencies are regarded as government publications. The information contained in such publications include laws, regulations, statistics, consumer information, censuses or population statistics, departmental plans, national development plans, gazettes, annual reports, etc. Examples are: *Nigerian Official Publications, 1869-1959: A Guide*; *National Archives: A Handlist of Nigerian Official Publications in the National Archives Headquarters, Ibadan*; *Official Publications of Sierra Leone and The Gambia, etc.* Government information provide valuable reference sources and the information contained in these publications may never be found in other information sources. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has a vibrant group on Government Information and Official Publications (GIOPS).

In the United States of America, the Government Printing Office (GPO), which was established by the U.S. Congress in 1860, is responsible for the printing, binding, marketing, and distribution of all government publications, especially those that are not of a confidential nature. The GPO also maintains necessary catalogues and a library of these publications. The GPO is the equivalent of the Federal Government Printer in Nigeria. Similarly, in Britain, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), which was principally established in 1786 to coordinate and manage office supplies for government departments, has now become the central government publisher responsible for the production and management of a wide range of official documents in government agencies. The HMSO also generates cumulative annual catalogues and indexes of government documents which can all be useful for bibliographic purposes.





Figure 7: Examples of government publications in Nigeria

Source: Google Images

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, government publications are information resources generated and

published by different arms of government, including ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) at all levels of governance: federal, state, local and international agencies. They can be classified into the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government and are important primary sources of information. They cover all subject matter

including education, environmental issues, water, housing, agriculture, gender issues, security, health, immigration, customs, correctional facilities, road safety, law, statistics, reports, parliamentary publications, legislation, policy documents, gazettes, government white papers, periodicals and discussion documents.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit provided you a brief overview of the nature, definition and concept of government publications. To reiterate, we defined government publications as information resources published by Ministries Departments and Agencies of government as well as international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and African Development Bank (AfDB). The publications are generated at all levels of governance, including federal, state and local government levels. The publications are classified under the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government and cover all subject matter such as education, agriculture, security, gender issues, reports, policy documents, manuscripts, law reports, legislation, gazettes, government white papers and periodicals.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

Briefly discuss the concept of government publications

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Briefly discuss the nature and definition of government publications.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**UNIT 3    TYPES OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we examined the definition, nature and concept of government publications. In this unit, you shall focus on various types of government publications, with a description of each type of publication. Such description will make it easier for you to understand the range of formats, nature and scope of government publications.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe various types of government publications
- describe the range of formats and scope of government publications.

**3.0 MAIN CONTENT****3.1 Types of Government Publications**

Government publications differ greatly in media, format, scope and content with each serving an important purpose in library and information services. Some are published while others are unpublished materials. They come as print and non-print materials, and electronic resources. Examples of print materials include books, periodicals, scientific and technical reports, legal publications, maps, posters, kits, gazettes, hearings, committee reports, bulletins, circulars, annual reports and pamphlets, budget speeches, white papers, directives, regulations, national development plans, estimates, census, reports of commissions of inquiry, laws, statutes, Hansard (an authoritative source on proceedings of House of Assembly and National Assembly). Non-print or audio-visual materials include CD-ROMs, DVDs, microforms, audio-cassettes and

video cassettes. Electronic resources include e-books, e-journals and other online digital resources.

Government publications can be classified into three broad categories; namely Executive, Legislative and Judicial publications. It is difficult to exhaustively describe all the different types of government publications, however, some of them will be described here.

### 3.1.1 Government Publications from the Executive Branch of Government

The executive arm of government publishes many documents in various formats. Some of such documents include government reports, technical reports, research reports, statistical publications, factsheets, handbooks and manuals, presidential papers, budgets, maps and atlases and pamphlets. They are briefly described below:

- i. **Government reports:** these are reports issued by the executive arm of any government authority at the local, state or federal level. The Law Insider dictionary defines government reports as those that are issued with respect to the compliance or non-compliance of any company party with applicable laws, including without limitation, laws relating to franchising. It further explains that in order to certify that a document is a government report, you should watch out for marks or stamps which indicate that the document was filed in a government office, such as letterheads, file code markings, captions, signature blocks on architectural drawings, or correspondence codes.

Examples include:

- UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2021). Nigeria Situation Report for Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States No.14 (as of 1 October 2021).[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha\\_nga\\_bay\\_state\\_sitrep\\_08102021.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_nga_bay_state_sitrep_08102021.pdf)
- World Report 2021: Nigeria. Human Rights Watch  
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<https://freedomhouse.org/country/nigeria/2021>
- Nigeria Situation Report, 21 Jan 2021 - ReliefWeb  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria-situation-report-2...>
- Kirkham (2005). “An independent audit of the UK Government Reports on Strategic Export Controls for 2003 and the first half of 2004.” Saferworld.

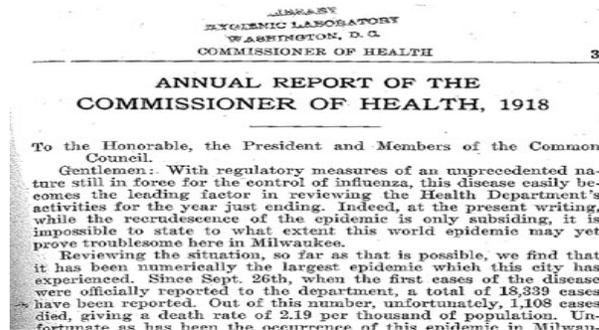


Figure 8: Example of a government report  
Source: Google Images

There are many advantages and disadvantages of government reports. Ong (2016) and Business Degree (2012) list some of these as:

### Advantages of government report

- Increases transparency and accountability.
- Develops trust, credibility and reputation.
- Promotes progress and innovation.
- Encourages public education and community engagement.
- Assists in monitoring and controlling the activities of government
- Guides decision-making, especially by management in the organisation
- It could be used to enhance employee motivation
- It could be used to evaluate employee performance in the organisation.

### Disadvantages of government report

- Reports are time-consuming to create.
- They are expensive to research and write.
- Technical reports can be difficult to understand.
- Implementing report recommendations can prove difficult.
- Reports could be biased and therefore, misleading.

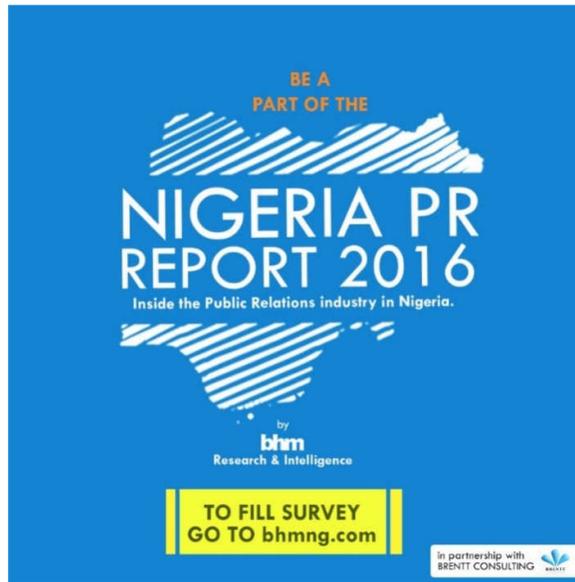


Figure 9: Example of government report  
Source: Google Images

- ii. **Technical reports:** Prance (2004) defines a technical report is a formal report designed to convey technical information in a clear and easily accessible format. It is divided into sections which allow different readers to access different levels of information. She stated that the report format should include the title page, summary, contents, introduction, the main body, conclusions, references, bibliography, acknowledgements and appendices. Technical reports provide information on processes, progress or results of projects, research, and activities of the organisation or institution or department. They could be in the form of research done by government.

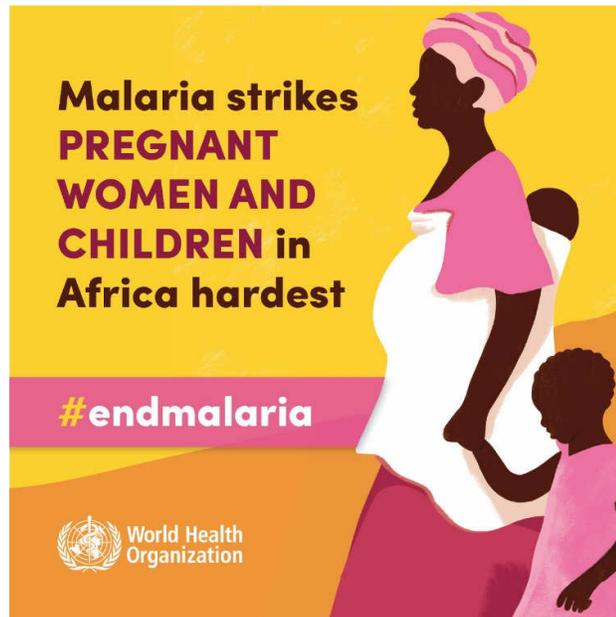


Figure 10: Example of a technical report  
Source: Google Images

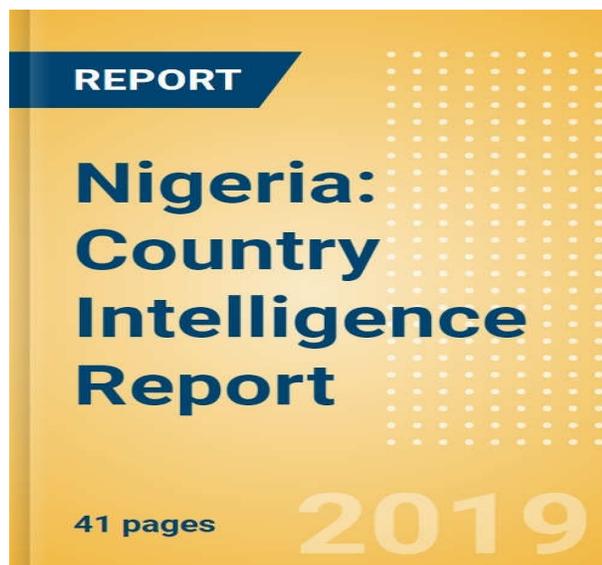


Figure 11: Example of a technical report  
Source: Google Images

- iii. **Research reports:** as the name implies, research reports are information gathered and published by researchers or statisticians in report formats. The information gathered could be quantitative or qualitative. Research reports usually have section on summary, background/introduction, methodology, main content, conclusion, recommendations and references.



Figure 12: Example of a research report  
Source: Google Images

- iv. **Government statistics:** these are the factual information or data that are collated and provided for statistical purposes by a government department or agency, which is usually a distinct entity of government solely responsible for reporting such statistics. In some cases, the agency may analyse its data to provide more information about the statistics in its reports such that the data is relevant to public policy concerns (Straf, 2001). In their contribution, Payne and Payne (2004) defined Official statistics as numerical data-sets, produced by official governmental agencies mainly for administrative purposes, including the census, crime figures, health data, income and employment rates, as well as those based on government-sponsored social surveys. For the agency to be effective, the focus of any analysis must be on ways to improve the relevance and accuracy for use in public policy analysis and decision-making, independently of any particular policy. Government statistics are important because they provide the basic ingredients that the governments use in making policies and evaluating its activities. Statistics assists in identifying the gaps, set goals and monitor the progress of government activities. The citizenry also bases their assessment of government on the statistical data provided.

Some of the reasons for which statistics are used include description, evaluation, analysis, inference, and research for

countries, sectors and groups. These statistics may be collected by a government agency from individuals, establishments, or other organisations directly, or it may obtain data from administrative records. However, it is important to state that such statistics or data are not collected for administrative, regulatory, or enforcement purposes. Rather, the data are used solely to describe and analyse statistical patterns, trends, and relationships involving groups of persons or other units that will be of immense value to the wellbeing of the generality of the citizens. Hence, Straf (2015) was of the strong opinion that statistics in governance and nation-building invaluable because they are fundamental to national development plans and other functions of government. He stressed that statistics are vital to a democracy, as they provide the means by which citizens can hold their government accountable.

Consequently, the nature of data provides enough justification for a government to collect statistics, but there are many other reasons for which governments collect statistical data. One of such reasons is to ensure that accurate, timely, and credible information is collected in order to assist the government in planning accurately. A statistical agency must be able to provide information relevant to current and future policy issues, to establish credibility for itself and its data, and to be respected and trusted by the agencies it collects information from. In so doing, it is able to secure the confidentiality of such agencies, thereby fostering respect and trust. Government statistics may be collected and collated from administrative and other records such as censuses, surveys, and compilations from other sources. Activities may be centralized or decentralized among separate statistical agencies and they are defined by clear characteristics, including a clear, well-accepted vision, mission and independence. In the post-Covid era, statistical agencies face the challenge of keeping up with a rapidly changing world in an era of fake news, misinformation, disinformation, globalization and constantly evolving new technologies.

In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is the main National Agency responsible for the development and management of official statistics, the authoritative source and custodian of official statistics, based on Statistics Act of 2007 which is the Legal Instrument that established the Act. Information from the website of the NBS (<https://nigerianstat.gov.ng>)

explains that its aim is to coordinate statistical operations of the National Statistical System in the production of Official Statistics in all the Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), State Statistical Agencies (SSAs) and Local Government Councils (LGCs). Nigeria operates federal system of government with 36 States and Federal Capital Territory and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). At the federal level, each Ministry, Department and Agency has a Director of Statistics. Each state also has Director of Statistics while each Local Government Area has a head of statistics unit. All these including Statistical Institutes constitute the Nigeria National Statistical System (NSS).



Figure 13: National Bureau of Statistics, Central Area, Abuja  
Source: Google Images



Figure 14: Example of statistics provided in government publications  
Source: Google Images

- v. **Factsheet:** Cubon-Bell (2019) as cited by Wikipedia describes a factsheet as a single-page document which provides important information about a product, substance, service or topic. Factsheets usually provide factual information to users in a succinct, readable and easily understood language. They usually make use of infographics, lists, tables and diagrams in order to make the information readily understandable and effective. Examples include the World Health Organisation factsheets on a wide range of health issues as well as the Nigeria Country Factsheet.

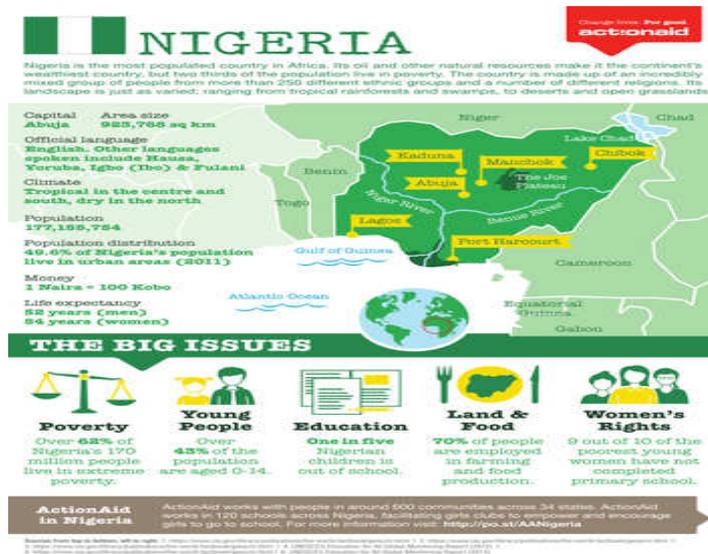


Figure 15: Nigeria Country Factsheet  
 Source: Google Images

- vi. **Handbooks and Manuals:** handbook and manuals are the most common form of documentation in government. Many now come in electronic forms, such as documentation stored on a corporate intranet. In whatever form they appear, they are used to instruct and guide employees on technical procedures, corporate policies, and many other kinds of information that is not intuitively obvious or easy to remember. Without them, employees would lose a valuable reference source and businesses would suffer from a variety of problems, ranging from untrained workers to liability lawsuit. Handbook and manuals may be used synonymously to refer to a ready-reference book that contains facts usually covering a particular subject. LIS BD Network (2021) refers to a handbook as a compilation of miscellaneous information in a compact and

handy form which contains relevant data, procedures and principles. It usually has a lot of diagrams, illustrations, tables and graphs and is small enough to be carried around in the hand. Examples are a guidebook for travellers; a reference book in a particular field such as “Family Planning: a Global Handbook for Providers” and Britain, 1948/49-, an Official Handbook, London: Stationery Office, 1948-. Published annually.

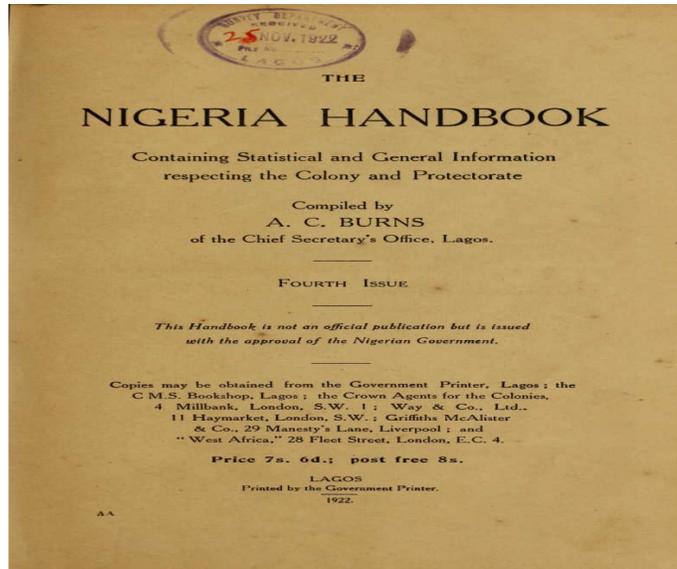


Figure 16: Example of a Handbook  
Source: Google Images



Figure 17: Example of handbook

Figure 18: Example of a manual

Source: Google Images

- vii. **Public Papers of the President:** In the United States, the Public Papers of the Presidents is compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives, and Records Administration. The concept started 1957 through a recommendation made by the National Historical Publications Commission. This was in an attempt to bring together the writings, addresses and remarks of a public nature of a president and to make them publicly available. In Nigeria, the Presidential Library was established to acknowledge the contributions of Nigeria's Presidents, and also to provide an insight into the intricacies and

challenges of the office of the President. The Presidential Library serves as a place where archived documents and materials can be accessed by researchers, students and the general public hoping to learn more about the office holder and the complex decision-making processes that come with the job. Examples in Nigeria are the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta and the Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida Presidential Library, Minna which are open to the public.

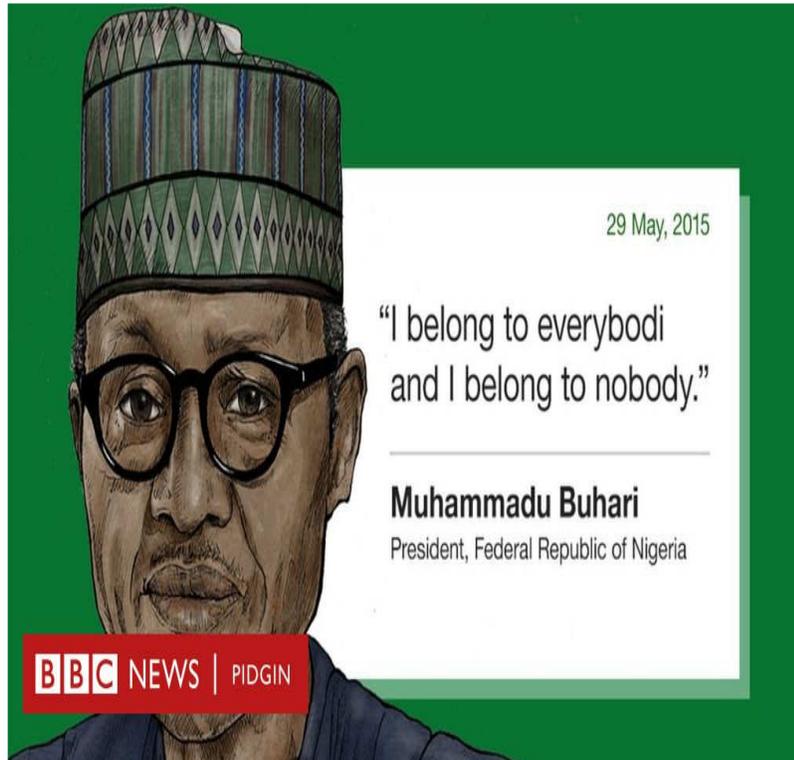
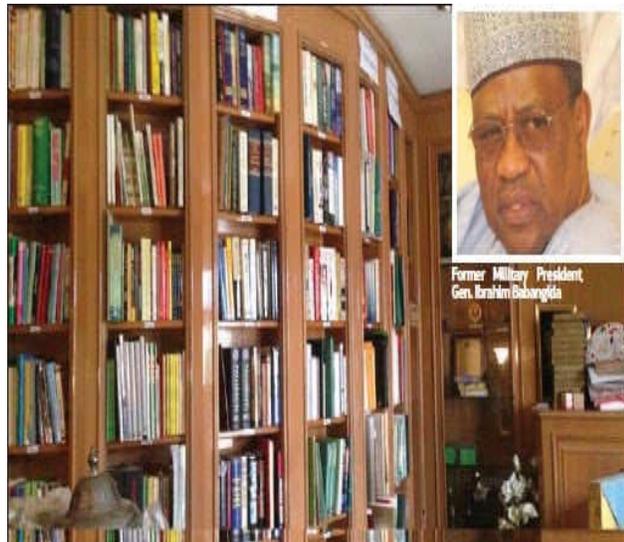


Figure 19: Example of a public paper of a President  
Source: Google Images



**Figure 20: Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library**  
Source: Google Images



**Figure 21: IBB Presidential Library**  
Source: Google Images

- viii. Government Budget:** This is a document prepared by the government to project its anticipated revenues (including income tax, import taxes) and its proposed expenditures on infrastructure such as healthcare, education, defence and roads for the forthcoming financial year. In most presidential systems such as in Nigeria, the budget is presented to the legislature for approval before expenditure can be made. Through the budget, the government implements economic policy and realizes its programme priorities. Once the budget is approved, the use of the



half, in thirds or in fourths, called a leaflet. UNESCO (2021) defined a pamphlet as a “non-periodical printed publication of at least 5 but not more than 48pages, exclusive of the cover pages, published in a particular country and made available to the public”.

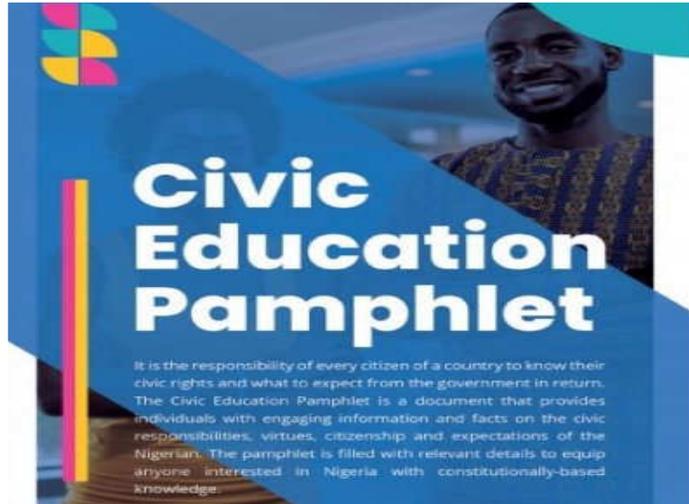


Figure 24: Example of a pamphlet  
Source: Google Images

### 3.1.2 Government Documents from the Legislative Branch of Government

These include such documents as:

- Hearings (testimony)
  - Bills
  - Committee reports
  - Record of proceeding and debates (Congressional reports)
  - Statutes, Laws, Codes and Acts.
- i. **Hearings:** The US Government Publishing Office notes that a congressional hearing is the meeting or session of a senate, house, joint or special committee of the National Assembly. It is usually open to the public to enable them obtain information and opinions on proposed legislation, conduct an investigation, or evaluate/oversee the activities of a government department or the implementation of a Federal law. In addition, hearings may also be purely exploratory in nature, providing testimony and data about topics of current interest. In the United States of America, most congressional hearings are published two months to two years after they are held. Hearings are available on the government website ([www.govinfo](http://www.govinfo)) as they become available during each session of Congress. Not all congressional hearings are available on the

website. Whether or not a hearing is disseminated on the government official website depends on the Committee of the National Assembly.



Figure 25: Congressional hearing  
Source: Google Images

- ii. **Government Bills:** Macmillan's dictionary (2019) defines government bill as that which is proposed, introduced or supported by a government in their country's legislature. In other words, it is a new law that could be introduced by the government. A bill is proposed legislation under consideration by a legislature. Bills are introduced in the legislature by government or private members and are discussed, debated and voted upon.



Figure 26: Example of a Bill  
Source: Google Images

- iii. **Law:** A bill does not become a law until it is passed by the legislature and in most cases, approved by the executive. Once a bill has been enacted into law, it is called an ACT of the legislature or a STATUTE.

In his definition, Gillespie (2013) stated that an act of parliament, sometimes referred to as primary legislation, is a text of law passed by legislative body. For most countries, an act begins as a bill, which the legislature votes on, the text may then be subject to assent or approval from the executive. An example is the act that established a Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria and provided for the constitution of a Federal Capital Development Authority for exercising the various powers set out in the Act. These powers include to execute other projects connected therewith, to provide for the laws applicable to that territory and for appeals from the upper area court and the law applicable thereto; and to provide for the delegation to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory of the executive powers vested in the President and those vested in him and the Governor of a State under the applicable laws (Federal Capital Territory Act, 1976).



Figure 27: Example of a law publication  
Source: Google Images

- iv. **Record of Proceedings and Debates (Congressional records):** this contains records for the proceedings/debates or sessions of the National Assembly (the US Congress in the case of the United States of America). It includes summaries of proceedings, letters and speeches for the Senate and the House of Representatives.



Figure 28: Example of a Congressional record  
Source: Google Images

### 3.1.3 Government Documents from the Judicial Branch of Government

The types of government documents produced by the judiciary include:

- Opinions
  - Judicial review
  - Court orders
  - Judicial discipline and regulations
- i. **Opinions:** Merriam-Webster dictionary defines opinion as a belief, judgement or way of thinking about something, that is, what someone thinks about a particular thing. Likewise, Wikipedia notes that opinion may deal with subjective matters in which there is no conclusive finding, or it may deal with facts which are sought to be disputed by the logical fallacy that one is entitled to their opinions. On the other hand, it is important to distinguish between facts and opinions. Facts could be said to be verifiable, that is, they can be proven to be true or false. An example is “Nigeria has thirty-six states and a Federal Capital Territory”. An opinion may be supported by facts and principles, in which case it becomes an argument. You cannot change a fact but you may change your opinion about something or someone.

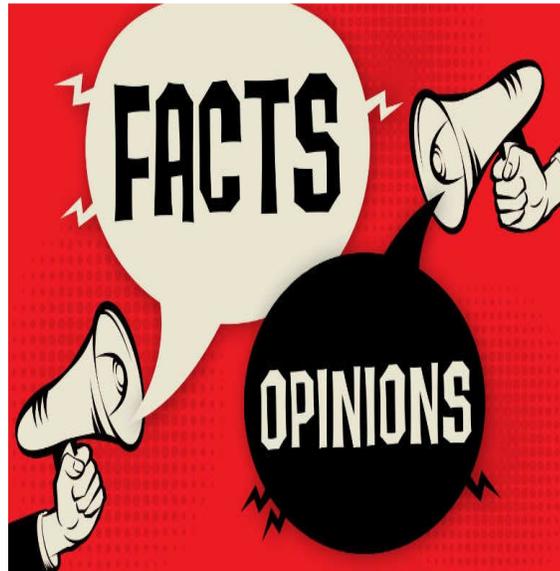


Figure 29: Opinions Vs Facts

Source: Google Images

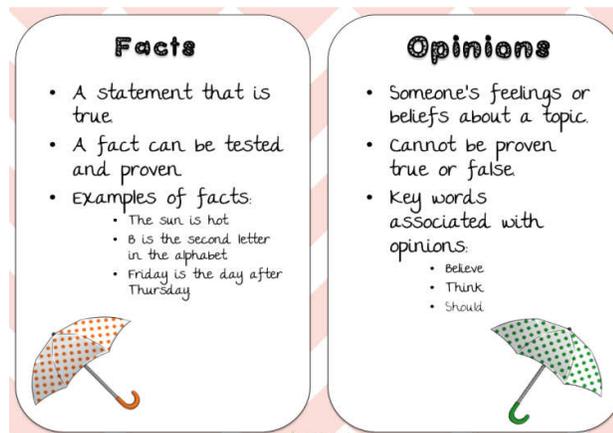


Figure 29b: Facts Versus Opinions

Source: Google Images

- ii. **Judicial reviews:** Tate (n.d.) in Encyclopedia Britannica defines judicial review as the power of the courts of a country to examine the actions of the legislative, executive, and administrative arms of the government and to determine whether such actions are consistent with the constitution. Actions judged inconsistent are declared unconstitutional and, therefore, null and void. The institution of judicial review in this sense depends upon the existence of a written constitution. It can therefore be said that judicial review is the judgement given by a court after the process of reviewing the lawfulness of a decision or action by a government entity. In this case the

court decides on the correctness of the process used rather than the correctness of the decision earlier arrived at.



Figure 30: Example of Judicial review  
Source: Google Images

- iii. **Court order:** Resolution Law Firm (2021) describes a court order as a written direction, decision or command delivered by a court and signed by the judge. It noted that courts orders are the determination of the court on a matter that arose from a cause of action. A court order is usually identified by the seal of the court impressed on it and the signature of the judge who delivered it.



Figure 31: Example of court order  
Source: Google Images

- iv. **Judicial discipline and regulations:** According to the National Judicial Council Judicial Discipline Regulations (2017), judicial discipline and regulations govern allegations

and complaints of misconduct against judicial officers and proceedings initiated in exercise of the power of the National Judicial Council pursuant to Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, to exercise disciplinary control over judicial officers against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made.



Figure 32: Example of a Disciplinary Agency  
Source: Google Images

### 3.1.4 Other Types of Government Publications

These include publications such as:

- Advice and Guidance
- Parliamentary business and official records
- Green Papers and White Papers
- Gazettes
- Royal Commissions
- Political Chronicles (summary of events)

The University of Wollongong Library (2021) defines these concepts in its website as:

- i. **Advice and guidance:** The government publishes to inform, advice, guide and warn citizens. Government does so in many ways. This could be to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibility to pay taxes, to register to vote, to report deaths, births and marriages. It could also be to

advice people on ways to stay healthy and safe such as giving up smoking or driving safely. Other pieces of advice could warn people of the consequences of breaking the law such as with drink-drive campaigns or over-speeding or to convey detailed regulations for building for fire prevention or for health and safety or to communicate changes to legislation. The materials are usually published in form of leaflets, other documents and media campaigns.



Figure 34: Example of government advice and guidance  
Source: Google Images

- ii. **Parliamentary Business and Official Records:** Official records are summary records of proceedings and therefore do not record everything said, apart from the wordings of motions. They contain information regarding members of committees, records of attendance and details of papers tabled but not printed.



Figure 35: Example of an official record  
Source: Google Images

- iii. **Green Papers and White Papers:** Once a government department has consulted on a topic and reached a view, this will be published as a White paper although this will not be how it is described on the title page. White papers are normally Command Papers and as such will be laid before parliament. White papers are policy information papers issued after a period of debate, they set out a policy that has been adopted and the philosophy and reasoning behind it. On the other hand, Green papers are policy discussion papers. They are intended to promote public debate on proposed government policy. They may give details about the policy being promoted or set out alternative courses of action and show the policy options available, for example, higher education policy discussion paper. On the other hand, these papers are not common with state governments, but have been issued at regular intervals by the Federal Government since the 1970s. Since 1978, the distinctively coloured covers are no longer used. Federal green and white papers are tabled in Parliament and are published as parliamentary papers and in plain-cover editions. It should be noted that the words green, white or policy paper do not always occur in the titles of these papers.

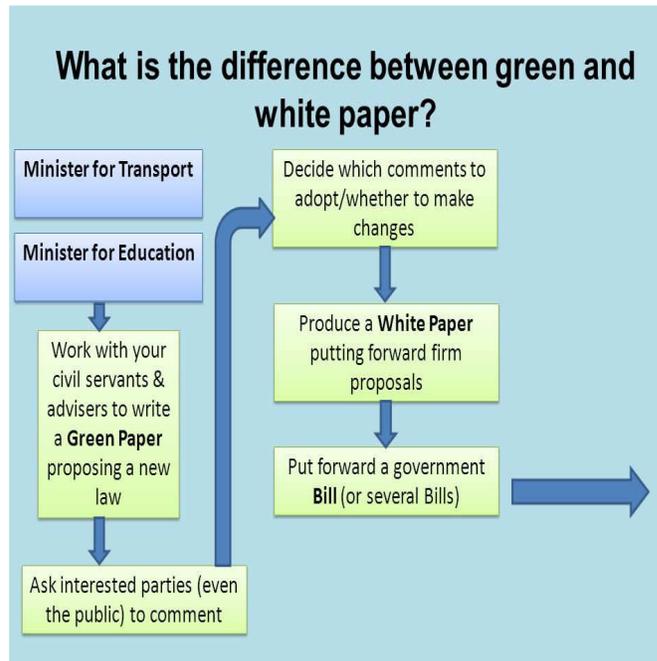


Figure 36: Government Green Papers and White Papers  
Source: Google Images

- iv. **Press releases:** press releases are a useful source of information as they would have been carefully written to convey a department's view on a topic and should not be overlooked. They appear on departmental websites and through alerting services, press conferences and other avenues, they are picked up and reported on by the media.



Figure 37: Example of press releases  
Source: Google Images

- v. **Gazettes:** The London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes are the UK's official newspapers of record. These are publications which have been produced for almost 350 years

and record events from an official perspective. There are notices of insolvency, unclaimed Premium Bond numbers, buildings licensed to be used for marriages, Royal proclamations such as changes to the design of coins and much more. The gazettes have been made freely available online and this includes free access to the archive, a fascinating source of information for issues such as family history research. An RSS newsfeed means you can stay in touch with different types of notices without actually accessing the gazettes. Gazettes are one of the public sector publications which are actively encouraging the reuse of their data and the information is available as pdfs and XML, so that they can be easily re-used. The information is covered by Crown Copyright and re-use needs to be licensed by [www.london-gazette.co.uk/reuse](http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/reuse).



## Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette

No 12. Lagos - 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2005 Vol. 92

Government Notice No. 12

The following are published as supplement to this Gazette:

<small>S. I. No</small>	<small>Short Title</small>	<small>Page</small>
1	Consumer Protection Council Act ( 1992 No.66 ) Consumer Protection (Sales Promotion) Regulations 2005	B 1 - 7
2	The Consumer Protection Council Act ( 1992 No. 66 ) Consumer Protection (Products and Services Monitoring and Registration) Regulation 2005	B 9 - 14

1

Figure 38: Example of a gazette  
Source: Google Images

- vi. **Royal Commissions:** the main function of Royal Commissions is to inform government. This is achieved either by gathering information to assist in the formulation of policy or by establishing the facts relating to a particular topic. Interim and final reports produced by Royal Commissions as a result of their investigations are tabled before parliament. Nearly all these reports are released as parliamentary papers.

- vii. **Political Chronicles:** The chronicle is a summary of events in both the Commonwealth and State Governments. For instance, the Australian journal of politics and history, published three times a year. The second issue covers the last six months of the previous year and the third issue covers the first six months of that year.

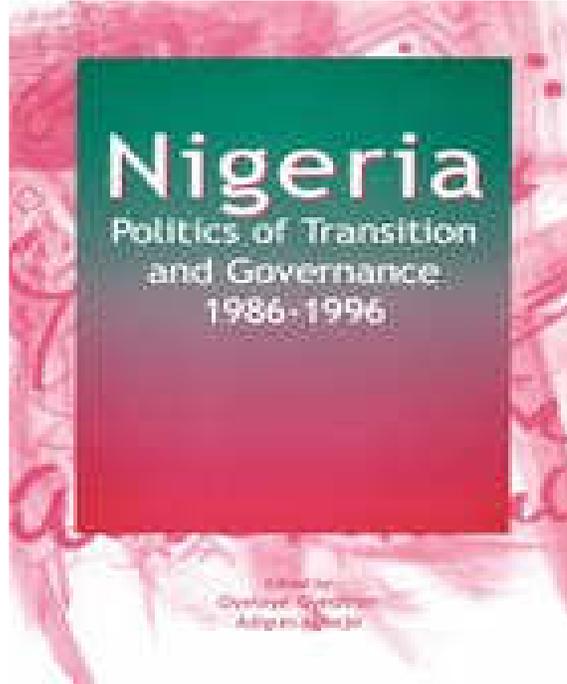


Figure 39: Example of a political chronicle  
Source: Google Images

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The unit describes the various types of government publications published by the three arms of government, that is, the executive, legislature and judiciary. It described other documents that may be published by MDAs outside the three arms of government. The purpose of the unit is to assist you to get acquainted with the range of government publications which vary in content, nature, format and scope.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In summary, this unit was designed to acquaint you with the various types of government publications. Many other government publications which are available in libraries were not discussed. However, government publications discussed include those of the executive arm (government reports, technical reports, research reports, government statistics, factsheets, handbooks and manuals, public papers of the President,

government budget, maps and atlases, and government pamphlets); those of the legislative arm (hearings, government bills, laws, and record of proceedings and debates/congressional records); and those of the judicial arm (opinions, judicial reviews, judicial discipline & regulations, judiciary review, court order, judicial discipline and regulations. Other types of government publications are government advice and guidance, parliamentary business and official records, green and white papers, press releases, gazettes, royal commissions and political chronicles. All of these will assist you to appreciate the range, scope, content and format of government publications.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Briefly describe the various types of government publications produced by the executive arm of government

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the various types of government publications published by the legislative arm of government.
2. Briefly describe the various types government publications produced by the judicial arm of government.
3. Describe ten government publications that are published by the Nigerian government.

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## **UNIT 4 HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 History of Government Publications
  - 3.2 Characteristics of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, we discussed the various types of government publications. You shall learn about the history and some of the unique characteristics of government publications in this unit. The characteristics will be described in such a way that will assist you to identify government publications more easily.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- trace the history of government publication
- identify and describe the characteristics of government publications
- explain the unique features and nature of government publications.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 History of Government Publications**

Government publications also referred to as official publications or more commonly as government documents, are documents published by order and at the expense of any public authority. They include official gazettes, parliamentary documents, reports and annals and other legislative texts, publications and reports of an administrative nature emanating from government agencies (Biblioteca Universidad de Alcalá, 2021). It is more fittingly described in the U.S code (44 U.S.C 1901) as “...informational matter which is published as an individual document at Government expense, or as required by law”. (Ohio State University, 2021). They span

across a host of formats, from white papers to in-house journals, gazettes, monographs (such as reports of surveys, census etc.), maps, court hearings, legislative hearings (such as the Hansard for the Nigerian National Assembly) and so on.

From the introduction of Egyptian papyrus scrolls around 3000 B.C to the codex around A.D 100 and then vellums/parchments, publishing has indeed had a long history. The introduction of paper however rudimentary it was in the 15<sup>th</sup> century brought with it an unequivocal breakthrough in the way information was preserved and transmitted. It was a precursor to the movable printing press introduced by Gutenberg which in turn gave birth to modern day publishing. Interestingly, the start of publishing in Nigeria was a direct consequence of attempts by colonial religious interests to distribute religious materials. The first press/publishing house for all materials was established by the Presbyterian mission (later named the Hope Waddel Press) in 1846 in Calabar (Oyeyinka & Adebayo, 2016). At the time, the publishing houses were British-owned such as the CMS press in Abeokuta, and others such as Macmillan, Longman, and Oxford University Press.

In extending this discussion, Afolabi (2014) asserted that the colonial government was instrumental to the development of document publishing with the establishment of the first Government Printing House at Broad Street, Lagos in 1914. With time, about four government press offices were established at Enugu, Ibadan, Cameroon and Lagos. Their mandate was initially to provide stationery materials to the colonial government but this soon expanded to include trade journals, letter of credence, white papers, rules and regulations, treasury books and forms. Their services were so vital that in 1933, a printing regulation law was enacted to protect the printing press.

After independence in 1960, the new Nigerian government became involved in publishing when it acquired the Kaduna-based *New Nigerian* newspaper and set up its first printing press in 1980 (Maringues, 2001). This move was seen as a way to put out veritable information as regards the activities of government, especially in the northern states. Printing of the Nigerian constitution in 1963 when it became a Republic and in 1999 also promoted the need for government to own a printing press through which government publications will be printed and made available to the populace. Thus, the Ministry of Information established in 1960 along with the Federal Printing Press were commissioned to make copies of the constitution available.

Today, the Federal Ministry of Information is primarily responsible for publishing information in the electronic media such as the Hansard for the

National Assembly, statements of the federal government and so on. Similarly, the Federal Printing Press located both in Lagos and Abuja is responsible for publishing hard copies of federal government documents such as the 1999 Nigerian Constitution.

### **3.2 Characteristics of Government Publications**

The characteristics of government publications have been discussed by many researchers (Morton, 1901; Weech, 1973; Sonaike, 1994) The following have been identified and described below:

1. **They represent government records:** government publications represent the edited and unedited documents produced by government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) at all levels of governance (executive, legislative and judiciary), including federal, state and local government levels. They also include publications by intergovernmental bodies as well as some international organisations such as the United Nations. Documents produced by any other organisation, institution or agency outside of government cannot be classified as government publications. Government documents include reports, gazettes, handbooks, Green papers and White papers, legislative proceedings and press releases.
2. **Government is the sole copyright owner:** government publications are usually regarded as “official records” until they are formally published by government. It should be noted that for a document to be classified as a government publication, it must have been published only by government sources. Government can therefore be regarded as the sole copyright owner of such publications.
3. **Government determines the content, media, format and frequency of the publication:** as the sole publisher of these documents, government determines the medium of publication (print or non-print); the frequency of publication (daily, weekly, monthly, annual, etc.) and the format of the publication (pamphlets, photographs, bulletins, handbooks, circulars, monographs, etc.). They are therefore both published and unpublished records. Akintunde (1991) notes that the format in which they appear range from annual reports, bulletins, circulars, monographs (e.g. report of surveys, census, etc.), periodical titles (such as Nigeria Handbook and Annual Abstract of Statistics); slip publications such as posters and calendars; pamphlets such as “Know Your Country” series; maps, hearings, committee reports, fiche to hard copy (e.g. Development Plans, Estimates, etc.).

4. **Court Subpoenas:** government publications are usually accepted in a court of law when there is a dispute. In Nigeria, in such cases, only the copy preserved by the National Library of Nigeria or such other government recognised depository is admissible in court.
5. **Constitutes a major part of national bibliographies:** government publications constitute a major part of a country's national bibliography. They are very important sources of primary information and as such have very high demand by users. In Nigeria, they constitute a large and important part of the National Bibliography of Nigeria.
6. **Ready reference tools:** many government publications provide answers to ready reference questions. They are usually valuable as ready reference tools that can be used for simple, factual information in libraries and information centres. For instance, yearbooks, handbooks, gazettes and reports.
7. **Wide range in format and content:** government publications have a wide range in format and content as they cover just about every subject area. They come in the form of monographs, one-page bulletins, pamphlets, yearbooks, press releases, court subpoenas, gazettes, periodicals, ephemeral materials, DVDs, CD-ROMs, video and electronic resources and so on. This nebulous range and content constitute a major challenge in the acquisition and management of government publications.
8. **Published at government expense:** another important characteristic of note is that government publications are published at government expense or as required by law. In other words, since they are published at government expense, it could be said that they are published by using public funds or tax payers' money. For this reason, it is essential that they are well organised, managed, preserved and disseminated for public use. Towards achieving this goal, there needs to be more research carried out on the best way to efficiently and effectively manage such publications for quality service delivery.
9. This unit examined the history of government publications, with special focus on Nigeria. It attributed the need to establish a government press and the Ministry of Information, which will be responsible for printing and publicising government information mainly to the necessity to propagate the Nigerian constitution.

**Self-Assessment Examination**

1. Discuss the history of government publications in Nigeria.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit discussed the history of government publications, focusing mainly on the evolution of government publications in Nigeria. Also this unit focused on the unique characteristics of government documents, explaining how they differ from other types of publications. The rich content and the varied formats that make them so important in library and information services were also discussed. Going through this unit will enable you appreciate the value and characteristics of government publications.

**5.0 SUMMARY**

In summary, this unit traced the history of government publication and the need for the establishment of printing press which lead to the printing of the Nigerian constitution and its distribution to the populace. Thereafter, the need to propagate government information from time to time in both electronic and print media made the government printing presses and the ministry of information with its various organs to thrive to date. Also, this unit described the major characteristics of government publications. It discussed the fact that they represent government records, government is the sole copyright owner; government solely determines the content; media; format and frequency of the publication; they are admissible as court subpoenas; they constitute a major part of national bibliographies; they are ready reference tools, and are published in a wide range of format and content. All of these characteristics make them unique and valuable sources of information used in satisfying the information needs of users.

**Self-Assessment Exercise**

What do you understand by unique features and nature of government publications?

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Identify and discuss the major characteristics of government publications.

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## **MODULE 2 ACQUISITION METHODS AND PROCESSES, ACQUISITION POLICY AND ORGANISATION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

Module 2 introduces you to the acquisition methods and processes as well as the acquisition policy of government publications. It also examines the organisation, of government publications. In other words, the module examines how libraries and other organisations identify, select and obtain publications that emanate from government sources as well as the policies that guide such decisions. It also deals with the issues of access to the documents by examining the process of cataloguing and classification and shelving of such documents. These are very important issues that need to be studied because the uniqueness of government publications makes them somewhat different from the methods deployed in acquiring and organising other types of publications. Critical historic, economic, socio-cultural and scientific information is lost when government publications are not properly acquired and organised. This module is designed to ensure that if the three units are adequately studied, you will understand the acquisition, management and organisation of government publications in the bid to satisfy users' information needs. The module is made up of these three units:

- Unit 1        Acquisition Methods and Processes of Government Publications
- Unit 2        Acquisition Policy of Government Publications
- Unit 3        Organisation of Government Publications

### **UNIT 1 ACQUISITION METHODS AND PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Acquisition Methods and Processes of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we studied the characteristics of government documents. This unit will introduce you to the acquisition methods and processes of government publications. This is essential in view of the unique nature and format of the publications.

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the acquisition methods and processes of government publications.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Acquisition Methods and Processes of Government Publications

Government publications are published mainly by government printers/presses, although a few are contracted out to private printing presses. With the aid of new technologies, more government publications are being published in-house by the ministries, departments and agencies responsible for creating the content. Kargbo (2008) notes that the essence of acquiring and processing government publications is to provide bibliographic controls in order to avoid the disappearance into oblivion of essential official publications with invaluable information. Just like other documents, government publications are acquired in four major ways; namely gifts, exchanges, purchases and legal deposits.



Figure 40: Acquisition methods  
Source: Google Images

- **Gifts:** in the case of government publications, gifts are government documents received free-of-charge from government MDAs by libraries, either solicited or unsolicited in line with the library's policy on acquisition.
- **Exchanges:** as regards exchanges, government publications are materials that are inter-changed between the issuing government agency and the recipient library which may give its annual report or newsletter or other publication in exchange. Exchanges are also free of other charges beside the materials being inter-changed. It usually involves a formal agreement.
- **Legal deposits:** libraries also acquire government publications through Legal Deposit laws. The law mandates the library to acquire all materials published in a country, by citizens of a country who live outside the country and all materials published about the country. For example, the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) is mandated by legal deposit law to acquire all materials:
  - Published in Nigeria
  - Published Nigerians in diaspora
  - Published about Nigeria

The National Library of Nigeria (NLN) policy states that the number of copies expected to be deposited by the publisher are:

- 10 copies from state governments
- 25 copies from the federal government
- 3 copies of books from individual publishers/authors

Legal deposits are a major source of acquiring government publications.



Figure 41: Legal Deposit Law of Canada  
Source: Google Images

- **Purchase:** acquisition of government publications is becoming increasingly focused on the purchase model. The process of purchasing government publications is similar to that of purchasing other library materials. It involves the process of selection, carding, bibliographic searching or verification, book ordering, book receipts, accessioning, ownership stamp and withdrawals. All of these terminologies will be explained briefly before a general discussion on the acquisition methods and processes. Book selection involves choosing of materials by the government document librarian from a catalogue or list of available publications in accordance with the library policy and budget. After selection, the next process is to record the appropriate information on a card (carding). The information recorded from each publication on each card is: order no., date ordered, price, no. of copies ordered, author, title, date of publication, edition (if it is not the 1<sup>st</sup> edition), publisher, ISBN/ISSN, accession no., recommended by dept. of person making recommendation, source (government MDA, printing press), and order received date. The cards are filed alphabetically to make retrieval easier.

Bibliographic searching or verification is a process in which library materials selected for order are verified for complete and accurate bibliographic details. The author, title, edition, publisher's details, ISBN, price, etc. are checked using existing bibliographic tools such as national bibliographies, publishers' catalogues and OPACs on the Internet. To ensure that duplicates are not purchased when not required, the library catalogue is searched to find out if the library already has a copy of the title. Then the process file (books already received

but not yet fully processed by the department) and on-order file (books already ordered) are checked to avoid duplications. Ordering then takes place. The details of materials to be ordered are put on “Order Slips” which are usually 7.5cm by 12.5cm (3”x5”). 3-5 copies of the slips are made depending on the library policy. The slips are distributed to the book vendor, the library’s “on order” file (this file assists the library to easily know which materials to make claims for if the order is not supplied), a copy to be used as reminder notice, a copy will be kept in the process file while the fifth copy will be filed by order number and kept in the material for the cataloguers use on arrival of the publication.

When government publications arrive in the library, the following process is used: open the parcel carefully, check item against order using order slip from “on order” file, insert the order slip in the book, and check the physical condition of book. If there are errors or damages, the publication is returned to the vendor, if the book is in good condition and it is the same as that ordered, it is accepted by the library and payment is approved and made. Once it is ascertained that the correct title has been purchased, the library accessions the books by assigning a unique number sequentially as they are received by the library and maintains an accessions register. In accessioning the publication, each copy will be assigned a different accession no. For instance, if the first copy is assigned the number 00008, the second copy 00009, the third copy acquired one year later may be 10001. This procedure is different from assigning a classmark (same for each copy) and different from the ISBN/ISSN which is the same for multiple copies of a book. The accession number of the latest publication received by the government publications department usually indicates the total volume of publications the unit has acquired. Stamping is very important in the acquisitions process. It requires putting the library identity on every document acquired. Therefore, the library ownership stamp showing the name of the library will be stamped on each book acquired by purchase, gift and exchanges. It is usually rubber-stamped on the visible parts of each document. This could be the title page or the verso or any of the end papers.

The acquisition process also requires that occasionally, books and other library materials are withdrawn from the shelves, especially during weeding or when materials have been taken out to the bindery for repair. In such a case, the government publications section maintains a withdrawal register in which

the details of the materials withdrawn are entered into the register. The entries in the register usually include the date of withdrawal, accession number, author's name, title, classmark, supplier, price of each book and reason for withdrawal.

Wilcox (1954) described extensively the specific methods and processes used for acquiring government publications in the United States of America and in Nigeria. He identified three trends affecting the procurement of government publications. These are:

- i. The development of a system of regional depository libraries to store and make available to all libraries and scholars in the region, little used sets of government publications. In this case, the central regional library loans out the materials through the inter-library loan service, provides referral services and makes reprographic productions when necessary. Example is the Midwest Inter-Library Centre in Chicago.
- ii. The collection of government publications by universities, research and other libraries.
- iii. The selective collection for reference and local interest needs which could be very limited. Reprographic services are also commonly available. This is the acquisition style used by many public libraries.

While government publications are essentially free-of-charge to depository libraries, other libraries such as university and public libraries acquire government publications at limited costs. Many government printing presses are now required to be self-sustaining, which means that they need to charge for their publications, if only on a cost-recovery, not-for-profit basis. However, for depository libraries such as the National Library of Nigeria, government publications are usually acquired free-of-charge from MDAs. With such a defined group of creators of government publications, it should ideally be easy to identify the materials, select, and acquire the materials. However, this is not always the case because of the poor bibliographic control mechanisms in place.

Many libraries have separate departments/divisions/sections/units for government publications. This department is expected to acquire government documents, organise them and disseminate them for use of the library patrons. The staff of these departments are usually para-professionals and library assistants, although some libraries deploy professional staff to head the department. As such, it could be said that these departments are mini-libraries in themselves in that they carry out functions like acquisition, cataloguing and classification, shelving and shelf reading, references services, readers' services, users'

education, exhibitions, collating statistics of use, weeding, development of policies, evaluation of the services and the whole gamut of library services. This makes the department very unique.

The identification and selection of government publications has been a major challenge in the acquisition process because of the inadequacy of the number and quality of selection tools. Wilcox (1954) and Wilson (1954) described the role of the American Library Association, the Superintendent of Documents Office and the scenario at the state and council levels in acquiring government documents in the United States. They stated that although there were attempts by the Committee on Public Documents of the American Library Association (ALA) to develop a centralised source of acquiring government publications, decentralisation seems permanently entrenched due to the multiplicity of agencies and their wide use of such printing devices as the mimeograph, the multigraph and offset. However, the ALA has done a lot to provide selection tools. For instance, it supports the publication of *The Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications* (in February and August, it contains a special cumulated section called *The Semi-Annual list of Periodicals, Releases and Statistical Statements*). Another tool in the United States is the *Classified Checklist of United States Government Processed Publications* produced by the Documents Expediting Project (1954) initiated in 1946 by the Joint Committee on Government Publications of the American Library Association, The Association of Research Libraries, the Special Library Association and the American Association of Law libraries as a medium through which federal government publications might be secured collectively by a group of libraries, especially processed publications that are not available through the Superintendent of Documents Office. The project office is domiciled at the Library of Congress and participating libraries have to pay an annual fee and they can only acquire materials in the centre to the limit of their financial standing.

It should be noted that in the United States, government publications are mostly purchased from the “Superintendent of Documents Office”, although they also get gifts from the issuing agencies. The Superintendent of Documents Office also requires that libraries make annual subscription (paid) to periodicals; which resulted in the establishment of companies that served as consolidation agents and consultants to the libraries. In essence, the acquisition of federal government publications can be done by:

- i. Requesting them directly from issuing agencies
- ii. Subscribing to the Documents Expediting Project
- iii. Subscribing for the microprint edition of all non-depository items in the *Monthly Catalog* from the Readex Microprint Corporation, New York City

At the state level, the three main ways by which state government publications are acquired in the United States include:

- i. by using the directory information in the *Book of the States* or individual state manuals, to write to the agencies from which publications are desired requesting everything issued or specific types of publications;
- ii. by using the *Monthly Checklist of State Publications* (published by the Library of Congress) or individual list of publications of the state to request specific titles as recorded therein;
- iii. by setting up exchange arrangements through a state library or state university library.

Wilcox (1954) and Wilson (1954) also noted that the acquisition of municipal and county government publications might well be restricted to municipal reference libraries and a limited number of the larger research libraries. General sources for locating current publications of municipalities are the periodical publications of state leagues of municipalities, periodicals in the field of municipal government, such as *American City* and *Western City*, and periodic bibliographical lists and checklists from municipal reference libraries. Local daily newspapers are another source which should not be overlooked. Municipal and county government publications are usually acquired direct from the issuing agency. These various acquisition methods have implications for Nigerian libraries which can learn a lot of good practices from the United States of America.

In Nigeria, one of the main tools used in the acquisition of government publications is the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) published by the National Library of Nigeria (NLN). As with other types of documents, acquisition of government documents is done through purchase, gifts and exchanges and legal deposits. According to Akidi and Omekwu (2019), national libraries in their bibliographic control efforts are responsible for acquiring information resources published in their countries of domain, processing them through cataloguing and classification and making them available to their citizens and also users outside the country, thereby enhancing effective bibliographic control nationally and globally. IFLA (2014) in its contribution noted that a National Bibliographic Agency (NBA) such as the NLN is responsible for providing authoritative bibliographic data for publications of its own nation, documentation

of authorised access points, authoritative citation for works related to the nation, and making the data available to other national bibliographic agencies, libraries and other stakeholders through appropriate and timely services that makes such data available globally.

Another essential service provided by the NLN is the collection, management, preservation and dissemination of materials as stipulated in the enabling law. Section 4 (1) of Act 29 of 1970 of the National Library of Nigeria stipulates that “The publisher of every book published in Nigeria shall within one month after the publication deliver, at his own expense, to the National Library, three copies of the book, two of which shall be kept in the National Library for permanent preservation and one of which shall be sent by the Director to the Ibadan University Library.” It further stipulates that ten copies of every State government publication and twenty-five copies of every federal government publication shall be deposited by the officer in charge to the National Library. Sanctions for non-compliance with this law attract a fine not exceeding £50 and he may, in addition, be requested to send the three copies or the cost of purchasing such copies. Materials under this law include literary works such as books pamphlets, sheets of music, maps, charts, plans, tables and compilations; dramatic works; collective works such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, yearbooks, newspapers, magazines and similar periodicals; documentaries and oral records published. The laws also require collection of every work published about Nigeria by a foreigner and every work published by a Nigerian living overseas. This implies that the NLN has the mandate to acquire all government publications.

However, this is not often the case as many government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) do not comply with these laws. What obtains in many libraries in Nigeria, including the National Library of Nigeria is that the staff of the government publications department visit the MDAs to find out which documents have been produced and then acquire such documents, if relevant to their mandates, either through gifts, exchanges or purchase. The other method of acquisition commonly used in Nigeria is for the libraries to write to the various MDAs and government printing presses requesting them to provide the libraries with their publications. The implication of this method is that the library’s collection is done in a haphazard manner. In almost all cases, the issuing agencies still appear to be the main source of acquiring government publications, thereby making the development of acquisition tools at the federal, state and local government levels absolutely essential. Other selection tools that are used by Nigerian libraries is local newspapers and other local

communication channels such as television and radio, book fairs and increasingly, social media and other electronic platforms.

Arising from the myriad of challenges experienced in the acquisition method and process of government publications in Nigeria, it is worth adapting some of the good practices used in the United States of America and indeed, other countries. For instance, in addition to the National Bibliography of Nigeria, every State Public Library Board should collate and publish a checklist of government publications in their state. To make it more comprehensive, they can partner with the heads of local government councils and local non-governmental organisations as well as local newspapers/media. Furthermore, strong systems should be put in place to facilitate collaborations and resource-sharing taking advantage of new technologies. Corporative acquisition projects on a state by state basis should be encouraged and established among the libraries. This will lead to such advantages as lower cost of acquisition, much easier process of knowing what is available, better access to a wider variety of government documents and faster retrieval methods.

In terms of acquisition of foreign government publications, it is interesting to note that the processes and challenges are similar. However, language constitutes a major challenge when trying to acquire government publications from foreign countries that do not speak the official language of the country of the recipient library. Any acquisitions programme for foreign government publications requires a good collection of national checklists, government organization manuals, yearbooks, and statistical yearbooks. Many foreign government materials can be obtained by gift or exchange or through partnerships, although some foreign countries are now demanding for payments for their publications. The National Library of Nigeria, and indeed other libraries should develop formal exchange programmes with the national libraries and relevant governments of foreign countries. The National Library of Nigeria, for example, has many government publications acquired from the Crown Agent for the Colonies in London. Consular offices and embassies of foreign governments sited in-country are also a very useful source of acquiring foreign government publications, even when publications requested for are not immediately available, the embassy may undertake to source for them in their country on behalf of the local library. It is highly recommended that foreign government publications should be acquired on a cooperative regional basis in order to save time, efforts and costs, although this will only be successful if strong systems for resource-sharing such as use of new technologies are in place.

The documents and publications of the United Nations and its specialized agencies are of increasing value to libraries and the quantity of such publications has increased with the availability of the Internet. Leidy (1953) stated that previously the acquisition of United Nations publications was available in the *United Nations Documents Index* published monthly by the Documents Index Unit of the United Nations Library in New York City. He noted that each January issue contains general information for the United Nations and each specialized agency as to the acquisition of documents and publications by purchase as well as the free distribution policy of each. Furthermore, the Part 2 of each April issue is a *Consolidated List of Depository Libraries and Sales Agents and Offices* for the documents and publications of the United Nations and its specialized agencies throughout the world. The *United Nations Documents Index* itself is a monthly checklist of the unrestricted documents and publications, mimeographed and printed, of the United Nations and its specialized agencies by symbol numbers with a subject index. Only unrestricted and limited issue items are obtainable so this *Index* generally omits all restricted items. However, this system has now been almost completely replaced as acquisition of many United Nations publications are got either through their local or country offices or through their websites. In Nigeria, newsletters and other publications of agencies like UNESCO can be acquired directly from their national offices. Also, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Lagos provides and freely gives out publications of the United Nations as well as information on other important sources.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it should be noted that government publications and publications of international agencies such as the United Nations are acquired through the process of legal deposits, purchase, gifts and exchanges. Good practices from the United States of America and the local practices obtainable in Nigeria were examined and discussed. The need to embrace state cooperative acquisition models and to develop checklists at the state/local government levels were highly recommended as good practice. Other methods such as writing to the issuing MDAs, regular visits to MDAs to find out what has been published and use of publishers' catalogues, directories and online sources are also valuable methods to acquire government publications.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the various methods and processes used in the acquisition of library materials in general. It went further to describe the methods and processes used in the acquisition of government

documents in the United States of America and in Nigeria. Furthermore, it examined the acquisition tools available and provided insight on how these tools are used. The acquisition methods at the federal, state and local government levels as well as the methods for acquiring foreign publications and United Nations publications were discussed. Suggestions on how the acquisition process, including selection and ordering can be improved were highlighted.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Using examples from the United States of America and Nigeria, describe the acquisition methods and processes of government publications.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (SAEs)**

1. Briefly discuss the ways by which Nigerian libraries can improve their methods of acquisition of government publications.
2. Describe in details, the general processes involved in the acquisition of materials.

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## **UNIT 2 ACQUISITIONS POLICY OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Acquisitions Policy of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we discussed the methods and processes involved in the acquisition and government publications. In this unit, you will be introduced to the policies that guide the acquisition of government publications. Specifically, you will learn about the meaning of policy, the importance of having an acquisition policy and the main components of an acquisition policy for government publications.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define the term “acquisition policy”.
- discuss the rationale for using an acquisition policy
- describe the features of an acquisition policy for government publications.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **2.1 Acquisition Policy of Government Publications**

A policy can be described as a statement of intent, principles or regulations which serves as guide to an individual, group of persons or community in deciding or taking actions in line with a set goal. Okojie (2017) opined that an acquisitions policy spells out the direction or guidelines for identifying, selecting, acquiring, assessing and weeding or retaining information resources in a given library. For government documents, the department responsible for acquiring the publications will develop written guidelines that will guide its activities in order to ensure that it meets the library’s objectives and

mandate. In general, the rationale for developing an acquisitions policy includes:

- It guarantees a common understanding of the library collection development goal and objectives.
- It ensures a proactive management of stakeholders' expectations in respect of information resources for meeting their needs.
- It sets out procedures and processes the 'acquisition team' needs to comply with in carrying out its mandate.
- It eliminates or reduces to the barest minimum the issue of subjectivity that may be displayed in the selection of resources.
- It ensures the judicious utilisation of funds (most times meagre amount vis-à-vis need) for acquisition.
- It promotes fairness in meeting the information needs of all categories of library users.
- It ensures a mission-driven and users' need oriented library collection.
- It helps to manage the acceptance or receipt of unsolicited non-priority resources while retaining the goodwill of donors towards the library.
- It creates a collection development system or culture that is not tied to a particular librarian's work-tenure.
- It assists in taking appropriate decision to weed or retain information resources in the library collection.

Acquisitions policies of documents have been well documented in the literature (Akidi, 2020; Akintunde, 1991; Wilcox, 1955). They list such key features as:

- Mission and vision statement of the library: the "big picture" of what the library wants to be in the future and how it intends to get there.
- Goals or objectives of the library: what the library wishes to achieve.
- Demographics of users: profiling of users of government publications.
- User Needs Analysis: systematic ways of assessing the information needs of users (could be done using surveys).

- Environmental Scan: assessing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis) of the library and its environment.
- Collection scope and contents: what extent of materials the library wants to collect and what it will deliberately not acquire. For instance, a library may decide that it will not acquire academic journals published by government institutions.
- Type of publications to be selected and what type of publications are intentionally NOT selected.
- Cooperation, subscription or access to external/online resources. The library needs to spell out its terms of engagement with vendors and the limits of such terms.
- Selection team, that is, who is responsible for selection and reporting lines
- Selection criteria: this deals with the criteria that will be used for selecting information resources
- Selection methods and tools or sources: which tools will be used for selection? Would items selected be in a predetermined format”?
- Acquisition/procurement process: who places the order?
- Statement on handling donations/gifts, especially in non-priority area(s): For instance, the library might decide that such gifts will be donated to other libraries or the library may decide that they will not collect such gifts.
- Policy statement on weeding of resources and what to do with them.
- Replacement of missing but useful materials: should the user be requested to pay for mutilated materials they used? Should the library try to acquire another copy?
- Number of copies to be acquired for each title: should the library buy single or multiple copies of a document?
- Should the library buy hard copies or soft copies?
- Format: should the department acquire print? non-print? electronic publications?
- Resource type: what should be the ratio between books, journals, periodicals, grey literature, maps, etc. Or, should all government publications be acquired?

- Language: Should the department acquire books in official language only or books in local language or other languages?
- Conservation and preservation policies; the process for identifying resources to be preserved and how to go about it.
- Users complaints procedure. For instance, should they write a formal letter of complaint?
- Special arrangements engaged in e.g. consortium or cooperative acquisitions.

For government publications in particular, additional features on the acquisitions policy include:

- **Shelf arrangement:** should government publications be integrated into the shelves used for shelving other library materials?
- **Classification:** should the classification scheme used be different from that used for other resources in the library? For instance, many libraries use a home-grown locally developed classification scheme for their government publications.
- **Media:** should the government publications department acquire only print resources or other media such as non-profit and electronic resources?
- **Opening hours:** should the government publications department close earlier than other departments? In some libraries, the department closes earlier because they argue that it takes a longer time to shelve government documents since their format and size vary greatly.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit briefly discussed the acquisitions policy for government documents, including the acquisition policy of libraries generally. It highlighted the value of and rationale for maintaining an acquisition policy in addition to enumerating the key features of the policy.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit defined the term “acquisitions policy”. Furthermore, it discussed the importance of developing an acquisition policy for the government publications unit of the library, highlighting specific features in the policy that address only government publications. You

will find the issues mentioned very useful in managing government publications units in libraries and information centres.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Define the term “acquisitions policy”. Why is it important to have a policy for acquiring government publications?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Describe a typical library acquisitions policy highlighting special issues that relate to government documents.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 3 ORGANISATION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Organisation of Government Publications
    - 3.1.1 Bibliographic Control of Government Publications in Libraries and Information Services
    - 3.1.2 Arrangement and Shelving of Government Publications in Libraries and Information Services
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We examined the acquisitions methods, processes and policy of government publications in the previous unit. In this unit, we shall discuss how government publications are organised in libraries and information centres in such a way that their rich information content can be fully exploited for efficient and effective service delivery. Organisation in this context involves cataloguing, classification and indexing the documents, labelling and shelf arrangement in order to make retrieval easier. This unit will therefore focus on the bibliographic control and arrangement of government publications to ensure that access to the documents is enhanced. Contemporary methods which include the application of Information and Communication Technologies will also be addressed.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the concept of “bibliographic control” of information resources
- discuss the key elements in organising government publications

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Organisation of Government Publications**

Organisation of government publications deals essentially with bibliographic control and arrangement, and by extension access to government documents. If users are unable to access or use the materials, then the value of the documents is lost. More importantly, there will be a wider gap in communication between the government and the governed, especially in terms of dissemination of information created by government for the generality of the people. It is for this reason that it is important to examine how government documents are organised, especially the bibliographic control systems that have been put in place by various libraries. Reitz (2004) and Pandey (2015) described bibliographic control of documents in a library and information service as a term that encompasses all activities involved in creating, organising, managing and maintaining the file of bibliographic records representing the items held in a library or archival collection or the sources listed in an index or database to facilitate access to the information contained in them. Similarly, dictionary.com (<https://www.dictionary.com/>) defined bibliographic control as the identification, description, analysis, and classification of books and other materials of communication so that they may be effectively organized, stored, retrieved, and used when needed. It can therefore be said that in Nigeria, bibliographic control of government publications deals mainly with the process of selecting, collecting and organising information in the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) adhering to international standards of cataloguing and classification, especially through legal deposit laws as mandated by the National Library of Nigeria Act No. 29 of 1970. Since the National Library of Nigeria publishes the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN), it is majorly responsible for the bibliographic control of government publications in Nigeria.

Exploring the concept of bibliographic control further, Akidi (2020) opined that it involves all the activities carried out by bibliographic agencies which involve acquisition, organisation, management, preservation of information resources, as well as creating systems that enhance availability, accessibility and utilization of such information resources. These practices include collection of legal deposit, cataloguing and classification of information resources, maintenance of cataloguing standards, compilation and production of national bibliography, indexing and abstracting services. Others include production of bibliographic tools, establishment and maintenance of authority files, compilation and maintenance of national union catalogue of monographs and serials, and maintenance of publishing

standards. In essence, activities and systems established by libraries to facilitate acquisition, processing and managing government documents constitute the processes involved in organisation. This unit will discuss the concept of organising government publications from the perspective of bibliographic control and arrangement.

### **3.1.1 Bibliographic Control of Government Publications in Libraries and Information Services**

Bibliographic control is an essential aspect in organising government publications because it facilitates access to important information therein. In their contribution, Lasisi and Oyelude (2013) acknowledged the vital role that the National Library of Nigeria plays in the bibliographic control of the country's intellectual output as well as the infrastructure put in place to enhance effective national bibliographic control practices. Indeed, the National Library of Nigeria plays a pivotal role in the bibliographic control and arrangement of government documents through the publication of the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) which aims to include all materials published in Nigeria. The NBN also contains classification marks and other bibliographic details.

These processes are necessary for effective organisation of government publications. Cataloguing and classification of government documents are essential public access tools. Inadequate or poor metadata results in the inability of users to locate the information that they require. This was emphasized by Alhassan (2013) who recommended that libraries should use standard classification schemes such as Library of Congress and Dewey Decimal Classification to organise government documents published in Nigeria. Other researchers (Akintunde, 1991; Adebimpe (2006); Ajidahun, 2006; Kargbo, 2008; Ani, 2017; Akidi and Omekwu, 2019 Akidi, 2020) examined the case of Nigerian libraries and concluded that many different classification schemes are used in the provision of metadata and classmarks. They noted that the standard classification schemes do not adequately cater for the needs of African libraries in terms of classifying government documents mainly because they were not originally designed for them. Rather, the Library of Congress Classification Scheme and the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme deal mostly with issues in the United States and the United Kingdom. In spite of the frequent updates issued by these classification schemes, African libraries have found the need to expand the appropriate sections in order to accommodate the peculiarities of government documents in Africa.

The National Library of Nigeria uses an adapted version of the Library of Congress classification scheme. Similarly, the University of Jos classifies its government documents using an adaptation of the National Library of Nigeria's scheme. On the other hand, the University of Lagos, Lagos, the University of Ibadan, Ibadan and the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife use home-made schemes developed by their librarians. Many other university libraries in Nigeria have developed home-made classification schemes or adaptations of these various schemes that are available.

This has posed specific challenges in the accessibility of government documents in Nigeria in the sense that users often find it confusing to deal with different classification schemes when trying to retrieve documents. The non-standardization of classification systems is a major issue in terms of accessibility which ultimately affects the level of awareness of these documents by users. It would be helpful if a consortium of libraries (categorised by type of library or by geographical location) agreed to use the same classification scheme for government documents. Although the classification schemes used internationally are not uniform, there seems to be better coalition among large groups. For instance, the United Nations uses the same home-made classification scheme in all its agencies and it provides cataloguing-in-publication data which has proved useful to many libraries that manage government documents. Consequently, since the documents are classified at source, the compilation of indexes, bibliographies and abstracts is much easier. Also, most American libraries use the Library of Congress Classification scheme which was specifically designed for American libraries and therefore adequately caters for their needs. Nigerian (and African) libraries need to consider one classification scheme for government publications in order to make retrieval easier.

Hurt (1997), in his contribution described two levels of accessibility. According to him, the first level questions whether the material or information actually exists, while the second level becomes operational only if the first level can be solved. The first level deals with availability while the second deals with selection for retrieval of the information. He concluded that classification and subject analysis have significant roles to play in the second level. Omekwu (2003) argued that since publishing is an international phenomenon, materials published in Nigeria will continue to be elusive if basic bibliographic information as to their authorship, appropriate title, place of publication, publisher's date, and pagination are ambiguous. Ultimately these materials are relegated to the world of grey literature. In discussing the issue, Wood (1984) took a different approach by asserting that the distinguishing characteristics of government

publications contribute to the difficulty of their access, such as small print runs, variable standards of editing and production, poor publicity, unacceptable format, for example, microform, and poor availability in libraries. Small print runs and poor distribution of country reports and workshop results are also some of the drawbacks that affect publications from Individual Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) which reduces the impact of such reports in the lives of citizens. Aina (1981) also emphasized the need for bibliographic structures in order to enable access to information. He made the point that the challenge to developing countries rests in their various stages of development, the resources available and the importance that is attributed to the library and information systems of the country. All of these point to the importance of bibliographic control in managing government publications and providing access.

In the twenty-first century where the electronic environment is prevalent, librarians have the additional responsibility of dealing with government websites to collect information, thereby making the process of acquisition, organisation and management of e-government publications even more complex. According to Oder (2008), some libraries have further raised the concern of “liability” when managing e-government forms thereby further complicating the issues of working in an electronic environment. Line (1989) opined that these circumstances can be frustrating because of the paradoxical nature of developing countries that devote finances to advanced bibliographic networks when the document supply infrastructure is rudimentary. He made a case for the development of a stronger national information and document supply infrastructure rather than the focus on producing national bibliographies. He questioned whether national libraries’ treatment of national bibliographies as useful retrieval tools actually helped the user to obtain the library material or whether they simply raised awareness of the existence of relevant material and increased a demand that could not be fulfilled. Having examined the literature on organising government publications, it is essential to note that organisation is key to the success of any library because it directly impacts the awareness, accessibility and use of such documents.

### **3.1.2 Arrangement and Shelving of Government Publications in Libraries**

The arrangement of government publications is another serious issue to be considered in discussing the organisation of such documents in libraries. Publications such as calendars, maps, almanacs, posters and bulletins are by their nature and format difficult to integrate into the main shelving system of the library. They need special shelving arrangements such as pamphlet boxes and special cabinet drawers or

walls in order not to mutilate them. Some government publications also have to be shelved “face-up” using serials shelves, thereby taking up a lot of space which is usually unavailable in many libraries. However, the peculiarities of some government documents make it imperative for them to be arranged and shelved differently from other types of publications, thereby making it confusing to users to access the information they need.

As Schmidt (2002) explained, even when patrons are aware of the existence and value of government publications, they remain largely inaccessible and under-utilised sometimes because of the poor organisation of the materials. Other researchers (Postema and Weech, 1991; Caswell, 1997) have also attributed the limited use of government publications to their impatience in trying to retrieve materials from poorly labelled vertical files and cabinets while Dilevko (2000) ascribed the frustration of users to the fact that neither the physical layout of the library nor the arrangement of books and reports is necessarily understood by patrons, who find it daunting to traverse the intricacies of classification schemes without at least some initial guidance. Many libraries do not provide cataloguing and classification details for government publications because of their nature and format, and as such arrange them in vertical files, pamphlet boxes, purpose-made boxes and shelves, thereby making it difficult for patrons to access the documents or even understand the shelving arrangement. Without printed indexes and adequate in-house records, Augur (1989) as cited in Mason, 2005, concludes that the result is limited access to important information, as these items are invariably not included in the library’s online public access catalogue and finding aids provided are sometimes not the most efficient.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that there is need to arrange and shelve government publications appropriately using special storage facilities that may not be used for other resources. The need for efficient bibliographic control of documents in Nigeria was also discussed. This is because of the unique and peculiar characteristics of government publications. With the advent of new technologies, especially the deployment of Artificial Intelligence and robotics in Nigerian libraries, there is hope that many of the challenges posed by the peculiarities of government publications will be resolved. The urgent need to use the new technologies to provide better quality service delivery to users of government publications cannot be overemphasized. These new technologies will be very useful in the acquisition, organisation, management and use of government publications and the consequent advantages should be exploited by libraries.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit briefly discussed the organisation of government publications, highlighting the processes used in Nigerian libraries. It defined the concept of bibliographic control. It also examined the bibliographic control practices of government publications units in Nigerian libraries as well the arrangement and shelving of government publications.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In summary, this unit examined the concept of bibliographic control and then went ahead to discuss the bibliographic control practices of Nigerian libraries, with special focus on government publications. The arrangement and shelving of government publications were also discussed. The need for digitization of the processes as well as the application of new technologies to improve service delivery was highlighted.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Discuss the arrangement and shelving of government publications in Nigerian libraries.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Define the concept of bibliographic control of government publications in libraries
2. Discuss the bibliographic control processes and practices in Nigerian libraries.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **MODULE 3 IMPORTANCE, DISSEMINATION AND USE, PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

This module introduces you to the importance of government publications and their value in providing library and information services. You will also have the opportunity to know how government publications are disseminated and used in libraries. Lastly, the unit addresses the need for the preservation and conservation of government publications because they are a valuable source of important information about the history, socio-economic and cultural life of a nation.

### **UNIT 1 IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR VALUE IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Importance of Government Publications and their Value in Providing Library and Information Services
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, you learnt about how government publications are organised. In this unit, we shall discuss the importance of government publications in library and information services. The unit will address the question “why are government publications essential information resources for library and information centre users?” It will enable you to see the critical gaps that these information resources fill, when they are used, how they are used as well as who uses them.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the importance of government publications
- appreciate why, when, how and who uses these information resources in library and information services with a view to envisioning their future potentials in the post COVID-19 era.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Importance of Government Publications and their Value in Library and Information Services**

Government publications have been important elements in the provision of library and information services from ancient times and have remained essential in determining the value of library services. As far back as 1787, James Wilson made a strong case for publishing the journals of the House and Senate as a right of the citizens to know what their agents (government officials) are doing and went further to state that it should not be an option for the legislature to conceal their proceedings. Building on this argument in 2009, President Obama emphasized the need to put government information online as it promotes transparency and accountability to the citizenry. Specifically, we can say that government publications are important in the following ways:

1. **Transparency and accountability in governance:** many government publications are a record of the activities of governments and are made readily available to the citizenry through various channels, a major channel of which is libraries. Consequently, the citizens are better able to hold the government accountable. In Nigeria, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) enacted on 28 May, 2011 (which supersedes the Official Secrets Act of 1911) further encourages transparency in governance and helps to mitigate corruption in government. The Freedom of Information Act enacted by over ninety three countries in various forms aims “to make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect public serving officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorisation and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters”. Simply put, the FOIA is an Act that gives a person, group, association or organisation the right to access information from Government Agencies,

Parastatals, Federal Civil Service, Private and Public sector organisations providing public services, etc. (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, Freedom of Information Act 2011; Wikipedia, 2021).

**2. Provides information about government:** government publications are a veritable source of providing citizens information on what the government of a country is doing. This is so important in good governance that 28 September was declared as the International Day for Universal Access to Information or the International Right to Know Day (UNESCO, 2021). Access to Information was also addressed in Sustainable Development Goal 16. All of these underscore the importance of government publications in libraries because they provide a rich source of primary information required by citizens of a country to live successfully in their communities. Through government publications, citizens are informed about the policies, laws, national development plans, services, and programmes of government (Smart, 2011). Much important research literature and reference information are found in the reports, bulletins and other publications issued by the various national, state and local governments because they cover topics in nearly all fields of knowledge.

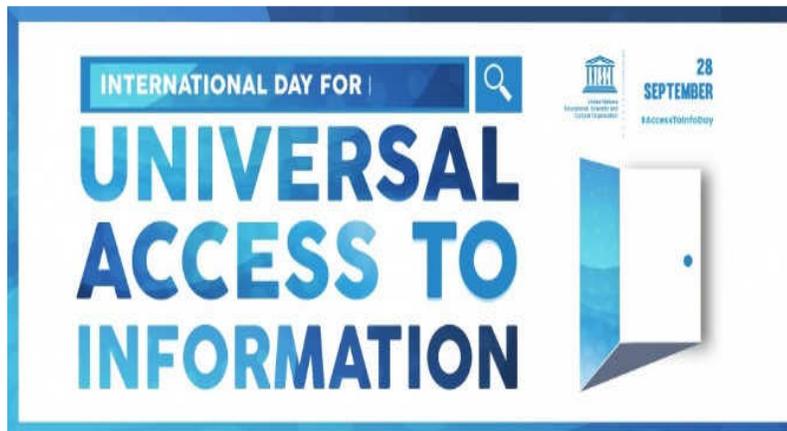


Figure 42: Access to Information  
Source: Google Images



Figure 43: UN Access to Information Day  
Source: Google Images

3. **Promotes good governance and democracy:** Government publications are a good channel for promoting good governance and democracy. Ajidahun (2006) described this function eloquently by stating that these publications help the government to propagate, publicise, and advertise its activities and achievements with a view to canvassing for the votes and approval of the people during electioneering campaigns. Such government documents as leaflets, factsheets and statistical data provide the people the opportunity to decide the type of government they want to have. The evaluation of government activities usually determines how long the government stays in power. In a democratic environment, because the citizenry has been informed about government activities, plans and manifestos through the published government documents that reveal information about the socio-economic and industrial development of the state or nation, and welfare programmes for the deprived and indigent masses, they are able to take informed decisions.
4. **Ready reference tool:** government publications are authentic ready reference tools for libraries. They provide primary sources of information which implies that they create the information contained in the documents. For instance, they can easily provide answers to such reference queries as “what are the new reforms in Public Service Rules (PSR) in Nigeria?” In this way, it provides the information needs of users, especially as regards government operations, policies and laws.
5. **Provides information resources for libraries:** government publications usually constitute a suitable proportion of most library collections. This is all the more important for libraries with paucity of funds because most government publications are free-of-charge.

It could therefore be said that they greatly contribute to the value of libraries. Researchers and other patrons who may have come only to use government publications in a library may decide to use other services in the library, thereby increasing the acceptability of the library in the community.

6. **Primary sources of information:** government documents are usually primary sources of information that may not be available elsewhere. They usually contain the most recent information on any subject and are considered important sources of information especially for science-based disciplines. Examples of such primary sources of information are journals (and some other serials), reports, patents, thesis and dissertations. These sources contain original information which are also very recent. The findings of every original inquiry are first published as articles in professional journals, as research reports, as patents (in case of inventions), thesis and dissertations (for researches conducted for the award of degrees).
7. **Trusted source of vital information:** Government publications are also important fact sources of information. They are some of the most heavily used reference sources. They provide facts on a wide range of issues: both background and current information. The facts stated in these information resources are usually accurate as at the time of production and are useful in providing answers to ready-reference questions. They consist of reference sources such as directories, handbooks, yearbooks, gazettes and almanacs and other information resources. Patrons usually prefer to refer to government publications as a trusted source to access information on government policies, reports, statistics on government performance, immigration information and other activities.
8. **Preserves historical and cultural information:** government publications are a rich source of information on the history and culture of any nation. The National Library of Nigeria has a rich collection of rare books (books relating to Nigeria published anywhere in the world before 1900) which cover all fields of knowledge. These materials provide deep insight into the history of Nigeria that cannot be found anywhere else. Omolayole (2003) noted that the collection is rich in old government publications including those on:
  - Lagos Settlement and Colony (1862-1906)
  - Royal Niger Company
  - Oil Rivers and Niger Coast Protectorate (1891-1900)

- Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (1900-1904)
- Northern Nigeria Protectorate (1900-1913)
- Egba United Government (1905-1913)
- Lagos Colony (1906-1954)
- Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (1906-1914)
- Nigerian Council (1914-1922)
- Southern Provinces (1914-1922)
- Northern Provinces (1914-1952)
- The Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria (1914-1960)
- British Camerouns
- Northern Camerouns
- Southern Camerouns
- Oxford Colonial Records Project (also known as the Rhodes House Collection which identified and acquired about 45000 volumes of papers in private possessions and to preserve them for use in research into Nigerian history during the colonial period).

9. **Promotes peace:** Government publications are one way by which a nation promotes and maintains peace and stability, especially in times of internal crises. When there are controversial, sensitive and unpopular policies that do not go down well with the citizenry which could lead to protests, arson, violence and discord, governments publish documents to explain the issues further, using different channels such as the electronic, print or social media to calm down the citizens. This is even more critical today in the era of misinformation, disinformation and fake news being propagated through social media and other propaganda media. The need for new policies could also be identified in such instances.

10. **Support to the Judiciary and Legislature:** Lawyers, law students and legislators depend heavily on government information to function effectively. Publications such as the Laws of the Federation, State Laws, *Hansard*, Law Reports, Reports of Commissions of Inquiry, Legislative or Parliamentary Papers are indispensable in meeting their information needs. Ajidahun (2006) opined that these materials are excellent and authoritative legal sources of information for students, teachers and practitioners of law, further noting that government depends on some of these documents to generate the white papers, which often lead to the enactment of laws and legislation. Moreover, legal counsels often cite profusely from these judicial publications to substantiate and strengthen their law cases. Judges also depend on government documents to support their decisions and judgements. The

availability of such publications will improve the quality of law graduates and the image of the law profession is thus enhanced.

**11. Facilitates conflict resolution within and between nations:**

Government publications are often required in resolving conflicts, especially land dispute. A good case in point was the press release given by the United Nations International Court of Justice (ICJ), The Hague, Netherlands giving judgement in the case concerning the Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria on the Bakassi Peninsula. On the judgement which was declared final, without appeal and binding for both Parties, the ICJ decision was based on a document: the “Henderson-Fleuriau Exchange **Notes** of 1931 between Great Britain and France. The judgement stated that the boundary is delimited by the Thomson-Marchand Declaration of 1929-1930, as incorporated in the Henderson-Fleuriau Exchange **Notes** of 1931 between Great Britain and France”. The dispute was resolved in favour of Cameroun (International Court of Justice, 2017-2021).

**12. Rich source of research information:** Government publications are indispensable materials for research, especially in this period where all kinds of research work are being conducted in the history of nations, genealogies, socio-political and cultural issues. The publication and availability of these government documents in libraries become very important and significant to researchers who often demand to be served in an online environment dictated by the post-Covid-19 new normal era. Indeed, Paulson (2013) stated that no research work on almost any African, Nigerian and even local government political or economic issue can be done without recourse to government publications.

**13. Provides information on the international relations and bilateral cooperation between nations:** In her description of government publications, Omolayole (2003) aptly described their importance stating that by their nature, government publications are a mine of information on the political and economic life of a country and that to know what the government of a particular country publishes is to be aware of the direction that the country is going. She went on to elucidate that the publications are very useful in the study of internal and international relations and bilateral cooperation between nations because they contain first-hand or primary source information. Examples of government publications in the National Library of Nigeria include the British Parliamentary Papers comprising the original *Hansard* — the official debates in the House of Commons — and *Command Papers; microfilm edition of the House of Lords Sessional Papers*,

1645-1859 published by Oceana; U.S. *Congressional Records*; *Canadian Government Publications* and many others. In Africa, specialized reports and gazettes from member countries of the African Union dealing with their histories, politics and socio-economic and cultural life are available. These materials promote understanding and unity among nations.

14. **No one else is collecting them in a systematic way:** Government publications are being actively collected, stored, organised and made accessible to the citizenry mainly through libraries. This is because libraries offer a faster and more complete information service to users and are the only institutions that are collecting these publications systematically and in a holistic manner, thereby making them more visible and accessible to users.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you learnt about the importance of government publications in libraries and information services. Government publications are published in different formats and are often valuable and unique, and include rare materials such as the original documents on the amalgamation of Nigeria and the collections of Othman Dan Fodio in Northern Nigeria. Digitisation of government publications has gained popularity in the twenty-first century as a way of promoting preservation and improving access through enlightenment programmes on the rich complexity of the government information landscape. It noted that many libraries enrich their collections by providing government publications which are usually free-of-charge. Their importance in good governance, provision of vital information about government activities, plans and policies, preservation of the history, culture, political and socio-economic state of a country, research, conflict resolution, promotion of international relations and bilateral cooperation between nations, publicity about government policies, support to the judiciary and legislature and a trusted source of information were discussed.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed the importance of government publications and their value in library and information services. Specifically, it examined the role of government publications in good governance, provision of vital information about government activities, plans and policies, preservation of the history, culture, political and socio-economic state of a country, research, conflict resolution, promotion of international relations and bilateral cooperation between nations, publicity about government policies, support to the judiciary and legislature and a trusted source of information. It noted that many libraries enrich their collections by

acquiring government publications which are usually free-of-charge. The unit concluded that government publications are indispensable tools in improving the quality of service delivery in library and information centres.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Explain the value of government publications in library and information services?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Briefly describe the importance of government publications.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Ajidahun, C. O. (2006). *The Acquisition, Management and Bibliographic Control of Government Publications in Nigerian University Libraries*.

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## **UNIT 2    DISSEMINATION AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Dissemination and Use of Government Publications
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, you examined the importance of government publications and their value in providing library and information services. In this unit, you shall be introduced to how government publications are disseminated and used in libraries. It is very important to study the use of these publications because users are the pivots and the *raison d'être* for which library services are provided. Since different users have different information needs, we shall examine the category of people who need information from government publications and why each of the publications types are used, that is, what do users need the different type of publication for? This unit also briefly discusses the different categories of users in libraries, in general. One of the goals of libraries is to satisfy their users and as such libraries design services and operations that will assist them in achieving this goal.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- briefly explain the different categories of users of libraries, especially users of government publications
- discuss how different types of government publications are used
- discuss how government publications/information are disseminated.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

- 3.1 Government publications are information sources that are produced at all the three tiers of government: the executive, judicial and legislative at local, state or federal levels. They are

published in different formats and include such publications as: annual reports, budget speeches, white papers, in-house journals, directives, regulations, technical reports, national development plans, gazettes, circulars, estimates, monographs (reports of surveys, census, reports of commission of inquiry), periodical titles (e.g. Nigeria Handbook, Annual Abstracts of Statistics), slip publications (e.g. posters), pamphlets (e.g. know your country series), maps, hearings, published laws of the land - including publications of courts - laws, statutes, and Hansard, the main publication of the various Houses of Assembly and the National Assembly (Ajidahun,2006). He went further to state that the publications are used for various purposes ranging from research, scholarly purposes to informational, educative and decision making. Government publications also help the government to propagate, publicize, and advertise its activities and achievements. It likewise serves as an active reference and instructional tool in the academia. Government publications are indispensable materials for research, especially in the twenty-first century when the democratic dispensation has taken more root with interest in democratic studies, federalism, resource sharing, legislative codes of conduct, codification of the laws of the federation, politics and government, strategic management, labour unions and press freedom under a democratically elected government. To underscore the value of libraries in society, it is therefore imperative for libraries to acquire, organise, manage and disseminate information contained in these rich sources published by government.

### **3.1.1 Dissemination of Government Publications**

Dissemination of information refers to an agency initiated or sponsored to distribute information to the public. (Bureau of Transportation Statistics,2011). The US Office of Management and Budgeting (OMB)defines it as "the function of distributing government information to the public, whether through printed documents or electronic or other media." (Brody, 1995).

Keeping in mind that government publications take numerous formats, the Nigerian government disseminates information on its activities using its ministries, departments and agencies and sometimes through other means. Some of the agencies are responsible for disseminating information in electronic format while some disseminate information in print format and yet others may disseminate information in all the various formats, including print, electronic and non-print formats. In this course material, a lot of focus has been put on the print media, especially the types, importance and use of print media. In this unit, more attention will

be given to dissemination of information in electronic format in Nigeria, although the other media will be highlighted. The following are a few of some of the agencies responsible for disseminating government information/publications:

1. **News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)**

Established by the Nigerian Government via Decree 19 in 1976, NAN became operational on 2 October 1978, providing general news service to subscribers in three bulletins published daily. With the introduction of satellite technology in 1998, the agency began to transmit stories to its clients simultaneously as they were edited and fit to print (Mfonobong, 2020).

2. **The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)**

This is a partly commercial television agency owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Beginning operations in 1959, its key function is to provide independent and impartial television broadcasting for general reception in the interest of Nigeria. (NTA, 2021).

3. **The Federal Ministry of Information(FMI)**

Establish around 2007 its mission is to maintain a robust information dissemination mechanism as well as to develop strategic communication of government policies and programmes (and feedback) in Nigeria (FMIC, 2020).

4. **The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)**

Established in 1978, its mission is "to inform, educate and entertain through the creation and maintenance of broadcast outfits that will serve as models in Nigeria and Africa in terms of standards, professionalism, and character..." (Radio Nigeria, 2021). The FRCN is responsible for dissemination information about government activities and policies through the radio.

5. **Voice of Nigeria (VON)**

Established in 1961, the VON has as its mission to promote and market the Nigerian image abroad. (VON, 2021). It does this by informing the world about Nigerian government policies, contributions of Nigerians in diaspora, etc. through the radio. It is also actively involved in defending Nigerians in diaspora by communicating their problems to the Nigerian government.

## **6. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)**

The NBS came into being with the merger of the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) and the National Data Bank (NDB) around 2005. (World Bank, 2010). The NBS is responsible for producing and disseminating statistical information on the Nigerian economy, government and citizens' expenditures, and other areas which will assist the government in making informed decisions. Through the NBS, the Nigerian citizenry (and the international community) obtain statistical information on government agency spending and on the Nigerian economy which allows for constructive criticisms and informed investments/business decisions.

## **7. Government Websites and Social Media Platforms**

Given the fact that the 21<sup>st</sup> century has promoted the use of electronic/digital communication, even more so with the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a deliberate paradigm shift by governments to use more of electronic platforms for communication. All MDAs in Nigeria were mandate to establish a .gov.ng or similar domain to publicise their official information. This implies that a lot of government publications and indeed, government information are now disseminated through the websites of various MDAs and users can access such information, even remotely on the website of the relevant MDAs. The environment has also facilitated the use of social media to disseminate government publications/information, although there are serious concerns around such issues as fake news, disinformation and misinformation. The social media platforms used by government include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. An example of how government made good use of social media was during the Covid-19 pandemic when information and publications by government on the pandemic were disseminated through WhatsApp to individuals and Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, electronic and print media were all deployed to inform citizens about the pandemic.

## **8. Print and Non-Print Media**

Government publications can also be distributed through print and non-print media such as relia. As discussed in previous units, using government printing presses and other channels, the print media through which government disseminates its publications include reports, gazettes, congressional records, green and white papers, atlases, bulletins, posters and newspapers and other periodicals. It is important to stress that government decides on the specific

appropriate medium to use in disseminating information and in many cases, it uses it combination of these media to disseminate its publications.

The following is the breakdown of a few government publications, the type of information they disseminate and what they are used for.

### **i. Annual Reports**

The annual report serves as a mechanism crucial for accountability and decision making, as well as medium for communicating achievements to the public. An annual report should contain an analysis of performance results. This requires having a set of appropriate measures and robust systems to collect the results, followed with analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of the information. The annual report will include information on achievements, value of services rendered and performance. It will also discuss challenges, lessons learnt as well as plans for the future.

**Achievements** – These include reporting on services delivered, the effect the services had on outcomes, and comparisons with past performance.

**Value** – This is the costs of the services delivered compared with what was achieved – that is, the cost-effectiveness of the services delivered. The reader should be able to tell how this has changed over time to determine whether the government is delivering improvements in cost-effectiveness.

**Performance interpretation** – This is an explanation of the main trends during the past 5 to 10 years, changes that were or might be required in any aspect of the business, and the results of any major management or policy decisions or operational changes made in recent years (Provost, 2011).

The annual report serves as a compendium of the initiatives and activities carried out by the government and its agencies for the year.

### **ii. Budget Speeches**

A budget speech is a speech to which the Government Head presents the country its financial situation, considered as the difference between the money it receives and the money it spends. The budget speech enlightens the public about the country's financial situation and also informs on the allocated budget for the next fiscal year. The budget speech comprises of key elements such as key parameters, revenue projections, proposed spending fiscal deficit and financial bill.

**iii. Green Paper**

A green paper is a government publication that details specific issues, and then points out possible courses of action in terms of policy and legislation (The Guardian, 2009). The green paper serves as a tool to stimulate discussions which is often the first step towards changing the law. It is used to get feedback from citizens both within and outside the parliament on its policy and regulations. The green paper serves as an information source to fresh discussions as to, the government policies and regulations and possibility for amendment of such.

**iv. White Paper**

White Papers are issued by the Government as statements of policy, and often set out proposals for legislative changes or the introduction of new laws (The Guardian, 2009). White papers are utilized to serve as case study containing detailed and technical information. They also serve as reference material; white papers are used to educate readers to bring to light a new or different perspective.

**Guidelines that Govern the Dissemination of Government Publications**

According to the United States Department of Transportation (2011), the following are some guidelines and principles that should be considered when disseminating government information.

1. In publications or summaries, information should be clearly presented to users, and users should be informed about the source(s) of the information presented.
2. As far as possible, tables, graphs, and figures should be interpretable as stand-alone products in case they become separated from their original context.
3. Methods used to produce data displayed in tables, graphs, and summary data should be available to the reader.
4. Documents should be well organised with language that clearly conveys the message intended. Tables, graphs, and figures should be consistent with each other and the text discussing them.
5. All tables, graphs, figures that illustrate data, and text that provides data not in accompanying illustrations should include a source

reference. The source reference should contain one or more entries with references to the sources for the information presented. The reference should be sufficiently detailed for a reader to locate the data used. Since databases and documents may be updated, the "as of" date for the source should also be noted.

6. The style of a publication should conform to specific agency style guidelines to ensure consistency and clarity throughout the document.
7. A contact point should be provided in the publication or with the summaries to facilitate user comments and suggestions.
8. The Sources and Accuracy Statements (i.e. compilations of data quality information discussed; they provide information on where the data came from, how it was collected, and how it was processed) for a data source should contain or refer to the current data system objectives and data requirements.
9. Sources and Accuracy Statements (S&As) should be regularly updated to include changes in methodology and results of any quality assessment studies.
10. A subject matter specialist other than those directly involved in the data collection and analysis should review the plans, methodology documents, and reports prior to dissemination. They should also review publications and summaries resulting from the data for content and consistency.
11. Publications should be reviewed by a style and visual information specialist for compliance with style standards.
12. Any data products that will be disseminated via special software onto the Internet should be tested for accessibility and interpretability prior to dissemination.

### **3.1.2 Purposes for Which Government Publications are Used**

Different categories of users seek for information from government publications. A library user could be said to anybody who visits a library. Nwalo (2003) defined a user as anybody who visits the library with the purpose of exploiting its resources to satisfy his information need. "Visit" in the twenty-first century include remote access to the library portal or

website or physical access to the building. In the same vein, Aina (2004) defined the term "user" to include all those who avail themselves of the services offered by a library. The term user is used synonymously with such terms as patron, client, information user, information seeker, consumer, customer and reader. In the twenty-first century, post Covid-19 pandemic, almost everything has become virtual. Reitz (2005) defined the twenty-first century library as a "library without walls" in which the collections do not exist on paper, microform, or other tangible form at a physical location, but are electronically accessible in digital format via computer networks. From this definition, it is apparent that the library users require new technologies to access library collections, as access is no longer restricted to the user paying a visit to the library (building) physically. The twenty-first century library therefore, emphasizes access rather than ownership. This implies that the library user needs to take more responsibility in locating and retrieving information from the library's collections.

Users' are the pillars around which library services and operations are built. Generally, the *raison d'être* of any library and information centre is to satisfy its users' information needs. User satisfaction research is often carried out in libraries and information centres because it is one of the key performance indicators (PKIs) of the success of any library, including national libraries services. That is why the vision and mission statements of any library, and the objectives are usually focused on satisfying users. Different users have diverse information needs and even one user may have different information needs which change from time to time. This dynamic nature of users' information needs makes it apparent that libraries will remain "growing organisms". Many researchers have categorised library users in various ways (Nwalo, 2003, Aina, 2004 and Anyira, 2011). Although it is difficult to have a clear-cut distinction between the different categories of users, it is useful to distinguish between the different groups because their information needs differ and they therefore require different services provided by different types of libraries. Using Aina's categorisation, there are children, pupils, students, adults, professionals, researchers and lecturers, policy makers and planners, artisans, rural dwellers, hearing and visually handicapped users and physically handicapped users. For government publications, most of these categories will use different documents to satisfy their information needs, especially researchers, policy makers, professionals and lecturers. However, users make effective use of information if they are aware of the importance of that information, their confidence in using the facilities for accessing the information and their linguistics and intellectual capabilities.

In terms of policy, most government publication departments have a policy that ensures that government publications are used mostly for

references purposes. This means that they are consulted within the library and are not usually loaned out to users. Also, many government publications units close to the public about two hours before the main closing hours (for instance they open from 8:00am to 2:00pm). This is because the nature of the various formats makes it difficult to shelf the materials and as such they need more time to shelf and shelf-read. Another use policy is that most government publications units are separate departments and run the whole gamut of library operations from acquisition to cataloguing and classification to reference and reservation services. The users therefore do not necessarily need to use other departments in the library. This implies that the staffing of the government publication unit should be carefully selected and a librarian should head the department. Some of the purposes for which users use government publications are described below:

**i. Historical Record**

The records of the legislative bodies are an important source of political information, and also provide background to the decisions of the government. In most countries, government bodies are required to provide an annual report, and these provide information about their activities, and the area of society for which they are responsible. The annual reports of the government are important sources of historical information – sometimes in unlikely areas. Reports of commissions of enquiry are usually in high demand immediately after their release, but are also an important part of the historical record.

**ii. Provision of Statistics**

Official yearbooks provide overviews of statistics for a country, detailed statistical information from censuses and other sources is generally produced by the Government statistics agency. In the twenty-first century this is most easily accessible online through the website. For instance, the National Bureau of Statistics, which serves as a statistical agency for the three tiers of government that produces the Statistical Master Plan (SMP), a programme document of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN).

**iii. Information Provision**

With the development of open access to government publications, the collection and use of government documents is changing. Libraries make government information available through the purchase of printed government documents, subscription to relevant electronic databases, the consolidation of online government information, cataloguing, circulating, and providing reference services, user training, and research guides. Government information are primarily provided in the various official

publications. The emergence of the web and digital technologies has accelerated and made the information far more accessible to the general population providing they have web access and the necessary skills.

#### **i. Evaluation of Government's Activities**

Government publications help the government to propagate, publicize, and advertise its activities and achievements with a view to canvassing for the votes and approval of the people during electioneering campaigns. Such government documents provide the people the opportunity to compare different types of people in government and their leadership and management style. The people can therefore decide the type of government they want to have in place. Such evaluation of government activities will determine the longevity of these governments. A government, irrespective of level, that does well will attract the people's approbation. When the government falters, it attracts disapprobation and protest. That government may eventually be terminated because the people have lost confidence in it. One of the ways by which government promotes stability and peace in the nation is by publishing and publicizing its policies made by government or purportedly activated by government which will need some clarification or explanation or else the public might resort to violent protest, acrimony, upheaval, arson, other forms of aberrant manifestations owing to misinformation or lack of information.

#### **v. Consultations**

The public often needs to consult the official publications on matters of policy and in so doing utilizes the Green Paper and other official documents. Green papers are official consultation documents produced by the government.

#### **vi. Legal Information**

Government publications such as judicial publications provide information to law students and legal practitioners. These publications include: The Laws of the Federation, State Laws, Hansard, Law Reports, Reports of Commissions of Inquiry, Legislative or Parliamentary Papers for their information needs. These materials are excellent and authoritative legal sources of information for students, teachers and practitioners of law. Government depends on some of these documents to generate the white papers, which often lead to the enactment of laws and legislation. Also, legal counsels often cite profusely from these judicial publications to substantiate and strengthen their law cases.

**vii. Research Purposes**

Government publications are primary sources of information therefore; their contents are essential for research purposes. They reveal a government's philosophy and ideologies, and propagate the activities of government and its agencies. The information generated through these documents can hardly be found through any other information source other than government publications. These publications are indispensable sources of information for educational, economic, socio-political and research purposes.

**viii. Educational**

Official publications serve as an educative medium to readers because they propagate the quest for knowledge and reduce ignorance among the populace. The provision of policy information through the use of white and green papers can help to create an awareness of policy issues among parliamentarians and the public and to encourage an exchange of information and analysis. They can also serve as educational techniques.

**ix. Provision of Geographical Information**

Developmental plans and maps provides information on the technical and spatial framework of the country with regards to a Geographical zone, which helps in providing health and safety of the occupants or other members of the public. Similarly, economic decisions to focus on tourism, manufacturing industry or agricultural development as the basis of the country's economic development can be obtained in these documents. The development plans help translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens.

**x. Governance**

Government publications strengthens the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government with a view to enhancing the independence as they provide information regarding public policy statements, statistical evidence, and regulation of activities of organizations, institutions and professional associations. It helps in establishing appropriate mechanisms to allow for civic engagement and citizen participation, especially the effective participation of women, in public policy development and implementation, to ensure that, apart from periodically electing their representatives, the people are continually involved in decisions and activities affecting them, either directly as individuals or through civil society organizations, such as community based organizations and special interest groups. Government publications

have political value as they serve as the chronicler of the activities of particular regimes of government.

#### **xi. Policy Development and Amendment**

Official publications serve as good consulting materials for the development and amendment of government policies and regulations. It helps in developing knowledge based on economic, governance, security, law and order with regards to the policies guiding them in the various level of government. When a government policy is set to be developed or amended, official documents in this regards are being reviewed. For instance, when there is an amendment of bill, the previous bill is being reviewed by the legislative. These documents give insight and helps in correcting weaknesses, deepening reforms at all levels of government and upgrading and enhancing of government operations.

#### **xii. National Planning**

A National Economic Development Plan will analyse the country's objectives and priorities in relation to all these sectors in response to well-identified national needs. It will propose and justify an overall plan in which the role of individual sectors, including aquaculture as a source of food, can be seen in context. A well-researched and reasoned policy document is of immense value to a country in the allocation of its scarce resources. It relates the scope and timetable of projects to the resources available and the benefits which will accrue. It enables realistic and achievable decisions to be taken.

#### **xiii. Primary Source of Information**

Official documents serve as primary sources of government and public information. They contain information such as government policy, legal information, information sources with regards to government agencies and their activities, government regulations, information source to fresh discussions as to, the government policies and regulations and possibility for amendment of such. They also serve as primary sources for those who wish to write books or other treaties. Government publications provide excellent source material in many areas, most of which concern our everyday life and they are particularly useful in the social sciences.

To reiterate, government publications are utilised for a variety of purposes based on the various specifications and specialisation of users. They are significant in the provision and dissemination of information about the policies, plans and activities of the various governments. Information is vital for daily survival, not only for individual but also for the various countries of the world. The use of government publications as a source of

information cannot be overemphasized. Also, government publications are of educational value and usually constitute very useful primary sources of information for research and scholarship. Government Publications usually carry information of a statistical nature about the various countries of the world. Such statistical information includes population figures, economic data, educational data, health data, political data and social information (Popoola, 2015).

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit discussed the various purposes for which government publications are used. It also examined the categories of users that use these publications concluding that they are used mostly by researchers and professionals who need information for decision-making and to develop policies for public good. However, every citizen uses government publications at some point or the other to meet different information needs such as health information and information on education. Finally, it discussed the various media through which government publications are disseminated.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In summary, this unit discussed how different types of government publications are used. In particular, it examined how annual reports, budget speeches, green papers and white papers are used. It also discussed in details what government publications are used for. The purposes for which government publications were used included historical record, provision of statistical data, information provision, evaluation of government's activities, consultations, legal information, research, education, provision of geographic information, governance, policy development and amendment, national planning and provision of primary sources of information for the consumption of the general populace. The unit also briefly examined the users of government publications, noting that researchers and professionals use the publications frequently even though the general public also depend on the publications for information that enables them live a successful life. It concluded by discussing the some of the methods used in disseminating government publications.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Describe five main categories of users of government publications.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

1. Discuss ten purposes for which government publications are used.
2. Briefly discuss the various methods used in disseminating government publications.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 3    PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN LIBRARIES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Preservation and Conservation of Government Publications in Libraries
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we discussed the dissemination and use of government publications. This unit shall focus on how government publications are preserved and conserved in libraries. It is essential to discuss this because without adequate preservation and conservation practices and policies, many of such publications will be damaged. Considering the fact that many of the publications are irreplaceable, the cost of losing them is very high.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the preservation and conservation methods and practices used for government publications.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Preservation and Conservation of Government Publications in Libraries**

Every library should have a robust conservation programme that will ensure the library materials have a longer life span. In Nigeria, preservation and conservation are the responsibility of the government agencies that creates the document, the National Library of Nigeria and the depository libraries where these materials are acquired. Some the environmental factors include light, water, heat humidity, gaseous air pollution, particles like dust, dirt, sand and smoke, fungi, insects, people, natural disasters. Solutions could include fumigation, encapsulation,

photocopying, lamination, binding, microfilming, photography and digitisation.

Conservation and preservation of library materials involve the treatment of physical items to extend their lifespan, repair of library material and restoration from loss, damage or repair. Although the conservation policy of a library may seem expensive, when compared to the cost of the materials, it is cheaper on the long run. Just like individuals conserve their personal items (shoes, clothes, cars, etc.), libraries also conserve their materials. Restoration and preservation of library materials can be very expensive hence it is better to ensure that materials are conserved. Conservation of library materials is the responsibility of library staff and users. Schonfeld (2017) observed that preservation entails a variety of activities, processes, and conditions designed to extend the life of a publication and the information it contains in a conducive environment. He noted that preservation involves physical security, facilities maintenance and disaster planning, including identification of missing materials, item-level metadata, a commitment to maintain materials and provide access. It also includes conservation activities. In Prytherch's *Harrods's Librarians Glossary* (2005), conservation is defined as the use of chemicals and other physical procedures in treatment or storage to ensure the preservation of a document while preservation is the primary functions of an archive depository to provide adequate facilities for the care, protection and maintenance of the materials of whatever kind, including specific individual and collective measures taken for the repair, restoration, protection and maintenance of the materials.

Print and electronic materials are vital and delicate. The way they are handled can affect the life span of the records contained in them. Records must be preserved and conserved for future use. Every generation desires to leave a mark of documented issues, concerns, ideas, discourse and events, and the only way to do this was by leaving a legacy in the form of documented matter. Preservation could thus be said to refer to all necessary strategies, measures and steps invested into prolonging the lives of library information resources. Murray (2005) as quoted by James-Ngozi et. al. (2020) explained that preservation is an indirect method of treatment in which the environment around an item is changed. This includes stabilizing, maintaining and monitoring temperature, humidity, light exposure, air pollution, dirt, dust and mould. Preservation could also be said to include surveying the proper storage and handling techniques, security, including theft, vandalism, disaster prevention, education, training and outreach programmes for staff, patrons, clients, and the public, while conservation is a direct method of treatment in which an item is physically or chemically changed. This includes cleaning, repairing, rebinding and reformatting. All conservation treatments entail the least intrusive methods possible and use of acid-neutral materials.

According to Alegbeleye (2002), preservation includes all the managerial and financial considerations, including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques and methods involved in protecting library and archival materials and information contained in them.

Conservation, on the other hand, refers to specific practices taken to slow deterioration and prolong the life of an object by directly intervening in its physical or chemical make-up. Examples of the latter are the repair of damaged books, binding or the de-acidification of paper. In their contribution, Clayton and Gorman (2003) opined that preservation is the generic term, and includes all activities associated with the maintenance of resources and the preservation of information content. This is in contrast with conservation, which refers to the physical items themselves in order to extend their usable life. Jordan (2003) also defined preservation as the activities, principles, practices, and organizations that ensure the usability, longevity, and accessibility of recorded knowledge. Activities currently defining the realm of preservation of library materials include conservation (general collections repair and special collections), reformatting (microfilming, photocopying, and digitization), selection for preservation, environmental monitoring and control, care and handling of materials, disaster preparedness and recovery, standards relating to materials, practice, and techniques, commercial binding, and preservation education and training. Conservation and Preservation are the processes of keeping an object safe from harm or loss, damage, destruction and maintaining it in a reasonably sound condition for present and future use, preservation deals with the regular maintenance aspect whereas conservation deals with the curative treatment (Sawant, 2014).

Giving credence to various definitions, IFLA in its Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Materials (2010) defined preservation as the managerial and financial considerations as well as storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques and methods involved in preserving library and archival materials and information contained in them while it defined conservation as specific practices taken to slow down deterioration and prolong the life span of an object by direct intervening in its physical or chemical make-up. IFLA explains the terms by noting that:

**Preservation:** includes all the managerial and financial consideration including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques and methods involved in preserving library and archive materials and the information contained in them.

**Conservation:** denotes those specific policies and practices involved in protecting library and archival materials from deterioration, damage and decay, including the methods and techniques devised by technical staff.

**Restoration:** denotes those techniques and judgments used by technical staff engaged in the making good of library and archives material damaged by time, use and other factors.

The composition of some of the media for storing information makes deterioration inevitable. Deterioration may set in through the natural ageing process or as a result of other factors such as chemical composition of the media of information, biological agents, environmental factors, physical agents and improper handling. There is, therefore, the need to take certain conservation measures to slow down deterioration to avoid losing these library resources. Conservation involves taking protective measures to prevent decay and consequently, the loss of library resources. Conservation is a field of knowledge concerned with the coordination and planning for the practical application of the techniques of binding, restoration, paper chemistry, and other material technology, as well as other knowledge pertinent to the preservation of archival resources. Conservation can be further characterized as both preventive and remedial. Preventive conservation consists of indirect action to retard deterioration and prevent damage by creating conditions optimal for the preservation of materials.

### **3.1.1 Preservation and Conservation of Government Publications in Libraries**

From the above explanation, one would deduce that preservation of library materials refers to the activities associated with maintaining library materials for use, either in their original physical format or in some other format. This includes a number of procedures from control of the environment to conservation treatment. Conservation therefore, is the treatment of library materials to stabilize their physical structure in order to sustain their survival as long as possible in their original format. Preventive conservation and preservation approach in libraries should focus on improving the environment, controlling light, temperature, humidity, and pollution. All libraries need to preserve and conserve their collections against deterioration from a variety of sources including chemical and biological threat, as well as physical damage through handling. The recommended environmental conditions which should be provided to prolong the useful life of library materials are:

- i. Low light levels
- ii. Steady relative humidity (around 55 %)
- iii. Steady temperature (around 21°C)
- iv. Good air circulation
- v. Elimination of airborne pollution
- vi. Control of biological pests
- vii. Improved handling techniques

- viii. Correct storage techniques.

### **Factors Responsible for Deterioration of Materials**

Mahapatra and Chatevabarti (2003) observed that the following physical and chemical factors are responsible for deterioration of documents, either by one or more.

- i. Natural aging of paper since the major constituents are of organic nature. Such inevitable deterioration can be minimized to a large extent by proper housekeeping.
- ii. In the manufacturing of paper sometimes fibres are used with low cellulose content or sometimes non-cellulose materials of the lignin type are used by which paper becomes degenerated very easily.
- iii. Mineral and chemical compounds used as basic constituents of paper affect the durability of paper.
- iv. Impurities in the ingredients used as basic constituents of paper cause inevitable deterioration.
- v. Presence of acidic sizing materials such as, alum, rosin, etc., causes the acidic effect.
- vi. Oxidizing agents present in the constituents of paper make the paper weak, discoloured and disintegrated. Presence of metal accelerates oxidation.
- vii. Alkalis used in the manufacture of paper affect it if used in a higher quality. Fungi grow very easily on such paper.
- viii. Heat and exposure to light make the paper brittle and fade in colour.
- ix. Dust particles make the paper discoloured, invite chemical impurities and accelerate biological growth.
- x. Acidic impurities present in the atmosphere make the paper discoloured and degenerated.
- xi. Sulphuric acid is formed from Sulphur dioxide present in the air.
- xii. Moisture and humidity by which not only the tissues of paper are disintegrated but also conditions are created for biological attack.
- xiii. Films are very sensitive to excessive heat, dryness, humidity and moisture.
- xiv. Chemicals present in audio-visual materials can cause deterioration under adverse environmental condition.
- xv. Due to the basic elements used in the audio or video tape, deterioration is caused for physical and chemical change within the materials under adverse environmental condition.

## **Methods of Preservation and Conservation**

Preservation methods are adopted based on location, weather, and environment. These conditions can be attained using an appropriate environment and the various other methods like chemical treatment, fumigation, restoring faded links, bleaching, etc.

### **i. Environmental Conditions**

Much research has been done on finding out the ideal condition of humidity and temperature for the storage of books, and archival materials. Gallo (2002), an Italian chemist suggested that the ideal humidity of between 40% and 65%, and the temperature between 180C and 200C are good for conservation of books. It is very difficult to control atmospheric conditions, which are constantly fluctuating. However, examples of what can be done include air-conditioning the storage areas, banning smoking in the library and ensuring that the main switches are off when the stack area is closed. Also, it is important to have fire extinguishers in strategic points in the library.

### **ii. Human Beings**

Security devices should be put in place to discourage as well as discover readers that steal or mutilate library materials. It is important the library should teach new users the proper way to care for and handle books. For instance, books should not be pulled off the shelves by head caps and should not be cramped on shelves in such a way that trying to remove a book may cause damage to its binding.

### **iii. Chemical Methods of Preservation**

International standards should be followed while using chemicals for preservation so that no damage is done to the original condition of documents. All commercial products whose composition is unknown must not be used. For instance, in trying to restore materials the least drastic method should always be tried initially.

### **iv. Preservation from Insects and Pests**

Fumigation and other chemicals could be used to deal with insects and pests. For instance, insecticides and pesticides can be used to control a wide range of insects and pests. Many of these are produced locally in Nigeria and are cheap, and readily available.

### **v. Restoring Faded Inks**

Paper containing the faded writing may be treated with some chemicals that will help darken the writing. This could be done by treating the paper with 3% solution of tannic acid which will make the writing clearer.

**vi. Bleaching**

The removal of general discoloration is necessary, to make the document look newer and to have a brighter colour. 2% of a bleaching agent, which is less injurious to the fibres of the document material, can be used as solution in water for this purpose.

**vii. Lamination**

It is the process in which a document is embedded between sheets of synthetic plastic film or tissue. This makes good reinforcement and covers the document from further deterioration.

**viii. Repair**

A document may suffer a minor physical change such as tears, wrinkling, scattered holes, and gross deterioration such as abnormally large number of holes and tunnels caused by insects. Latter case calls for the strengthening of the sheets with chiffon and through the modern process of lamination.

**ix. Racking and Shelving**

The racks, shelves and containers also conform to the exigencies of good storage that is resistant to dirt, dampness, fire, and microorganisms. Proper choice of material and design of racks, shelves and containers avert the dangers to the documents.

**x. Dust Removal**

Dust accumulates quickly in our climate, so it is necessary to remove it regularly. Dusting cannot be done properly with cloth and broom, because particles of dust rise into air and again settles down in some other part of the room or in other shelves. To overcome these problem libraries should use vacuum cleaners. Vacuum cleaners also helps in saving a lot of time otherwise spent on cleaning.

**Electronic Methods of Preservation**

In the electronic environment, the problem of storage and preservation of information is removed from the point of use (where it has traditionally been located) to the point of supply. The information producer bothers about location of extensive databases for storage and preservation from where users can access whatever they needed. Digitisation as a tool for the preservation of information originally created in conventional formats, especially newspapers, has been canvassed widely in recent years. Conversion to a digital format gives the user a whole range of new search tools, since what is created is a file that is flexible and can be manipulated just like any other electronic data file. Digitization is an expensive option for preservation though legitimately viable.

In summary, Ross (1989) noted that preservation can be achieved by two main methods: by preserving the artefact and by preserving the intellectual contents.

### **Preserving the artefact (Physical)**

- i. Refurbishing and collection maintenance
- ii. Fumigation
- iii. Protective enclosures.
  - a) Encapsulation
  - b) Boxes
  - c) Document folders
- iv. Binding
  - a) Sewing through the fold
  - b) Strengthening paperbacks.

### **Preserving the intellectual content:**

- i. Reformatting
- ii. Photocopying
- iii. Lamination
- iv. Microfilming
- v. Photography
- vi. Digitisation

All libraries must decide what to do with government publications in disrepair. At what point is an item beyond repair? Should it be replaced? Preservation and conservation refer to the processes of monitoring the physical condition of the library's materials and taking action to prevent further deterioration. Some of the ways in which library materials can be conserved include:

1. **Careful handling of materials:** this includes
  - i. Preventing dog-earing of books: dog-earing eventually creates a line of weakness which aids tearing of pages of the book.
  - ii. Moving books in the library: every library is encouraged to use book trolleys to move books around, especially from the circulation and reference sections to the shelves. Even when books are moved around by hand (in small libraries), the staff must ensure that they carry few books at a time in order to prevent them from falling over. When books fall accidentally, there is a likelihood that their spine could break. Example of book trolley is shown in the pictures below:



Figure 44: Trolleys for moving books around  
Source: Google Images

- iii. Shelving and removing books from the shelf: when books are being shelved, adequate space must be left within the shelves to facilitate easy retrieval.



Figure 45: Removing books from the shelf  
Source: Google Images

- iv. Dusting and vacuuming books on the shelf: this should be done with clean dusters and appropriate equipment for vacuuming to avoid books being destroyed during the process.
2. **Re-binding of library books:** as soon as library staff notice that the spine of a book is weak and the pages are falling off, it is the responsibility of such staff to withdraw the book from the library shelf and from circulation. Such books are taken to the bindery for re-binding or fixing of the book. When a book is being withdrawn from circulation, it is important that a record of the details is kept. Some libraries use forms while some use notebooks to keep such

details as author, title, publishers, etc. After the book is repaired, it is returned to the shelf and all records are amended accordingly.



Figure 46: Example of a book that needs re-binding

Source: Google Images

3. **Keeping pests off the library:** pests such as rodents, ants, book lice, cockroaches, termites, etc. could damage books in the library. This is why libraries take all reasonable measures to prevent actions that may attract pests. For instance, most libraries do not allow users to bring food items into sections of the library where books are stored.
4. **Preventing humidity:** humidity in the library creates a fertile ground for moulds which enhance deterioration of books. All reasonable care must be taken by libraries to ensure that the environment is suitable for storage of books/materials. For example, libraries should ensure that there are no leaking roofs so that rain does not fall into the library.
5. **Library security:** securing of library materials is very important, especially because libraries spend a lot of resources (money, time, human) to build their collections. It is therefore necessary to ensure that great attention is paid to securing the materials. Although libraries still lose some materials due to theft, mutilation, etc. such loss should be kept below 3% of materials available in a library. When a library loses more than 3% of its materials, it needs to immediately review its security system. Over time, libraries have used different security measures to prevent losing their materials. These include anti-book theft devices which are available for purchase, employing library porters, CCTV cameras, etc.



Figure 47: Example of a library security system  
Source: Google Images

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In concluding this unit, it necessary to reiterate that the preservation and conservation of government publications is very important in the provision of library and information services. In this unit, the concepts of preservation and conservation were defined. You also learnt about the factors responsible for deterioration of materials, methods of preservation and conservation of library materials, including government publications, and ways in which library materials may be conserved. All of these will give you an insight into how government publications are preserved and conserved.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In summary, this unit discussed various aspects of preservation and conservation of government documents. The two concepts were extensively defined and discussed. In particular, factors responsible for deterioration of materials, the methods used in preservation and conservation and the ways in which government publications could be conserved were examined.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Discuss the various ways in which government publications may be conserved.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

1. Distinguish between the terms “preservation” and “conservation”
2. Discuss the various factors responsible for the deterioration of government publications.
3. Discuss the methods used in the preservation and conservation of different library materials, including government publications.

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**MODULE 4 CHALLENGES OF ACQUISITION, ORGANISATION AND USE OF GOVT PUBLICATIONS, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPECTS OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MGT AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

This module introduces you to the challenges of acquisition, organisation and use of government publications. It addresses such questions as do libraries face difficulties face when trying to acquire government documents? What are these challenges? What special challenges do librarians face when cataloguing and classifying government publications? Are there issues in arranging, shelving, retrieving and using government publications? Suggestions on how the challenges may be mitigated will be made. The module also examines the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic on the management and use of government publications in library and information services. This is with a view to harnessing the opportunities created by the pandemic to improve the quality of service delivery. The module consists of two units, namely:

- Unit 1 Challenges of Acquisition, Organisation and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services
- Unit 2 Opportunities and Prospects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services

**UNIT 1 CHALLENGES OF ACQUISITION, ORGANISATION, DISSEMINATION AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Challenges of Acquisition, Organisation, Dissemination and Use of Government Publications
  - 3.2 Suggestions on How These Challenges May Be Mitigated
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (SAEs)

7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we examined the preservation and conservation practices in the management of government publications as well as the dissemination and use of such publications. In this unit, we shall discuss the main challenges encountered in the acquisition, organisation and use of government publications in library and information services. Suggestions on the various ways in which these challenges could be mitigated will also be explored.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the main challenges encountered in the acquisition, organisation and use of government publications
- explain various ways in which these challenges could be assuaged.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Challenges of Acquisition, Organisation, Dissemination and Use of Government Publications**

As mentioned earlier, government publications according to Ries (2021) are those publications, regardless of physical form, issued or published by authority of a government body, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary at all levels of governance such as international, national, federal, local government bodies and intergovernmental bodies. The publications range from primary source materials for scholarly research to informational pamphlets for the general public. Inherent in this definition lie many of the challenges in the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of such documents. The dynamic nature of society also makes it imperative to examine the specific challenges encountered in the acquisition, management and use of government publications. These challenges are numerous but a few will be discussed in this unit. Students are expected to read the literature widely in order to have a better appreciation of these challenges.

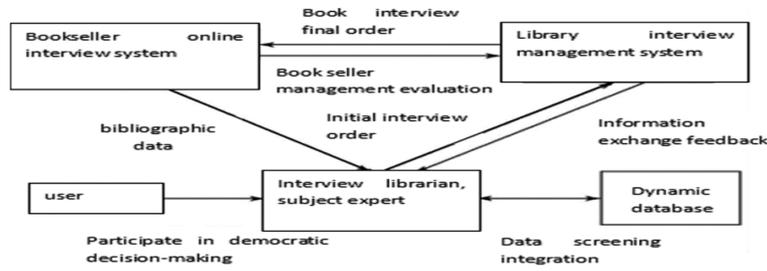


Figure 48: Challenges of book acquisition

Source: Google Images

Some of the challenges that have been discussed in the literature include:

1. **Acquisition of government publications:** acquisition processes are a major challenge in the sense that many of the publishers of government documents do not comply with legal deposit laws in their countries. This means that government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) hardly take their publications to libraries that are designated for such purposes, even under legal authority. Therefore, the libraries and institutions that need them to provide research and other information services to their users have to identify the necessary publishing organisations, monitor the frequency of publishing as well as develop robust acquisition systems and policies in order to stock them. All of these have implications on issues like staff time, efforts and funding. In essence, most of the institutions have to be proactive and visit the MDAs regularly in order to develop a rich collection of government documents. Shuler (2002) stated that bibliographic controls need to be overcome in order to deal with the reluctance of libraries to acquire government publications “expensive to acquire, frustrating to understand, very labour intensive to maintain, and difficult to explain how to use to the public.” This viewpoint has not changed much.
1. **Inadequate bibliographic control tools:** this is a very important issue, especially in the selection and processing of government documents. As Weech (1981) noted “without access to the knowledge of what is published and who does the publishing, there would be little opportunity to develop collections of state publications”. Likewise, Salisu (1984) described bibliographic control as inventory control, evaluative selection, holdings identification, subject guide and bibliography of mediagraphy. This implies that there are recognised processes through which materials published in a country are identified, collected, collated and organised in such a way that the information contained can be easily accessed by users and the cataloguing-in-publication information can be used by libraries, thereby making it faster to

make them accessible to users. This problem is even more prominent in countries like Nigeria where the bibliographic control tools are grossly inadequate. For instance, the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) which is published by the National Library of Nigeria and is supposed to collate, catalogue, classify and produce every publication published in Nigeria annually is not published regularly. The implication is that it is very difficult to find out which government documents have been published and by which MDA. In addition, each institution that acquires such publications will need to catalogue and classify them whereas the Nation Bibliography would have provided such information. The government printers/press do not fare any better in terms of providing lists of what they publish.

2. **Inadequate materials, facilities and equipment:** Many government printers and government presses find it difficult to acquire printing paper, ink and other materials in bulk because of the costs and challenges in procurement processes. This usually increases the time span between the creation and publishing of the manuscript such that in some instances, the information contained in the manuscript becomes obsolete even before it is published. Furthermore, the facilities and equipment in some of the printing presses are obsolete or very old models which need to be urgently upgraded. For instance, traditional manual machines are still being used, whereas such models have been phased out by the producers, making it difficult to get spare parts when such equipment break down. Also, equipment such as air-conditioners and furniture need to be constantly replaced to make the work environment conducive for staff and patrons.
3. **Inadequate space:** The irregular nature and size of government publications constitute a problem in shelving, resulting in inadequacy of space for such materials. Many government publications are just a few pages or even one-page documents. The implication is that they are shelved horizontally rather than vertically, thereby consuming a lot of shelf space. This is one of the reasons some libraries pile them up in stacks in an unprofessional way, thereby making them very difficult to access. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Fourth Industrial Revolution, libraries and other institutions that store government publications should leverage on new technologies and robots to disseminate these publications electronically.
4. **Shelving:** This is one of the major challenges in the organisation and management of government publications. A cursory look at government publications will reveal that many of them are

pamphlets and do not have well-defined spines. This makes it difficult to shelf them vertically like other library materials and to integrate them into the shelving arrangements of the library/organisation. Shelving them horizontally like periodicals takes up a lot of shelf space and integrating them into the main collection means that many are inconspicuous and cannot stand appropriately on the shelf, thereby making them difficult to access. For instance, shelving of bulletins, posters, maps, calendars and almanacs may require special cabinets as they need to be laid flat. Other information houses may simply shelve these documents in pamphlet or vertical files. This results in having limited access to important information, as these items are invariably not included in the library's online public access catalogue (Augur (1989) as cited in Mason, 2005), and finding aids provided are sometimes not the most efficient. Also, non-print/audio-visual materials such as microfilms, audio-tapes video tapes and slides require special storage. This would appear to confirm reports by Postema and Weech (1991) and Caswell (1997) that for some researchers, the time involved in trying to retrieve government documents for research outweighed the value of the information it contained.

6. **Various classification schemes:** Another major challenge faced in providing easy access to government publications is the fact that different libraries and institutions use different classifications schemes in process the documents. Some use the Library of Congress Classification Scheme, others use Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme while many others use home-made schemes. For instance, the National Library of Nigeria and the University of Jos use adaptations of the Library of Congress Classification Scheme while the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University use different home-made schemes. Furthermore, international agencies like the United Nations agencies use the same classification scheme which is home-made and different from other established schemes. However, it should be noted that Nigerian libraries are all agreed on using the issuing agency or government department as the main entry, where they differ are the primary notation and cutter number used in classification of materials (Akintunde, 1991). These have implications for resource sharing and ease in document retrieval.
7. **Frequent policy changes:** For African countries, one of the biggest challenges of managing and using government publications is the frequent policy changes that result in creation, merging and de-merging and abolition of government MDAs often

resulting in confusion of what is being published and who publishes what. Akintunde (1991) aptly synthesizes this challenge by using the example of the creation of states in Nigeria from three regions to four regions to twelve states, 19 states, 21 states and FCT; to 30 states and FCT and then to the thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory as we have it today.

1. **Inadequate human resources and staff skills:** In many instances, libraries do not put their “best” librarians in charge of government publications unit. In fact, in terms of organisational structure, some libraries downplay the status by not making them full-fledged sections or departments but units or even sub-units. Para-professional staff or those who are not highly motivated are usually left to manage the units, often resulting in putting officers who do not have adequate skills to manage the unit. In the twenty-first century, when Information and Communications Technologies is fundamental to quality library service delivery, many of the staff deployed to government publications units do not have the requisite skills and mind set to initiate innovative projects that would turn around the units and put them in tandem with international best practices. The implications are that the unit is not professionally managed and collection of the documents is done in a haphazard manner.
  
2. **Inadequate funding:** Inadequate funding is a major issue in the management of government publications. Funds are required to manage many aspects of the process of acquisition and use of the publications. For instance, since the MDAs usually do not take their publications to libraries and other institutions as required by legal deposit laws, libraries have to proactively go round the MDAs to identify, select and acquire what has been published. This requires a lot of funding which is not usually available. In addition, many MDAs generate manuscripts which may never be published because of the high cost of publishing. In such cases, the information contained in these manuscripts may never be made available to the public. Even more complex is the fact that many government printing houses or presses have been privatised, thus requiring them to be self-sustaining. The implication is that they are not committed to giving out the publications free-of-charge and hardly comply with the legal deposit requirements. In some cases, where budgetary provisions are made for publishing government documents, the funds to back up such budgets may not be fully released and the MDAs usually do not give priority to such publications.

3. **Low level of media and information literacy (MIL) in Nigeria:** The low level of Media and Information Literacy of users impedes the use of government documents. Okojie (2012) defined information literacy as the ability to recognise when information is needed, identify the various channels or sources available, identify the appropriate source, evaluate the information and use it in an ethical and legal manner to make informed decisions necessary to succeed in the world of work. Similarly, media literacy implies the ability to identify, access and use media ethically, which have become a prerequisite for citizens to realise their rights to freedom of information and freedom of expression. August (2006) aptly articulates the relevance of media and information literacy, stating that it enables people to show and make informed judgements as users of information and media, as well as to become skilful creators and producers of information and media messages in their own right. The challenge of accessing government publications is made more complex by the fact that some of the users do not have the requisite skills to use new technologies to access the documents remotely and MDAs on the other hand may not have staff that are skilled enough to deploy technology to disseminate their publications. Technologies that could be effectively used include social media and other Internet facilities.
4. **Preservation and conservation:** Government publications, due to their nature and format require special storage facilities and equipment to conserve and preserve them. Conservation and preservation require a controlled environment, with the right temperature, lighting and humidity. The erratic power supply and inadequate funds to power generators 24/7 makes it difficult to control the temperature and other environmental issues.
5. **Lack of political will:** Another challenge is the lack of political will by MDAs to put their publications on open access. In some cases, MDAs withhold committee reports and other vital documents that they may classify as “Official Secret” which contain information that are not necessarily a state security risk. This could be a huge challenge to researchers who may need such information for their work.
6. **Corona virus and the Covid-19 pandemic:** The corona virus which started in Wuhan, China in 2019 eventually resulted in the Covid-19 pandemic experienced globally with many deaths recorded worldwide. The pandemic led to a global lockdown that saw all businesses, organisations, government agencies and schools shut for long periods of time. Covid-19 protocols leading

to the emergence of the terminology “new normal” had to be put in place by National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). This meant that many government publications could not be published as and when due, therefore accessing information in such publications was a huge challenge. In addition, the lockdown meant that the use of government publications was low as patrons were on lockdown.

7. **Curriculum:** one of the major challenges in the management of government publications, is that many library schools do not teach it as a course. Since it is not in the curriculum, staff would probably not be interested in working in the unit because they may lack the confidence to do the job.
8. **Need to strike a balance between contending issues:** Often times, the librarian is dealing with the need to strike an appropriate balance between contending variables in order to provide quality service delivery to its users. Collection development is at the centre of the contention as it provides the links between the resources and the users to meet the objectives of selection, acquisition and provision. Okwor, Ihekwoaba and Agunwamba (2019) aptly articulated this challenge by stating that:

for the user, the concern has to do with the relevance or appropriateness of the collection to his/her needs, requirements and demands in terms of documents and information. There is a need, therefore, to strike a balance between acquisition and the information needs of the users. Librarians must also maintain a balance between print and electronic materials, between book and non-book materials, between monographs and periodicals, between the selection of materials and needs of users, between acquisition and use of materials, and between available funds and desired resources.

These issues are challenges that are continually playing out in quality service delivery and require appropriate skill and dexterity

of the librarian in charge in order to get the right balance that will satisfy the complex information needs of library users.

9. **Relevance of government publication to users:** Hernon's (1979) study is instructive here as it concluded that researchers perceived that government did not publish any information that was relevant to their field of study or research interests, and so this contributed to the under-utilisation of government publications in the social sciences. Rodrigues (2008) aptly summarises these issues raised by asserting that citizens are always anxious to access the services of their government, including information services. Government records are a public asset and improper record-keeping compromises their integrity. He went further to note that without an effective system for creating, managing, storing and archiving records, implementation of an access law can be difficult. The law will also be undermined if information has been stored so badly that the records are not in a fit state to be inspected or copied. Unfortunately, financial shortages, insufficient hardware and filing systems, poor bibliographic control and information delivery are all common challenges in Nigeria. Libraries have a role to play in facilitating democracy by committing to addressing some of these concerns. Fiscal challenges are always imminent but emotional decisions for management and training of human resources must also be revisited in the interest of all.

## 10. Marketing, Awareness and Value Creation

The twenty-first century has brought with it the concept of information explosion which has consequently brought about the challenge of information dissemination and access. Aguolu (2006) opined that this challenge will increase and that the real danger of the marginalisation of certain groups in the society that could result in social exclusion. Essential information services, and the people who deliver them, continue to face difficult times. This is more so for government publications that are essentially produced using public taxes. Like all other public institutions, the legitimacy of libraries depends mainly on the perception of their value to society. Therefore, libraries must focus on bringing value in their service delivery to the table of national discuss if they wish to be taken seriously by policy makers who are responsible for sharing national resources to different sectors (Rodger, 2002, Singh, 2003, Kann-Christensen & Pors, 2004).

### **3.2. Suggestions on How These Challenges May Be Mitigated**

1. **Acquisition Processes of Government Publications:** The low level of compliance with legal deposit laws could be mitigated by empowering the staff responsible for acquiring government publications to proactively go to MDAs at all levels of governance as well as government printers/presses to collect what has been published. In addition, the National Library of Nigeria should organise more enlightenment programmes for MDAs to educate them on the importance of complying with legal deposit laws in terms of depositing copies of their publications in the National Library. The benefits of compliance should be stressed during such acquisition drives.
  
2. **Inadequate bibliographic control tools:** In order to resolve this issue, it is important to put in place systems that will ensure regular publication of the National Bibliography. For instance, the National Bibliography of Nigeria will contain all materials published in Nigeria, by Nigerians outside the country and all materials published about Nigeria. Since this will include government publications, it would have been very easy to access the required bibliographic details such as cataloguing-in-publication and classification information, thereby making access to the materials easier. Every effort should be made to get the required funding necessary to publish the NBN. In addition, a decentralised system of collecting government publications at designated nodal organisations would make it easier to collect the publications from MDAs or even encourage the MDAs to deposit the materials because of proximity. This is an idea that could be further explored by libraries with a view to establishing good opportunities for resource sharing.
  
1. **Inadequate materials, facilities and equipment:** One of the ways in which this challenge could be mitigated is to ensure that the budget for these materials, facilities and equipment are made well ahead of time in line with procurement processes. Special permission could also be obtained such that the budgeting and procurement process are made flexible enough to accommodate the peculiarities required. All of these will reduce the time lag in publishing the documents. Furthermore, adequate arrangements should be made to ensure regular maintenance or upgrading of equipment and machines in order to avoid frequent down times. Constant replacement of such basic facilities like air conditioners is important so that the work environment would be conducive for staff of the printing press.

2. **Inadequate Space:** Access and use are very important aspects of providing information services. Libraries and other institutions that stock government publications should make the additional effort to make it easier for patrons to access and use government publications. Due to the nature of these publications, it is important that special cabinets, drawers and other storage facilities are provided. Horizontal display which takes up much space should be discouraged. Most importantly, more efforts should be made to collect government publications in electronic format since most of them are born digital. This will ease acquisition, access and use of the materials.
  
5. **Shelving:** To mitigate this challenge, libraries have to provide special storage facilities especially for pamphlets, bulletins, almanacs and so on. For publications such as bulletins that may be produced daily or weekly, binding annual volumes will assist in storage and organisation. Binding annual volumes of periodicals has become common practice in libraries. Special furniture may be provided to shelve audio-visual materials such as audio and video tapes, microfilms and slides. It is advisable to shelve most government publications separately from other library materials. However, in doing so, utmost care should be taken to ensure that the space and shelves and facilities provided are adequate and do not constitute a hindrance to access and use of the materials.
  
6. **Various Classification Skills:** the literature is replete with suggestions that government publications should be classified at source and cataloguing-in-print (CIP) information should be provided at that stage. Suggestions have also been made that government document librarians in Nigeria should come together to develop a uniform home-made scheme for classifying such documents and meet from time-to-time to review such schemes (Akintunde, 1991; Ajidahun, 2006). Having a uniform classification scheme will make it easier for patrons to understand the arrangement and access the publications. A uniform classification scheme will also facilitate resource sharing between libraries, especially electronic libraries.
  
7. **Frequent Policy Changes:** One of the ways to deal with such challenges is to ensure that staff in government publication units are flexible and have the appropriate mind-set to deal with such policy changes as quickly as possible. In terms of sharing materials from a merged or de-merged MDA or state, libraries should develop appropriate systems that facilitate such sharing in a

consistent and acceptable manner in order to reduce potential areas of conflict among library institutions and staff.

8. **Inadequate Human Resources and Staff Skills:** training, re-training and re-skilling of staff is a reliable way to deal with such challenges. Staff posted to government publications unit need to be familiar with the nature, characteristics and peculiarities of such documents and this requires capacity building, even if they are in-house staff development programmes. Efforts should also be made to ensure that experienced librarians with excellent managerial skills are posted to such units, especially because the documents are invaluable sources of information to researchers, policy-makers and other categories of users.
9. **Inadequate Funding:** this challenge could be mitigated by soliciting more funds for government document unit or the library, in general. In preparing budgets, libraries should ensure that the cost of transportation from one MDA to another regularly is included. There is also need to provide funding for sensitization programmes for MDAs in order to enlighten them on the need to obey the legal deposit laws and send these publications free-of-charge to libraries (national, state and local government libraries). Furthermore, libraries need to explore collaboration and partnership opportunities with other libraries and foreign government institutions in order to reduce cost of acquisition.
10. **Low Level of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in Nigeria:** This requires capacity building of staff and users. Training staff on how to use information and communication technologies to enhance access and training users how to use electronic government resources online are some of the ways in which the challenge of low level of media and information literacy can be solved. The training provided has to be regular and frequent enough to be meaningful.
11. **Preservation and Conservation:** In order to preserve government publications adequately, there is need to purchase special storage facilities, including shelves. It is also important to provide adequate space such that the publications are properly displayed for easier retrieval. However, preservation and conservation of materials require special controlled temperature and environment. The humidity in the place that they are kept must be at the right level so that the materials do not start moulding or caking. The temperature should be controlled using air-conditioners and other facilities to ensure that the room is cool as high temperatures will cause the paper to become brittle, or change colour. It is important

that staff and users are taught how to properly handle the materials. This involves educating them on the effects of dog-earing, mutilating and defacing of such materials. In essence, every care must be taken to ensure that the materials are not negatively affected by human, environmental, chemical and other factors.

- 12. Lack of Political Will:** This issue can be mitigated through enlightenment campaigns. MDAs need to be educated on why they should put their publications on open access. The Freedom of Information Act is a good attempt to ensure access to these materials. Compliance to the Act will reduce the number of classified documents in the official secret file. Moreover, since most government documents are usually converted to digital format, adequate new technologies should be deployed to enable MDAs send their information resources to libraries. This will increase visibility, access and use of the resources as well as resource sharing.
- 13. Coronavirus and the COVID-19 Pandemic:** Although the corona-virus still persists with a trail of devastating impact in its tracks, the lockdown has been largely lifted in most countries. This implies that government printers/presses should have resumed work, even if not fully. Production of government documents should immediately resume and a system should be put in place to ensure that backlogs are published as quickly as possible. More than ever before, the effect of the corona virus highlights the need for government documents to be produced and disseminated electronically. This should be the new normal.
- 14. Curriculum:** In reviewing the curriculum of library schools, government publications should be given the attention it deserves and made a compulsory course for students. This is because all types of libraries at all levels of governance require government publications to meet the information needs of their users. Already, the trend is that many library schools have included it in their curriculum and it is expected that all library schools will eventually do so as government documents are a vital source of primary information.
- 15. Need to strike a balance between contending issues:** This challenge requires a senior professional that is information literate, who can take the appropriate informed decision at the right time with the limited resources available. Hence, the government publications unit should be managed by a skilled librarian of high repute who will be able to determine the right balance between print and electronic materials, between book and non-book

materials, between monographs and periodicals, between the selection of materials and needs of users, between acquisition and use of materials, and between available funds and desired resources. In essence, the librarian should be able to determine the right balance between acquisition and user information needs in order to achieve the vision, objectives and mandate of the library.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this unit discussed the various contemporary issues and challenges in the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of government publications. Suggestions were made on how the challenges discussed could be mitigated. Government documents are key information resources of any information system; hence everything must be done to ensure that the challenges faced by the unit are alleviated if the library is concerned about meeting its objectives and mandate. Government documents provide a mine of information that is useful for researchers and for the preservation of the indigenous culture of a society. Care must therefore be taken to harness the advantages of information and communication technologies to acquire and disseminate the government publications.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed some contemporary issues and challenges in acquiring, organising, disseminating and using government publications with a view to suggesting solutions to these challenges. The main challenges examined included acquisition processes of government publications; inadequate bibliographic control tools; inadequate materials, facilities and equipment; inadequate space; shelving issues; several classification schemes; frequent policy changes; inadequate human resources and staff skills; inadequate funding; low level of media and information literacy skills; preservation and conservation issues; lack of political will; inadequate curriculum; and striking a balance between various contending issues in library operations, management and use. Suggestions were made as to how these challenges could be alleviated so that government publications will take their rightful place of importance in quality service delivery in library operations.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Discuss five challenges faced in the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of government publications and suggest ways in which these challenges may be mitigated.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

1. Discuss the challenges faced in the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of government publications.
2. Describe the ten main challenges that a library in Nigeria may face in the acquisition and organisation of government publications.

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## **UNIT 2    IMPACT OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE ACQUISITION, MGT. AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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- 4.0 Conclusion
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we discussed the contemporary issues and challenges of the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of government publications. In this unit we shall discuss the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Acquisition, Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services. Both the positive and negative impact of Covid-19 on the management and use of government publications will be examined. In particular, we shall explore how to leverage on new technologies to improve the quality of service delivery through libraries and information centres.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Acquisition, Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services.
- explain how libraries and information centres can leverage on new technologies in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the management and use of government publications.

## 1.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Opportunities and Prospects Provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Acquisition, Management and Use of Government Publications in Library and Information Services.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Covid-19 pandemic have severe impact on every facet of society, including the acquisition, management and use of government publications. Some of the impacts are negative while others are positive/opportunities. The Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0 is the on-going automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. In the 4IR, large-scale machine-to-machine communication (M2M) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are integrated for increased automation, improved communication and self-monitoring, and production of smart machines that can analyse and diagnose issues without need for human intervention. It is therefore important that managers of government publications leverage on these opportunities to ensure better quality services delivery in libraries (Wikipedia, 2021).

It is therefore important to examine the opportunities provided by these two phenomena with a view to ensuring that libraries and information centres build on the opportunities while doing everything at their disposal to reduce the negative impact. In this unit, we shall examine some of these opportunities and prospects. Okojie (2021) identified and discussed some these opportunities and prospects as follows:

1. **Better ICT Infrastructure:** The Covid-19 pandemic and the 4IR came with many challenges but one of the key opportunities they brought is the improvement in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in governance. One would expect that government printers/press would take advantage of these opportunities to make government publications more readily available and accessible. Other initiatives taken by government, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic era include building of better infrastructure, reducing the cost of Internet access, provision of cloud storage facilities which libraries could leverage on and the migration to electronic services for many operations. In the 4IR, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics is becoming more popular in the provision of services in every sector. Robotics would be especially useful in the dissemination and retrieval of government documents as it would make access easier and faster. Government printers/press must take advantage of these opportunities in the management, dissemination and use of government publications.



Figure 48: Use of Artificial Intelligence  
Source: Google Images

- 2. Training, Re-training, Re-skilling and Up-skilling of Staff and Users:** With the improvement in the deployment of ICTs, there is need for government printers/presses to re-train their staff in order to ensure that they make the best use of the new technologies available. In particular, staff need to re-skill and up-skill themselves so that they can take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the ICTs available. Re-training and up-skilling should be done in a strategic and systematic manner such that staff remain motivated and maintain a mind-set that will enable them to be flexible and adaptable to changes. Such training could be provided in-house or outside the office. For instance, there are many online courses that are available free-of-charge which could be leveraged on. Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), YouTube and many other online platforms which staff have remote access to need to be fully exploited. The lockdown period witnessed an upsurge in the number of training programmes using Zoom and Google Meet platforms. Staff of government printing presses should leverage on these opportunities to re-skill and up-skill themselves. In addition, libraries and information centres which stock government publications could organise special capacity building programmes geared towards re-training, re-skilling and up-skilling of users of government publications.
- 3. Provision of Online Services:** The Covid-19 pandemic and the 4IR have enhanced the deployment of online services, especially because of the opportunities brought about by the new technologies. Most academic libraries now provide Ask-A-Librarian reference services as well as e-services in all departments. The government publications unit should develop electronic services that will enable users' access the resources

online. Reference services could also be developed. More importantly, they should go into collaborations or partnerships with government printing presses that will ease the acquisition process electronically. Electronic content pages and notification of new publications, for instance, could increase the number of government publications captured in national bibliographies. Also, the provision of electronic services has meant that the libraries were able to disseminate government publications to larger and more diverse user groups.

4. **Use of Social Media:** Government printing presses use social media more frequently in communicating with their clients and in marketing the information resources that are available. In libraries and information centres, government publications units use Facebook, WhatsApp and other Social Media platforms for communicating among themselves as well as providing e-services to their patrons.

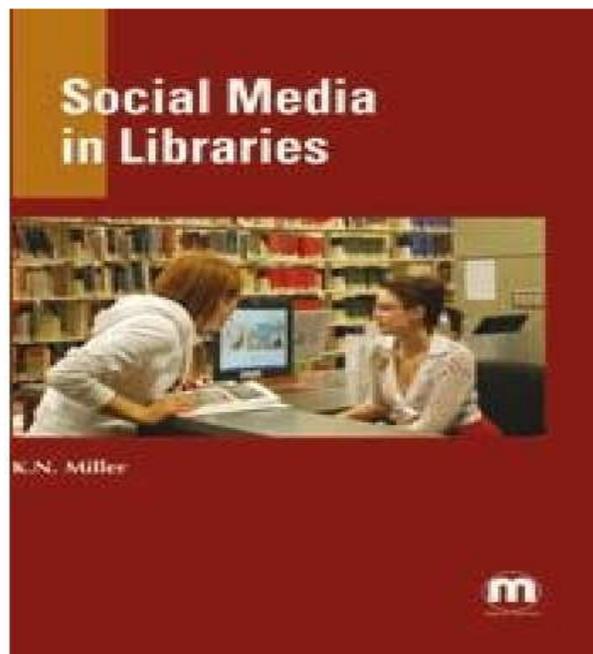


Figure 49: Social media in libraries  
Source: Google Images

5. **Free Online Resources:** Government publications were made more readily available and accessible during the Covid-19 pandemic. As many renowned libraries opened their resources to other libraries free-of-charge during pandemic, government publications were among the resources made available. Researchers were able to use these information resources to conduct research during the period.

6. **New Acquisition Models:** The 4IR and the Covid-19 pandemic have facilitated the deployment of new acquisition models by publishers. Electronic books and journals that had hitherto been poorly used in many African countries are becoming more commonplace and patrons of library information resources, including government documents are demanding more electronic materials, thereby encouraging the acquisition of electronic materials. Publishers and librarians are discussing new ways of collaborating and working together such that the cost of accessing eBooks and journals, including government publications will become cheaper.
7. **Platforms for Online Meetings:** Online platforms have made it easier for staff of government printing presses and libraries to meet and sort out areas of common interest. Using facilities such as zoom and Google Meet made it easier for staff to meet “face-to-face” and this has become the new normal in many organisations.
8. **Democratisation of Knowledge:** Providing more electronic platforms and services democratised knowledge more than ever before because more people now have access to government information and government is able to reach a larger number of people.
9. **UNESCO Memory of the World International Register and IFLA Risk Register:** With the deployment of more ICT facilities, more people have access to information on how they can register their government publications, especially the rare materials of high cultural value on the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register and the IFLA Risk Register. These enhanced access have provided the opportunity for rare materials of global significance to be preserved.
10. **Space redesign:** The Covid-19 pandemic forced most organisations to re-design their spaces to provide room for more online services and to observe social distancing. Government publications units of libraries therefore have the opportunity to request for better space for their publications or alternatively, they could demand for more ICT facilities which can be used for dissemination of information in government documents.



Figure 50: Social distancing in libraries

Source: Google Images



Figure 51: Library Makerspaces

Source: Google Images

On the other hand, Covid-19 pandemic brought about a total lockdown in society and many operations and services were not readily accessible to users. In fact, most people were more concerned about safety of life and therefore did not show much interest in accessing government publications which were in print format at the initial stages. In addition, most of the information on Covid-19 were disseminated through social media, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control which also used social media for its information services, thereby facilitating the movement of users online. However, as the fatal impact of Covid-19 reduced and as more people got vaccinated, users have begun to request for government publications, albeit in more electronic format.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution as well as the COVID-19 pandemic on the management and use of government publications. These opportunities will continue to assist in enhancing access to government publications as the drive to provide online services continues to increase. The 'new normal' occasioned by these opportunities will: improve ICT infrastructure in

government printing presses, facilitate the use of online platforms to reach more diverse and numerous populations thereby contributing to the democratisation of knowledge, drive the development of new acquisition models that will encourage open access, facilitate space re-design that will enable administrators provide better space for government publications in libraries and information centres as well as provide better opportunities for capacity building of both staff who create and publish government documents and the users of the services.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and those occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. It examined how government printing presses, users of government publications and staff of such units in libraries and information centres. Libraries and government printing presses need to discuss opportunities for better collaboration and partnership in their efforts to improve the quality of service delivery. Better use of social media and other online platforms, creation of new acquisition models taking advantage of open access resources and as well as more opportunities for re-training and up-skilling were examined.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the acquisition, management and use of government publications

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Discuss the opportunities and prospects provided by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the acquisition, organisation, dissemination and use of government publications.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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