DOCUMENTATION OF NON-CONVENTIONAL LITERATURE IN AFRICA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

by

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Dedicated to my loving
Father and Mother
Yuliano and Monica

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Introduction

As Sir William Arthur, a renowned economist suggests, a great deal of underdevelopment in Africa is a consequence of lack of data, knowledge and information. He writes that

> "It is for lack of knowledge that the African farmer produces seven hundred weight of maize from an acre instead of thirty hundred weight; and for lack of knowledge that half the calves born to his cows die within their first eighteen months"[1].

Sir William Arthur goes on to point out that the basic difference between developed and developing countries is that the former countries have knowledge while the latter lack knowledge.

It is generally accepted among economists that to ensure success in the planning and implementation of economic projects, information is necessary. In recent years this view is shared by African political leaders who believe that socioeconomic development is to a great extent enhanced by availability of the necessary information, at the time it is needed.

To a considerable degree, Africa is rich in information resources just as much as it is in some natural resources like mineral wealth. In independent Africa we have noted, perhaps with appreciation, the unprecedented growth in information generating activities. This has been particularly remarkable in development information appearing in documents such as resource assessment surveys, feasibility, pilot and evaluation studies, population census and numerous scientific investigation reports, especially in the field of agriculture.

Development information generating activities in Africa, no doubt demands huge amounts of funds in terms of materials, time, management and personnel, some of which is imported from developed countries. Such activities usually involve the support or/and participation of international organizations, government bodies, research agencies, universities, societies and private firms.

The end products of these information generating activities are documents broadly classified as 'non-conventional literature', in the corridors of information science. These documents are normally produced in small quantities and distributed to a limited number of individuals or organizations. The main difference between these particular documents and books and journal articles is that the former are not issued through normal commercial channels. As such their accessibility worldwide is notorously difficult, more so, in Africa where the infrastructure for librarianship and information work is relatively weak. It is estimated that the proportional output of non-conventional literature to that of published documents is much higher in Africa than in Western Europe and North America.

This is the background to the importance of non-conventional literature in Africa.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to isolate and analyse some major constraints acting against the flow of information in Africa, South of the Sahara. It describes the status of documentation of 'non-conventional literature' and makes suggestions for future developments in the context of the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS).

A Chapter on the System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe (SIGLE) is included to give an example of an operational co-operative information system specifically designed for the management of non-conventional literature. It is hoped that the case of the British Library (Chapter 4) will shed some light on some fundamental issues that are likely to be addressed to a 'national authority' in the collection and supply of 'non-conventional literature'. It may provide useful lessons to Africa in the pursuit of national based regional information systems.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Meaning and Characteristics of Non-Conventional Literature

1.0 Definition

Apparently there is lack of consensus on the definition of unpublished or semi-published documents embracing the so called 'Grey Literature'. Less popular a term sometimes used to describe the same literature is 'ephemeral'. It may not be justifiable to describe all forms of unpublished documents as 'ephemeral' since this term presupposes that documents so described have limited use or value as opposed to commercially published documents. In this dissertation the phrase 'non-conventional' will be used to refer to this 'elusive' literature which by its nature is neither distributed nor marketed through conventional commercial channels. As Baulkwill and Posnett points out

> "This literature includes some of the documents produced by government departments, international organisations, commercial firms, universities, research stations and consultants, conferences and symposia, but not documents issued by recognised publishing houses".[1]

Dissertations, technical, annual and research reports such as those produced by universities and government departments and documents issued following surveys, commissioned and pilot studies and scientific experiments, could all be described as non-conventional as long as they are not published by commercial firms and consequently signalled in major indexing and abstracting services.

1.1 Attributes

Perhaps non-conventional literature can best be distinguished from conventional literature by a number of attributes that are more identified to the former than the

latter. Posnett and Baulkwill[2] have dealt with these attributes in considerable details.

Purpose and audience are among such characteristics identified. Reference is here made to documents issued to satisfy a 'contractual obligation'. Documents in this category will normally be issued in limited number and addressed to a well defined audience. An example could be works done through consultancy, survey data, reports sponsored by government agencies and numerous other classified and unclassified papers of specialized nature, issued from time to time at irregular intervals.

Originator or source of document is another factor that could differentiate conventional from non-conventional literature. This will be represented by the bulk of unpublished documents originating from public bodies like state agencies, higher educational institutions, research centres, societies and international organisations. Should it be decided by the originator that these documents be put on sale, more often than not, only a small number will be sold at subsidised charge.

In normal circumstances, the physical form in which these documents appear is of relatively low standard, while representation of bibliographic description lacks consistency. Sometimes bibliographic details may be incomplete or even misleading. It is observed that

> "The appearance of non-conventional literature is often distinctive with typed/mimeographed text and soft stapled covers, but this is not a diagnostic feature. Some prestige documents are elaborately produced".[3]

The physical features of a non-conventional document will sometimes depend on the affluence of the issuing body, significance of the subject matter or intentions of the issuing body to either attract or please its audience. It will thus be noted that most non-conventional documents issued by wealthy organizations will appear in forms not much less formal than conventionally published documents.

Baulkwill and Posnell write that the conventionality

of a document could be seen as a representation of the status of documentation of a country where it originates. They point out that

> "A document with every appearance of an obscure informal origin can easily be 'legitimised' and made much less obscure, if it is formally registered and signalled by a well developed national documentation service. Ideally such a service would not only signal the documents but also be able to make copies of them available on request".[4]

A major characteristic associated with non-conventional literature is inaccessibility. Two primary determining factors could be isolated. The first relate to the degree to which the originator draws the attention of potential users to the document or the extent to which the originator makes the document visible to documentation services that could signal the existance of the document to a wider audience. The other factor could include what Baulkwill and Posnell describe as

> "... security restrictions, limited number of copies, abscence of clearing houses capable of producing hard copies on demand and finally sheer distance of the material from centres of interest"[5]

Small prints runs of say 50 to 100 copies which in some cases are normal prints of non-conventional literature are essentially a result of a deliberate move on the part of the originator, to limit circulation. This move is based on the belief that these documents are primarily of local or specialized value. A belief which is stressed when deciding who is to receive copies. Another important factor related to the level of publicity of non-conventional literature is the capacity of the issuing body to communicate the existance of documents first to the organization engaged in similar activities and second to organizations linked to documentation services at national and international levels. It logically follows that Africa, with a relatively poor network of contacts between

generators of non-conventional literature and documentation centres should have a lower level of publicity of this literature than is the case in developed countries.

1.1.1 Quality

One possible indicator of the significance of non-conventional literature is its level of use. In the context of this dissertation, the significance of non-conventional literature is analysed in relation to relevance in satisfying highest priority information requirements of Africa: that is information that can offer solutions to the issues of poverty and its related problems such as disease, hunger and illiteracy.

It is ironic that inspite of all the difficulties in identifying, acquiring, indexing, storing and retrieving them, non-conventional documents are cited more often than one could imagine. This is particularly true of scientific and technical reports. Garvey writes that

> "Our studies have shown consistently over the years that between a quarter and a half of research scientists have used information gained from a 'technical report' in the course of their own research information which they later reported in a journal article. While it is true that these reports are more frequently used by applied-research scientists, you will find that about a third of the authors of basic research articles will have used information gained from technical reports' during the course of conducting the research described in their articles".[6]

Since Africa probably has a higher proportion of its literature published in non-conventional form than Western Europe and North America, it is most likely that this literature is much more cited in scholarly research and government documents in Africa than in Western Europe and North America. Observations [7] of information seeking behaviour of researchers at a research institute in Zambia are in line with a generally accepted opinion

that most problem directed researchers in Africa rarely find published documents to be relevant to their works. This contention could partly be associated with the fact that virtually all problem directed research is so specialized and localised that it is difficult to relate it to works published from research conducted elsewhere.

The library at the Land Resources Division[8] has been a subject of study to determine the level of use of non-conventional literature. Although the rate of use per document is generally low, half of the queries forwarded to the library are met by information supplied from non-conventional literature.

The usefulness of non-conventional literature at the Land Resources Division is considered to be very great

> "... as been illustrated by a high percentage of it which is used in citations and answering queries. In particular, the literature of resource assessment and development planning often represent many years of careful study of the environment and agricultural potential of developing countries".[9]

1.1.2 Timeliness

The delay from the inception of research project to the time results are finally reported in journal articles has for long been recognised as a major weakness of contemporary publishing procedures. As a matter of fact, one reason why researchers are keen on getting information from pre-publication reports of one kind or another, is the mere reason that these papers are normally issued shortly after a research project or survey, has been concluded. It may suffice to point out at this stage that delay in having research results published is partly to blame for the advent of invisible college[10] in academic and professional spheres. Isolating 'timeliness' as a major factor that gives significance to non-conventional literature as apposed to conventional literature, Garvey writes that

> "... nearly two thirds of these reports are distributed either in the same year or the year

following the inception of the work reported"[11]

One may add that, owing to the limited and selective circulation of these reports, their chances of reaching the presumed relevant or target persons are high.

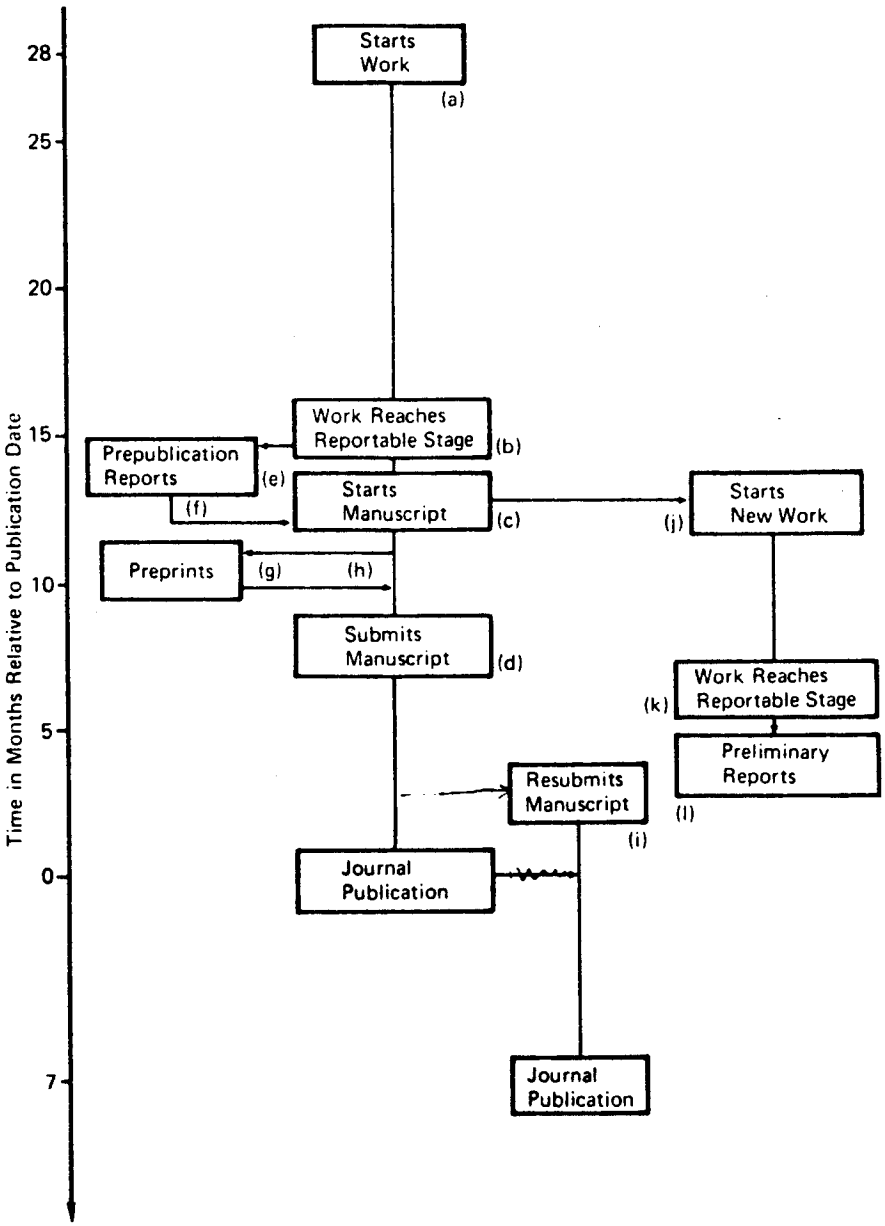
Lin (et al)[12] have reported interesting data on their elaborate studies of the information flow process in nine scientific (including social science) and engineering disciplines. On the following page a schematic model shows the time lapse between the beginning of a scientific work and its subsequent publication in a scholarly journal. It could be seen from the schematic presentation that while in normal circumstances, it will take about two years for scientific studies to be reported in journals, on the contrary, it will take about one year for the same work to appear in non-conventional literature, i.e. publication reports.

Studies elsewhere show that it can even take much longer to have research result accessible to the public from the time of inception of a project.

Crawford cites findings of the American Psychological Association. She writes that

> "If the sequence is began at the time an investigator initiates a project, it is their estimate that approximately eighteen months elapse before the first preliminary report to the granting agency. By twenty months, a report is listed for presentation at a local regional, or national meeting and not until ten months later, thirty after initiation of the project, is a manuscript submitted to a journal, pre-prints of article may be circulated, but it will be another six months before the article is mentioned in the Annual Review. Thus, between initiation of a project and its mention in the Annual Review, more than five years have lapsed!"[13]

Findings of the American Psychological Association may appear to be exaggerated in the light of modern publishing practices. The point, however, is that non-conventional literature in the form of pre-publications,



Schematic Model of Information Flow Associated With Journal Articles.

produces research results much earlier than published formats such as books and journal articles. According to Garvey

> "... in a typical scientific journal the publication lag (the time between submission of a manuscript to a journal and its publication in that journal) is a matter of several months, and in many cases the lag is over a year"[14]

It goes without saying that not all manuscripts submitted to a journal are accepted for publication. As Garvey points out, most of the manuscripts received often end up rejected by prestigious journals. An author whose manuscript is rejected normally has to start afresh; polish the manuscript and send it back to the journal editor or preferably send it to a different journal other than the one which rejected the first submission. This process results in further delays.

Garvey observes that more than anything else, the delay to publish one's article is necessitated by the annually increasing number of manuscripts received, which by far and large, outnumbers the available journal pages. As such some manuscripts have to be 'withheld' until such a time when it is found possible to publish them in subsequent issues.

1.1.3 Completeness

The point that pre-publication reports are brought to the attention of the public (usually a selective number of individuals or group of people) much earlier than journal articles need not be reemphasized. Perhaps what is more fascinating is the difference in details between pre-publication reports and journal articles.

From the perspective of authors, it is understood that the significance of pre-publication reports lies not so much from the point of view of early dissemination of research results, but on the necessity to elicit feedback. This is particularly true if an author has the intention to or is expected to publish his findings. According to results of Lin (et al)[15] survey, comments and criticisms

arising from pre-publication feedback are much more tied to the style of presentation rather than the actual contents like redefinition of concepts and re-analysis of data. As Lin (et al) put it

> "We found that stylistic change was the single largest category reported by those authors who modify their manuscripts as a result of feedback from pre-publication reports. The third largest category of modification-changes in general form and organization of material in manuscript presentation - also involves alterations in style rather than in scientific quality"[16].

The following table shows the nature of modifications arising from feedback in percentages.

Garvey[17] is also of the view that pre-publication reports carry more detailed information than journal articles. He writes that pre-publication reports normally include enormous amount of raw data together with what authors will describe as negative and possitive results. According to Garvey

> "... in the pre-publication report the scientist may tell more of his personal experiences and interpretations of his work; in the journal these traditionally must be attenuated"[18].

A study [19] to compare and analyse the contents of 200 pairs of technical reports in pre-publication state and subsequently in journal articles, shows that pre-publication reports normally contain more details and appear more complete than counterpart journal articles. The study indicates that

> "Not only did they (pre-publication reports) contain textual material not appearing in the journal articles, but over half contained figures and tabular material not appearing in the journal articles. Also, almost half of the technical reports contained supplementary material, such as diagrams of equipment and photographs of apparatus, specimen, subjects, etc"[20].

Nature of Modifications Resulting from Feedback from Prepublication Reports

Nature of Modifications	Percentage Authors N = 1,220[1]
Stylistic changes	43.0%
Clarification or redefinition of concepts, new or further explication of theory, etc.	34.3
Changes in general form or organization of presentation	28.2
Incorporation of others' findings, relating or citing new work, etc.	22.6
Clarification of methods or procedures	19.8
More detailed description of results, or of a process	19.4
New emphasis or change in interpretation of findings	17.3
Collection of additional data, remeasurement of variables, etc.	11.2
Replication of some aspect of research, reanalysis of data, etc.	9.6

[1]Authors who reported any modification resulting from feedback from prepublication reports.

A scholar in African studies or other development studies who will concentrate his search for information on published literature is most likely going to miss a mass of very important information contained almost exclusively in unpublished sources. As Fletcher points out

> "Many worthwhile working papers are never published conventionally, and even when they are, they may be delayed or reduced in size, and usually the voluminous data included in the working papers will be omitted from the published version".[21]

Access to non-conventional literature is particularly problematic to the young researchers. The older and more experience researchers will normally contact their colleagues in their fields of study to gain scholarly advice and information on latest developments. However, to the young and inexperience researchers with insignificant outside contacts with people in their field, the voluminous wealth of information contained in non-conventional literature will remain largely untapped.

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CHAPTER TWO

Africa and Information Needs

2.0 Information for development

It is disheartening to note that although countries in Africa acknowledge the need for data in their development effort, very little has been done to establish and maintain indigenous information processing centres.

Africa has a growing population unmatched by the current available food production capacity, health and educational services.

Economies of African nations are essentially import orientated. They import expensive capital good and machinery for industries and numerous items for home consumption including foodstuffs. In return Africa export cheap raw materials. Exports from Africa to developed countries mostly consists of mineral resources and agricultural produce whose marker value fluctuate from time to time depending on demands of the advanced economies of the developed world. Deficits in balance of payments accuring from these rather unfavourable terms of trade, have had devastating effects on foreign reserves of African countries. As a result African nations have been compelled to look to the international organizations and individual states of the developed world for loans which tend to perpetuate African dependence on developed countries.

Given the very difficult times that Africa is facing from the economic point of view, many people realise that the most crucial issue is to ensure that basic requirement of life for modern society are provided to the common man. One may here again refer to poverty and its off shoots of illeteracy, hunger and disease as some of the major problems in Africa that need utmost attention. It is with this background that information requirements of Africa could be ascertained.

2.1 Rural development

Rural development in Africa is an area rated highly on the national development agenda. The fact that the majority of the population in Africa live in rural settlements places great importance on efforts to improve living standards of rural Africa. The need for data on the structure and socioeconomic background of rural dwellers is essential for the planning and implementation of development projects.

For example, at the micro level the activities of agricultural extension officers may need to be studied further and reevaluated in the light of modern basic requirement of rural populations.

Given the necessary support, an extension officer has the capacity to relate approved methods of cultivation, introduce tested seed varieties and modern marketing skills to subsistance as well as emerging commercial farmers.

Rural extension work is an example of an area where provision of data arrived at from local studies rather than pure scientific knowledge often represented in published work, is usually emphasized. It is primarily a practical activity. Rural development could partly be described as a labour intensive venture involving painstaking experiments, observations and use of statistically derived input and output data.

The field of agricultural and rural development in Africa is probably in the forefront for the generation of non-conventional literature in recent years, if regular government documents are not taken into account. Perhaps this is so because in Africa, rural poverty poses the greatest challenge, not only to politicians but also to the international community. No wonder that many of the commissioned studies, consultancy works and other problems directed researches currently going on in Africa, have close relevance to the fight against rural poverty.

It thus follows that bibliographic control of agricultural and rural development literature deserves

first priority in the growth of information services in Africa.

Aware of the danger of confusing agricultural and rural development literature with pure agricultural research, Baulkwill and Posnett[1] list the type of literature that could best be categorised as development literature. The list (shown below) may be seen as an example of socioeconomic development literature that needs special attention in bibliographic control, from the point of view of Africa:

- inventorisation of environmental and socioeconomic resources;
- classification of those resources in terms of land capacity and suitability;
- predictions of desirable development;
- detailed feasibility studies of areas chosen for development;
- planning for development; and
- description of actual implementation of development plans.

2.2 The Volume of non-conventional literature

One is likely to encounter difficulties in attempting to estimate the volume of non-conventional literature in Africa. Problems arising from poor publicity are much more entrenched in the African Continent than in Western Europe and North America. It is likely that the bulk of this literature lies unscratched and hidden in government files, office cabinets in research centres and even private homes of some scholars and researchers. In some circumstances documents generated in the government machinery are at the mercy of unskilled clerical officers. More often than not, these clerical officers do not only know what to do with these documents but have very little knowledge about the practical value or potential uses of these documents.

Presumably, one explanation to the underutilization of data in government circles in developed nations like

the United Kingdom, is linked to the unprecedented growth in the generation and production of non-conventional literature. In Africa, on the other hand, this problem has much to do with the scatter of documents whose inaccessibility is most notorious. A situation which has arisen partly as a result of mismanagement of document and failure to recognise the potential value of non-conventional literature.

Inadequate economic resources and acute staffing problems are also some of the crucial issues to be considered in our understanding of the status of documentation of non-conventional literature in Africa. As Wood rightly points out

> "... originating organisations (originators of non-conventional literature) have neither the staff nor the financial resources with which to promote it (non-conventional literature) or to deal with the demand that such publicity might encourage"[2].

The difficulties some libraries in developed countries have experienced or are likely to experience in the acquisition of African literature issued no longer ago than the previous year should be understood in the light of the predicament of non-conventional literature in the African continent.

If one had to attempt to compare the proportional output of non-conventional literature in Europe and Africa, he is likely to find that it is higher in the latter than the former. Among the possible explanations to this effect is the fact that in Africa a formidable publishing industry has failed to emerge (this case is discussed further in Chapter 4). The economic hardships that have hit the Continent harder than any other continent in recent years implies that the majority of African countries are incapable of satisfying information needs of their people through books published overseas. Equally important in our study of the size of non-conventional literature in Africa is a trend, especially evident in post colonial Africa, towards increasing

consultancy activities and international aid programmes.

The case of Lesotho is a typical example that could help to explain the reasons behind the mushrooming non-conventional literature in Africa.

Painting a picture of Lesotho as an 'overpopulated and impoverished labour reserve' at the eve of independence in 1966, Ambrose[3] describes the post-independence period in Lesotho as an era characterized by a rapid flow of external aid. He writes that

> "The nature of such aid, and the demands of its administration require feasibility studies, project document, consultancies, quarterly (or monthly or annually) reports and evaluations. Virtually every aeroplane landing at Maseru airport brings an 'expert' who will contribute to this vast and apparently ever expanding body of grey literature"[4].

Added to this growing literature is a massive number of documents reproduced by photocopying.

Ambrose identifies 152 originators of non-conventional literature in Lesotho. He categorises them as follows:

Number	Publisher
32	Government departments
13	Author publishers
11	Parastatal organizations
10	Aid projects
10	Religious organizations
7*	Publishing firms
6	Professional bodies
6	Firms (other than publishing firms)
4	International organizations
4	Societies, clubs and special interest groups
3	Diplomatic missions
3	Charities

*Apart from the 7 publishing firms reported, it is apparent (from the above table) that the rest of the

bodies listed generate documents that may be classified as non-conventional literature. On the basis of the above table we may conclude that in Lesotho conventional literature represents about 6% of the total national output of documents.

The mushrooming of non-conventional literature coupled with the diversity of sources of this 'fugitive' literature poses a big challenge to librarians and documentalist alike, involved in bibliographic control. Outlining some problems encountered in the collection of these document, Ambrose writes that some time

> "... it requires repeated visits, letters and often the offer of material in exchange in order to acquire publications. The papers of aid projects are particularly difficult to obtain. Some larger agricultural projects have generated 50 or more separate papers, but within a few years of the project's ending, most cannot be located"[5].

He pin points government sources as an area slightly less elusive. He nevertheless goes on to hint that

> "There is no central government bookstore in Lesotho stocking these publications. Distribution policies vary from department to department. In some, publications are given away freely, in others they are on sale; while in others annual reports may be produced in such limited edition that a copy can only be obtained after an interview with the permanent secretary"[6].

Such is the magnitude of the problem of collecting non-conventional literature in some African states. Ineffective bibliographic control in Africa, makes it very difficult to arrive at a reasonable assessment of the strength of non-conventional literature. We can however, subscribe to a general belief that

> "... the non-conventional literature forms a higher proportion of the total output in developing countries than it does in developed countries"[7].

2.3 The Importance of local material

While the importance of information is well acknowledged in Africa, a huge amount of locally produced non-conventional literature present in Africa is largely untapped. It is true that a substantial amount of non-conventional literature generated in Africa cannot be utilized simply because of lack of publicity or difficulties of accessibility. On the other hand lack of use of this literature could be a result of the apparent underestimation of its potential value.

Many African scholars and information specialists press undue emphasis on imported published documents at the expense of local materials. Information specialists concentrate on the acquisition of works published in Western Europe and North America for use in Africa. They deliberately ignore the presence of indigenous non-conventional literature which has relevant information on what an African, political leader will call 'problems of our times'. As Baulkwill and Posnett note in their discussion

> "... the importance of non-conventional literature is consistently undervalued because the traditional wisdom of the research world 'good research is published in journals of high status is applied to the totally different world of development surveys in tropical countries"[8].

Some librarians in Africa, however, are now questioning this traditional wisdom from the point of view of relevance to information needs of Africa. Speaking at the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African librarians (SCECSAL) Kiyimba notes that

> "Many libraries in many African countries ... boast of fantastic collections from outside, very well organized for maximum benefits of a clientile very less than 10% of the total population"[9].

One may add that the bulk of imported published

literature has very little to contribute to the immediate development effort of Africa. Information pertaining to development in Africa can best be assimilated from feasibility studies, surveys and resource assessment studies carried out within individual African states. Information specialists in Africa should therefore direct their collection development policies on non-conventional literarure, particularly in the area of development studies.

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CHAPTER THREE

Publishing and Book Development in Africa

3.0 The plight of the publishing industry

In Africa documentation of non-conventional literature has acquired greater prominence and urgency than in developed countried. This is partly a result of the failure of the publishing industry to 'take off'. The inability of an indigenous publishing industry to grow and sustain itself denies Africa access to the much needed information in printed form. It implies that published documents as medium of information transfer are scarce and thus far from meeting information requirements of Africa.

Aside from suffering from inadequate capital investments necessary to revitalize and consolidate the industry, publishing in Africa has partly been incapacitated by lack of a formidable and reliable market force.

The majority of African countries have yet to experience elaborate literacy campaigns such as witnessed in other developing countries like Cuba and Jamaica[1].

In 1970 about three quarters of the non-Arab African population (15 years old and older) could not read[2]. In some African countries illiteracy rate per given population is higher than in others. In Sierra Leone, for example, 70.7% of the adult population were classified as illiterate according to 1985 UNESCO report[3]. In the same year (1985) UNESCO reported 71.9% of the adult population of Senegal illiterate, 88.4% was reported for Somalia while Niger recorded 86.1%.

It may suffice to point out, however, that even though measures to fight against illiteracy could prepare grounds for a healthy publishing industry, that alone may not necessarily warrant a flourishing publishing industry. There are other underlining factors that need to be tackled first and formost. Zell[4], for example, refers to the negative reading habits of a large portion

of the literate African population. Whether this is true of the average literate persons as well as scholars and researchers in Africa, remains to be seen. According to Zell, the negative attitude towards reading stems from the inherent belief that reading books is basically non-productive. According to Zell, reading books in Africa is said to be an exercise fundamentally associated to schooling: the passing of a school examinations marks the end of the exercise.

The problem posed by the existence of low literacy levels in Africa is further complicated by other forces hostile to the growth of publishing industries. The presence of a large population in the low income group, a diversity of local languages within individual African states and absence of all-weather roads to link urban centres to rural settlements are some of the contributing factors to what is generally seen as lack of a market force.

Non-availability of the necessary manpower or presence of a limited number of experts such as skilled editors, designers and distributors of publications is also connected to the problem of publishing in Africa. The fact that machinery and paper are to be imported from developed countries introduces additional burden to an African state which foresees the benefits of indigenous publishing and yet is unable to foresee how such an industry could develop with ever diminishing foreign exchange earnings.

Furthermore, indigenous publishing in Africa has to face competition with well established multinational publishing firms which have branches in African countries. Unlike indigenous publishing houses, foreign publishers not only have the technical know-how that is usually necessary in commercial publishing interprises, but also have capital capable of holding the industry firm while awaiting long term profits from investments. William Mitchell, a former editorial manager of Oxford University Press in Nigeria, rightly points out that

> "The non-indigenous publisher in Nigeria has generally been more heavely capitalised than the

indigenous colleague. This may be because publishing, with the relatively slow and difficult returns on capital which it offers, has been less attractive to indigenous capital than other form of entrepreneurship. Whatever, the case, the willingness and capacity to deploy large sums of capital has been a central factor behind the dominance of non-indigenous publisher in Nigeria Educational book market"[5].

3.1 Book Production and Book Trade

The rate at which books are produced in Africa may represent the status of the publishing industry as well as the level of book trade.

Available statistics to show output of books as represented by the number of titles per million inhabitants are alarming and should no doubt be a great concern to people who would like to see progress in book production in Africa. It will be noted from the table shown below that as is expected, Africa lags far behind the world average.

Book Production by number of titles[6]
(Per million inhabitants)

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1977
World	131	144	168	187	185	187
Africa	13	19	23	23	27	26
America	68	84	167	206	216	213
Rurope	320	383	450	535	558	588
Oceania	68	121	286	361	235	245
USSR	279	355	329	329	310	328
Developing countries	38	35	40	41	45	46
Africa(excluding Arab states)	10	12	18	17	27	26
Northern America	77	91	271	367	389	389
Latin America	60	79	77	78	89	93
Asia (excluding Arab states)	65	53	58	63	65	68
Developed countries	247	296	357	420	424	449
Arab states	27	4	38	38	35	38

From a global perspective the above figures represent an average increase of about 43 per cent[8]. The increase of book production in Africa between this period (1955-1977) is almost negligible. According to the International Survey of book production, during this period

> "Africa which accounted for 1.1 per cent of the number of titles in 1955 had increased that percentage to only 1.7 in 1977 (it was 1.9 in 1975)"[7].

In the Arab world a rapid production which was noted particularly in the 1960s, on the whole contributed to an increase of 40 per cent over the same period. On the other hand Europe (excluding USSR) increased its production by 84 per cent while USA and Canada had increased theirs by five fold according to the International Survey[8].

Statistics on book production of individual African States is usually hard to come by. One possible explanation to lack of statistics stems from the understanding that the actual numbers of titles produced by some countries are too insignificant to raise awareness of the need for some form of bibliographic control. The other possible explanation is rooted in the failure to communicate book production records to organizations that may signal their existence or/and availability. For some African countries, the book production industry simply does not exist. As the UNESCO report indicates

> "Of the 55 countries and territories included under Africa, a few produce books. And of those, a smaller number still report their statistics to UNESCO. Many of the countries do not have a depository system and would be at pain to produce statistics on book production, even if there is any"[9].

The mere fact that book production in Africa is very low when compared to the world standards can not be disputed. A UNESCO meeting of experts on books in the Promotion of Development in Africa observes

> "... that while Africa comprised, at that time

(1968) 9.4 per cent of the world's population, it was producing only 1.5 per cent of the books printed annually"[10].

A working paper of the UNESCO conference[11] made a detailed study of book production in 34 selected countries in Africa. With an exception of the Mahgreb (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco), South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), the paper notes that

"Of the 34 countries of the region, only 20 produce books. Seven countries publish less than 20 titles annually and only five produce more than one hundred titles per year. Production by number of titles has been extensive from year to year but most recent figures indicate a trend towards fewer titles"[12].

A lot need to be done if book production in Africa has to contribute to the overall development of the continent. According to the Accra meeting of experts

"Book production in the region is about one-thirtieth of one book per person. This per capital production contrasts with 7.7 books in the United Kingdom, 6.2 in the USSR and 5 in France"[13].

The Accra meeting of experts perhaps deserves special mention on the subject of book production in Africa. Its body of statistics may be a starting point in an attempt to revamp the book industry in this part of the world. The meeting reviews that

"The low level of book production makes the region largely dependent on book imports. Statistics from a number of different sources makes possible an estimate of the number of books and pamphlets imported by the region: some 24 million copies annually. This total of books imported was three times the number of books in the region (7.3 million copies)"[14].

As the Accra meeting of experts points out, the statistics referred to above are partly a reflection of

the fact that the African continent has not adequately taken advantage of the technological breakthrough that makes possible mass production of books. Technological advances that have consequential effect of making books cheaply available. One may wish to point out, however, that Africa may not blindly adopt the necessary technology from the developed countries. Considerations should be made to other crucial factors such as non-availability of technical know-how and a marketforce capable of making mass production economically feasible. It seems ironical that small print runs that are said to equal the existing readership in Africa are very expensive to maintain in the light of manpower and technological demands of modern publishing practices. Such is the dilemma that will probably continue to frustrate book production in Africa in the years to come.

It appears most likely that Africa will probably continue importing books in millions to make do with the failure of indigenous publishing. Economic hardships that are a common place in most African countries in recent years is enough testimony to show that trends may change towards less book imports. If the drift in favour of fewer imports continues unchecked then sooner or later, time will come when the number of books imported will equal the number (almost static) of books published locally. Until such a time when the number of books published locally will surpass the number of books imported.

Hypothetical though, this trend may appear, the message that book imports cannot be sustained, let alone increased to meet information requirements of Africa is becoming more apparent as the African economies dwindle. Perhaps time is ripe for African states to make concerted efforts to reexamine possible alternatives for satisfying the book requirements of the African population.

3.2 African Authorship

Failure to attract indigenous authors is yet another contributing factor to the underdevelopment of publishing

and book promotion in Africa. Local authors in Africa are more attracted by the publishing companies in the developed countries. By virtue of their internationality and success, publishing firms of the developed world guarantee a wide market.

In addition to publicity, African authors will look to international publishing companies for relatively handsome or more favourable monetary benefits compared to what local publishers can offer.

The persistence on the part of African scholars to look to Western Europe and North America for literature as well as having their journal articles and books published should perhaps partly be explained in terms of a long established historical tradition. That is the practice of African nationals to rely on developed countries for higher education especially at post-graduate level. Upon return to Africa, these scholars seek promotion of professional contacts with their counterparts in the developed world. This they do with varying degree of success by presenting papers at international conferences, person to person contact and perhaps most demanding and rewarding professionally, having their works published in learned journals of international repute. The fact that these contacts are usually associated with the commonly sought scholarship, achievement and recognition, both at home and abroad, impinges upon African authors to maintain and nurture these contacts at all costs.

Some African authors will complain that they are being 'exploited' or that they are getting a low deal when they have their works published by foreign publishing firms. Inspite of being 'exploited' they will, however, continue to send their manuscripts to Western Europe and North America and perhaps hope that they will look to the indigenous publishers when they (indigenous publishers) reach acceptable levels of maturity. Who will promote scholarship in Africa? One may ask. Is it not the African author himself?

It may suffice, nevertheless, to point out that the African intellectual products represented in published

works in developed countries are by no means the only works in the intellectual mainstream of Africa. One may argue that as a matter of fact, published works under African authorship in developed countries or by foreign firms represent a tip of the iceberg if the African intellectual activities are considered in totality.

Authors, particularly in the social science disciplines, are generally considered to be a 'typical' group[15]. Most social scientists, academics and researchers alike do not publish, let alone social science practitioners such as administrators, lawyers and social welfare workers. This is true of social scientists in Africa and Western Europe and North America.

What is published by African authors outside the African continent is probably an insignificant fraction of the entire intellectual activities of the African scholarship which by virtue of its limited publicity is largely confined to the African continent. In any case a large percentage of the African intellectual products normally does not appear in published literature, but is vested in non-conventional literature that takes the largest share of documents about Africa.

3.3 National Bibliographies

A National bibliography is expected to be in the forefront of bibliographic control at national level. Therefore a scholar or researcher will normally refer to a National bibliography to ascertain the nature and quality of the artistic and intellectual products of a given nation.

In Africa, however, not all countries compile National bibliographies. In countries where they do not exist, a scholar is likely to refer to any possible sources of information no matter how incomplete or inaccurate. It will be seen in most cases that in Africa non-conventional literature is often ignored or unnoticed in most authorities that serve for bibliographic control purposes.

Obasi[16] catalogues events leading to the National library Decree of 1970 in Nigeria. Decree 29 as it was known, was inacted to give the National library of Nigeria, (Lagos) status of a National library. Thanks to the advent of a military government which passed the Act. Obasi, however, points out that inspite of the good intentions of the Act, in practice it achieved very little in facilitating bibliographic control, particularly in the area of non-conventional literature that accounts for the majority of Nigerian publications. He writes that

> "The Nigerian copy right library for obvious reasons attracts no more than a tiny proportion of everything printed, not to mention the vast published overseas. This is more so with ephemeral materials, which account for more than 70% of all documents printed in Nigeria, including those by government and their agencies, the universities and research organizations"[17].

Incompleteness, inaccuracy and lack of authentic of National bibliographies is often pointed out by critics of African bibliographic sources. For example, the President of the Nigerian Publishing Association is reported to have said that 80 per cent of Nigerian publications are not represented in the National bibliographies[18].

Perhaps what is more disheartening is not necessarily the incompleteness, inaccuracy or lack of authentic, but the fact that the Nigerian National bibliography (like most other National bibliographies in Africa) has rendered itself of no use to those seeking development information usually contained in non-conventional literature. The practice of compiling the Nigerian National bibliographies is such that it deliberately exclude elusive non-conventional literature. The bulk of the listings of the Nigerian National bibliographies consists of traditional library material which according to Obasi

> "Led themselves more easily to conventional library cataloguing, classification, storage and retrieval"[19].

Problems of bibliographic control in Africa are partly to blame for dependence on foreign sources of information. One may single out the library of Congress accession lists and publications of the Standing Conference on Library Materials on Africa (SCOLMA) as examples of alternative sources of Africana material. It can be quite frustrating to a scholar of African studies in Africa, who during his search for information realises that it is easier to identify relevant sources of information in the western world than in Africa itself. One may believe that the idea that sources of information on Africa are sometimes (if not often) more easily accessible in the developed countries than in the African continent itself is misleading. And yet past experience shows that to a considerable degree, that is the case in practice. For example, Altbach writes that

> "It is often easier for a Nigerian librarian to find out what books have been published on a given topic in Britain or in the United States than it is to locate relevant titles published in the Ivory Coast, India or Tanzania"[20]

Perhaps what some scholars and librarians in Africa have not fully realised is that in essence, publishers in the Western Countries produce documents for the audience in the Western World. Decisions to publish journal articles and books are in the main, influenced by the appetites of the Western market force. Whether they are to publish works of African scholars or works based on African issues does not much matter to transnational publishers. What probably matters mostly is the potential market. Transnational publishers know very well that the market force in Africa is secondary in strength and that by far and large the major sales of their publications lie in the affluent Western World. As Smith points out

> "Most foreign publishers who bring out books by Africans on African affairs do not choose manuscripts on the basis of African market force, because these works as a whole sell only 10 per

cent to 50 per cent in Africa"[21].

These are some of the pertinent issues that underline the underdevelopment of publishing and book development in Africa. The forces reacting against book development are numerous and interrelated. Some of the problems are so complex that it will take some years and involve huge investments to solve them.

The economic constraints prevailing in most African states mean that for a long time to come, African countries will concentrate their development efforts on matters of urgency, directly connected to the well being of the majority of the people. In which case issues considered to have long term benefits like publishing will probably be shelved indefinitely.

By its proximity to finding solutions to socio-economic issues that confront Africa today, development literature, in its non-conventional form, will be a natural ally to key people in government, commerce and industry and also social research. Non-conventional literature has advantages that usually lack in commercially published documents in Africa. It normally contains relevant and most recent statistics and information, and above all, it is within reasonable reach within individual African states. Emphasis on documentation of non-conventional literature in Africa seem more inevitable than ever before as far as the present development priorities are concerned.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Non-conventional Literature and European Community

4.0 The System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe (SIGLE)

Contrary to the African scene, documentation of non-conventional literature in individual European states has received considerable attention over the past years. In more recent years we have witnessed concerted effort by a number of Western European countries to share information. The idea to share information was conceived by the Commission of European Community and was further developed at a meeting of experts held in England in 1978.

The background to the formation of SIGLE was a seminar on grey literature held in York, England, December 13-14, 1978[1]. This seminar was organized by the Director-General for Scientific and Technical Information and Information Management of the Commission of European Community, in collaboration with the British Library Lending Division. Attended by 30 experts from member countries of the European Community, the seminar was convened in line with the policy of the Commission of the European Community on promotion of Communication. The Commission has committed itself to improving means of communicating results of research and other studies to potential users.

According to the European Community stipulations, the Director-General for Scientific and Technical Information and Information Management is expected to promote 'large scale' information systems geared towards development of Euronet (European on-line Information Network). SIGLE was therefore envisioned to emerge in the light of Euronet.

The main purpose of the York seminar was to formulate a model for the creation of a database of non-conventional literature relevant to European information

needs. A working definition of 'Grey literature' was adopted. It was restricted to documents which 'in its manner of publication' is 'non-conventional'. Some characteristics ennumerated in this dissertation (Chapter 1) were also highlighted to distinguish 'grey literature' from conventional publications[2].

Fully-fledged regional co-operation in the sphere of document collection and supply could hardly succeed without establishing 'national authorities' to be responsible for co-ordinating the flow of documents in all participating nations. The York seminar recommended appointment in each country, 'national focal points' to be accountable for the gathering, processing and supply of documents national wide. The role of 'national authorities', it was suggested, would go beyond collection, processing and supply of documents, to include 'repackaging of information'.

By 1981 the York seminar recommendations had began to be implemented. France took the initiative of electing a central processing centre for SIGLE outputs. In England, the British Library Lending Division, being a national repository library, naturally took the responsibility of acting as a 'national focal point'. Other Institutions like the Fachinfurnationszaentrum Energie Physik Mathematic GmbH, Laboratoire Belge de Lindustrie Electrique-Universte Catholique de Lauvain and the Irish National Board for Science and Technology also joined the consortium the same year.

A two-year pilot project was initiated in 1981 according to arrangements outlined in a technical agreement signed by contracting institutions[3]. A SIGLE committee consisting of representatives from each contracting centre was created for management purposes of the pilot project. The primary occupation of the project was first; to devise a system capable of identifying non-conventional literature emanating from community member states. Secondly; to provide bibliographic as well as physical assess to document so identified.

Each contracting party was expected to collect, catalogue and file documents derived from the state it represents. Contributions from member states are centrally processed by the Commissariat a Lenergie (CEA) in France. This centre would then supply contracting institutions with master tape copies that represents the output of the European Community. Institutions that are a party of SIGLE are free to make use of the output products.

Standard cataloguing rules are to be found in a SIGLE manual. It was stressed that documents would all include a title in English language, the date of issuing collation source and a code that shows the subject category.

Finalcial support of the pilot project came from the Commissions of the European Community. It included costs of central processing and 25 per cent input costs of approximately 30,000 documents.[4] Other processing costs however, such as those incurred through acquisitions, three quarters of cataloguing work, storage and document delivery services were to be met by participating institutions. It was expected that in future, the system would be financially self-supporting by means of funds to be raised through document delivery services, royalties accruing from on-line services and also sales of monthly published bibliographies and indexes.

Initially contracted by parties in the scientific and technical domain, SIGLE concentrated on gathering scientific documents. It is envisaged, nevertheless, that in future the system would expand to include social science disciplines like economics.

4.1 The British library and non-conventional literature

The British Library Lending Division (BLLD) at Bostom Spa has since 1963 been involved in developing a special collection of non-conventional literature[5]. Following the formation of SIGLE the British Library was elected to be a 'national authority' for the United Kingdom.

Mention will be made in this section of specific types of literature the BLLD has been collecting and some problems that have been encountered in the management of this literature.

The Library collects about 100,000 report literature through agencies in the United States[6]. The main sources of American report literature are U.S. federal government agencies such as the National Technical Information Services (NTIS), the Department of Energy, the Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC) and the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA).

Through contractual arrangements, the BLLD is supplied with different forms of non-conventional literature. The library receives around 6,000 unclassified research reports.

> "About 50% originates in the government or quasi-government sector, 30% in the universities and about 20% in individual organizations"[7]

Another category of non-conventional literature the Division (BLLD) has been collecting long before the formation of SIGLE are translations from foreign languages (mainly from major developed countries). Translations amounted to about 500,000 documents by 1982. It is estimated that of this collection of translations

> "50% are from Russia, 25% from Japanese, 10% from French, 10% from German and 5% from other languages"[8].

An exchange programme between the Division and the National Translation Centre at John Crerar Library in Chicago affords the Division an opportunity to obtain several thousands of translations from the United States. The Division receives around 30,000 requests for translations annually, of which about 20 per cent are satisfied.

Prior to 1970, the Division had no comprehensive policy towards acquisition of British doctor dissertations[9]. Most of the dissertations that found entry into the Division's collection were donations from individual

authors. Since then, however, the Division, with the co-operation of universities, has been microfilming copies of Ph.D. dissertations admitted in British universities. The arrangement is that, dissertations are sent to the Division which upon microfilming, it sends originals back and retain microfilm copies. Attempts to build a comprehensive collection of American dissertations in microfilms was abandoned (1970 - 1978) partly as a result of escalating costs of microfilming and partly due to improvements in delivery services. It was realised that scientific and technical progress in transportation and communication between United States and United Kingdom had greatly increased the speed of ordering and delivering individual dissertations. Since then the Division policy towards American doctor dissertations has changed. It now acquires them on demand. The same principle applies to dissertations from other foreign languages.

Papers presented at conferences are also a concern of the Division. Approximately a quarter of the conference proceedings that the Division acquires annually (about 4,000) are distributed in channels other than commercial[10]. In most cases these papers are brought to the attention of the Division through numerous bibliographic sources including conference announcements. To obtain conference proceedings the Division normally has to contact actual producers, e.g. societies and research agencies involved in the sponsoring and organising of conferences. Unpublished conference proceedings acquired by the Division attain the 'status' of Conventional literature by virtue of being included in monthly published Index of Conference Proceedings alongside conference proceedings distributed through the commercial media. This index is available on-line through BLAISE (British Library Automated Information Services).

Market research reports are probably among the most expensive non-conventional document the Division collects. The policy of the Division in the acquisition of these reports is rather uncomprehensive partly because these reports have a relative low level of use and limited

shelf life, inspite of their inhibiting costs. Some market research reports are acquired but only in response to demand. For others, the Division will normally request for an explanation to justify their acquisition. It is estimated that annually the Division purchases several hundreds of market research reports, some of which cost more than £1,000 per document[11].

Although the Division ventures into acquisition of these reports for loans, it generally avoid those which are very exepnsive. One may point out, however that most publishers willing to sell these reports to libraries advice such libraries against lending or photocopying. Restrictions imposed on market research reports no doubt impinges upon availability of these documents. Unlike most users of other forms of non-conventional literature, users of market research reports probably find them more difficult to access than to identify bibliographically. As Collins points out

> "... for business information the type of publication most frequently causing problems to practitioners is market research reports, with 30% of respondents having difficulty in identifying and 48 respondents having problems in getting access to such reports"[12].

In recognition of this problem, the British Library Business Information Services (based at the Science Reference Library of the British Library) advised the British Library to put more effort in compiling comprehensive bibliographic lists and include notes about availability and/or restrictions in libraries. Recently, the British Library Business Information Services embarked on documentation of United Kingdom based and foreign market research companies[13]. It issues leaflets listing identified market research companies and illustrates the services offered including publications.

Acquisition of local government reports and non-HMSO imprints materials emanating from government agencies is a recent phenomenon in the Divisions collection programme.

Until the Capital Planning Information (CPI) intervened, the Division acquired local government documents more or less on ad hoc basis. With its specialised knowledge in the activities of the local government authority, CPI requested to undertake the responsibility of acquiring local government reports on behalf of the Division. Three years after taking over this responsibility, however, it became apparent that the performance of CPI needed much to satisfy the expectations of the Division. CPI lamentably failed to reach the input initially set at 1,000 reports per year. In the words of Wood

> "This is a long way short of the fifty thousand reports per year which Don Kinnington estimated as the output of the local authorities"[14].

Don Kinnington's estimates sharply contrasts with 250 titles which were reported in the British National Bibliography in 1930[15]. This staggering difference is perhaps an indication of the magnitude of the problem of collecting local government literature in the United Kingdom.

Regarding non-HMSO documents issued through government departments, the Division has made arrangements with some government departments to supply the Division with these documents as they are made available. This scheme, however, does not include all government departments, neither does it guarantee supply of all non-HMSO documents originating from the departments involved in the arrangement.

Other, perhaps less publicised but valuable forms of non-conventional literature held at the Division include supplementary material.

In collaboration with Journal Editors, the Division receives detailed data contained in some documents that accompanies journal manuscripts. These supplementary documents are not published in normal circumstances. Some of them are directed to the Division for storage and future use.

Copies of full texts of summary material appearing in synopsis journals are also sent to the Division by some publishers. Added to this category is a growing collection of journal articles usually referred to in numerous journals but awaiting publication in the forthcoming issues.

House journal or serial publications emanating from industrial and commercial firms are among the most elusive non-conventional literature. Even though they are usually obtainable cheaply or free of charge, their classification and management in libraries are a constant problem to libraries and information specialists.

In the United Kingdom some libraries collect house journals particularly those derived from local companies. The British Association of Industrial Editors is said to have a large collection of more recent house journals. Special libraries, more so those supported by industrial or commercial firms will normally possess substantial amounts of this literature in the fields of their speciality or interest. By far and large, the largest collection of house journals in the United Kingdom is housed in the British Library, in either the Lending Division or Science Reference Library.

Collections of house journals in libraries in the United Kingdom, the British Library inclusive, are by no means complete. Available bibliographies of house journals appear to have big gaps in coverage of this literature. This is probably understood if one considers the dynamics of this type of literature. Not only does its format vary from company to company and sometimes within companies, but titles may change from time to time without prior notice. Sometimes distinct house journals may appear under the same name. Worse still, some house journals are issued irregularily while others are produced without indicating date of issue or number.

Companies are sometimes born but they cease to exist after sometimes or are incorporated into more powerful firms and perhaps change registration of company trade

name. Difficulties of maintaining an unbroken run of back issues of house journals from some local companies, let alone foreign firms, cannot be underestimated.

The need for bibliographic control of British non-conventional literature led to the launching of the British Research and Development Reports (BRDR) in 1969[16]. This reference tool was subsequently renamed: British Reports, Translations and Theses. Documents publicised in this monthly issued publication are listed in general subject fields and provided with key subject indexes. Report literature is input in the SIGLE system and thus appears in SIGLE generated computer tapes. Documents emanating from the European Community and held in the British Library under the SIGLE arrangement are publicised in a guide known as the; Serial Publications of the European Communities and its Institutions held by the British Library Lending Division.

It is generally recognised that at present, the demand for non-conventional literature held in the British Library, is relatively small. This is shown by the enormous disparity between the strength of the collection and the number of requests for documents received annually. There is hope, however, that trends towards increased input of non-conventional literature in data bases may yield more possitive results as the mass of literature becomes more apparent to users. Further developments in linking automated document supply systems to major on-line services may also have the same effect of promoting availability and use of non-conventional literature.

While the British Library continues to expand in the area of non-conventional literature, let it be seen as a resource of last resort. The library will no doubt be willing to acquire as much as possible to satisty demand and maintain its reputation as one of the most comprehensive collections in Western Europe. The problem seems to lie in the fact that funding difficulties may in the foreseable future, incapacitate the library's present acquisition practices. In which case the library

will reluctantly surrender some of its services that are a background to its present status and reputation.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Toward Control of Development Literature in Africa

5.0 Economic Co-operation in Africa

Many African countries now realise that organized information could make valuable contributions to national development. The problem, however, is how to evolve the information systems necessary to ensure the flow of information.

The idea that an information system based on inputs of a single nation could not necessarily satisfy information demands of all its clients is popular in Africa. No wonder that 'resource sharing' and 'library co-operation' are recurring themes at meetings of Library Associations.

In the economic sphere regional groupings are a common place on the African Continent in recent years. We have witnessed the emergence of SADCC (1980); Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference which incorporates Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe[1]. SADCC's main objective is to strengthen national economies and cut the domination of the more powerful South African economy. In 1983 yet another economic club was launched in Africa, namely; PTA (Preferential Trade Area)[2]. Encompassing 14 states in the Eastern and Southern parts of the continent, PTA aspires to co-ordinate sub-regional economic development. PTA strategy to meet its aims is influenced by the need to relax and subsequently eliminating trade barriers. Serving the Eastern and Southern African regions, PTA is more or less a replica of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States). ECOWAS was established following the signing of the 1975 Treaty of Lagos to reliberalize trade and foster economic co-operation and self-reliance among West African States[3].

The success of emerging economic groupings in Africa will, to a considerable extent, be determined by

capability to absorb the mass of development literature mushrooming in Africa. A substantial amount of consultancy papers emanating from field studies within Africa, certainly needs to be studied further by people involved in development planning. The same applies to a great deal of literature arising from university supported research projects aimed at resolving particular socio-economic issues in African countries. Some statistical data originating from international organizations such as UNESCO, WHO, UNDP and voluntary and private firms, have far reaching implications on the nature and future direction of development research in Africa. Survey data and numerous commissioned studies generated by African governments equally carry basic information essential for forecasting and execution of development projects.

Since African countries share similar economic, social and geographical features, the flow of information across national boundaries becomes even more significant than importation of knowledge from developed countries for the purpose of socioeconomic progress. For example, research findings on systems of cultivation in Zimbabwe are likely to be the basis of experiments on new cultivation practices in Tanzania. The same principle could apply in other economic sectors like commerce, industry, mining, transportation and banking. This is the background to the significance of information resource sharing among African states.

Economic groupings in Africa should perhaps be prepared to share experience and knowledge and make concerted effort to exploit information resources generated in individual states. A systematic flow of information among African states may be instrumental to ensure success of the ultimate economic objectives of economic groupings.

5.1 The Quest for New International Information Order

Until recently efforts to implement co-operation in library and information work at regional level, in Africa, have to a large extent failed for a number of

reasons. Among the most common problems identified are presence of; poor postal and telecommunication services; inadequate financial resources; and skilled staff, to mention a few. As a result many African nationals have been looking to developed countries in their information seeking activities. They have to make do with information made available to them through the relatively adequately documented reference and bibliographic services of developed countries. If information so derived is intended for use in problem solving or development planning, the African national is often confronted with the difficult task of not only assimilating the information, but also of 'converting' it in conformity with the local realities.

In the quest for solutions to problems of information flow, developing countries have for a number of years been appealing for assistance from developed countries. In science and technology, Third World calls for a new International Information Order, date back to 1979 during the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) held in Vienna[4]. Realising that trade and economic prosperity could hardly flourish without access to recorded data and knowledge, Third World countires were strongly in favour of establishing a new Global Information Network (GIN). Third World countries proposed formation of a new Global Information Network which could allow them access to world wide scientific and technological knowledge and also reduce information dependence on the developed world. Indeed developed countries agreed to set up GIN, primarily as a referral system with the understanding that 'national focal points' would also be established to perform retrieval functions, particularly in developing countries. Detailed technical operational procedures of GIN were not discussed at the Vienna Conference. Issues such as confidentiality, depth of coverage, subscription fees, language of documentation, and location of the Global focal point were, in the main, avoided.

While fundamental issues remained unresolved, lack of enthusiasm for the GIN accord, on the part of the developed countries, finally dampened the spirit of the concept of a Global Information Network. This meant that financial support from the developed countries was not forthcoming afterall[5].

The question of funding the envisioned global system, coupled with operational complications that are likely to emerge if such a universal system was implemented, no doubt played a part in watering down the GIN accord to mere academic discussion. Nevertheless, critics of the GIN accord will be quick to point out that inability on the part of the Third World countries to establish recognizable operational 'national focal points', meant that the accord, originally conceived to facilitate access to information in developing countries, was unrealistic. This is perhaps an example of the difficulties that may arise when evolving an information system from the top rather than from the grassroot level.

Third World demands for structural changes in information flow in the context of the GIN accord pose other questions. The question of relevance to development in Third World countries, of a global information system is certainly one of the crucial issues. It is estimated that of the world output of scientific and technological information, Third World countries contribute only about 3%[6]. This may logically imply that 97% of world scientific and technical information has no direct bearing on information needs of the Third World countries. There seem to be a high probability that such a global network could be dominated by transfer of information from the developed nations to developing countries. Information which in both content and context is by and large irrelevant to scientific and technological advances capable of enhancing economic and social progress in developing countries. The estimated 3% of the Third World countries contributions to world science and technology is likely to be overshadowed by literature of the developed nations thereby raising questions of

efficiency and effectiveness of the whole global system in the Third World countries.

One may add that, in any case, the phase 'Third World' is a nebulous concept which groups countries like China, Chad and Haiti. It includes nations which are in some cases geographically apart, share different political systems, contain cultural values and languages, not necessarily related, and varies considerably in economic growth. The benefits to be derived from a global information system would therefore vary according to capabilities of individual Third World nations to exploit a global system. For example, possession of computerized databases, specialized and skilled personnel, reliable communication systems and adequately supported 'national focal points', may significantly determine the extent of utilizing a global information system in the context of the GIN accord.

5.2 IDRC and Regional Information Systems

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is perhaps the main champion of regional economic information systems in developing countries. Created in 1970 by the Act of the Canadian Parliament, IDRC was formed primarily to promote developmental research activities in developing countries[7]. Four areas have been cited as principle focus of IDRC supported projects. These are:

1. Agricultural, food and nutrition sciences;
2. Social sciences;
3. Health sciences; and
4. Information sciences.

In the area of information sciences, IDRC's main concern is to facilitate bibliographic control and dissemination of recorded information. IDRC involvement is to ensure that information generated in developing countries is processed for use in undertakings pertaining to socioeconomic development. As such, the following projects have been identified to fulfil this objective, i.e.

- support for the development of, and participation in regional and global co-operative information systems that respond to areas of development priority;
- establishment of specialized information analysis centres with a specific subject focus;
- assistance for the development of national information influstructures in selected countries;
- training relevant to the needs of DRC-supported programs; and
- improvement of information handling tools, e.g. development computer software and the sauri.

In pursuance of its aims, IDRC has been instrumental in the creation and development of regional DEVSIS (Development Science Information System) in Africa, Caribbean and Latin America. Steps have been taken to establish a similar system in Asia[8].

5.3 Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS)

The African component of DEVSIS is known as PADIS (Pan-African Development Information System). This system was created in January 1980 under the aegis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with financial support from IDRC, the African Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations agencies[9]. In composition and coverage PADIS is the largest information system in the DEVSIS constellation.

PADIS formation followed recommendations to ECA of a group of experts on the implementation of a socio-economic information programme for Africa[10]. Submitted in June 1979 (ECA 1979), the final report of the groups of experts proposed a ten-year programme of action at national, subregional and regional levels. The programme was initially set in two phases. The first phase was coined: DEVSIS-Africa, a model which was essentially designed to stimulate efforts to improve national capabilities of managing socioeconomic development information systems in Africa.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (ECA station) was designated as the regional centre for PADIS with the responsibility of acting as a resource centre and co-ordinator of information activities in the region. The final report for the formation of PADIS emphasized the need to formulate means of maximizing use of information generated through DEVSIS-Africa network. The group of experts advised that the first mission of phase 1 would be to build an information system at the ECA headquarters. It was projected that the regional centre would not only act as a model for the African continent but would also assist in establishing sub-regional and national centres. Once established a regional centre would then embark on providing training courses in specialized skills like document processing and use of computers. DEVSIS-Africa was seen as a decentralized and co-operative system that would draw on inputs from sub-regional and national centres and even outside the region.

A developed regional information system in Africa, it was projected would provide access to socioeconomic development literature and offer services to institutions and individuals working on projects related to pertinent issues of social and economic development in Africa. Long term aspirations of PADIS includes:

- consolidation of national and sub-regional centres;
- creation of a demonstration bibliographic data-base;
- development and execution of training programmes; and
- establishing a printing unit and microfiche laboratory for printing DEVINDEX Africa and producing microfiche copies respectively.

To set phase 1 of the PADIS programme in motion, IDRC committed CA $5,000,000 and donated a MINISIS software for the project[11]. An HP3000 computer was donated by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). Support from other organizations, such as ECA, ADB, UNESCO, EEC and USAID (United States Aid for International Development) was also secured for the project.

Publication of the first issue of DEVINDEX Africa (ECA 1981) was perhaps the first sign of PADIS effort in promoting bibliographic control and access to recorded socioeconomic information in Africa. Several other subsequent publications have been issued since then. DEVINDEX Africa contains abstracts of selected ECA documents. The idea of PADIS is to issue the index on quarterly basis. The ultimate source of inputs being national centres participating in the PADIS activities. Documents included in the index follow a standardized procedure of recording which is expected to be adopted by information centres in the PADIS integrated system.

PADIS offers a document delivery service of unclassified documents upon request. Document delivery is channeled through microfiche copies.

Having offered extensive training courses for ECA staff working for PADIS, the second part of the PADIS training programme was extended to individual ECA member states. A training co-ordinator was appointed to initiate suitable training programme, identify the personnel that needed to be trained and ascertain the scope of training courses. The training co-ordinator was further expected to advice information specialists at national level on issues concerning implementation of socioeconomic information systems in line with the requirements of the PADIS network.

PADIS sponsored training programmes of indigenous information specialists in Africa officially started in 1982 as part of phase II of the PADIS project[12]. The training programmes familiarize qualified and experienced information science personnel to PADIS/DEVSIS methodologies and operations. In essence, the training programme is a medium of transfer of PADIS/DEVSIS procedures, concepts and techniques of information processing and retrieval, to participating countries.

According to a report by the co-ordinator of PADIS Training Programme, participants of PADIS organised training courses are limited to 10-15 individuals drawn from qualified applicants. Entry requirements for potential

participants includes

> "Considerable operational experience, to possess good formal academic qualifications at basic degree level, and professional qualifications at Master's degree level"[13].

These requirements are in addition to affiliation to a documentation centre or department (or school) of library and information studies. A formal application form is obtainable upon request from the PADIS Training Programme Co-ordinator of ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa.

In both intent and content, the PADIS training programme is tailored towards developing a personnel structure capable of maximising utilization of PADIS information resources. It is disheartening, however, to note that so far the programme is confined to a limited number of qualified staff. It goes without saying that generally speaking, Africa lacks training programmes in library and information studies at postgraduate levels. It follows therefore that PADIS training programme is only open to a few information workers who have had an opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies in developed countries. Ideally PADIS network need not be a privilege of highly qualified staff. A more vigorous and effective approach to enhance information flow in Africa requires the active involvement of at least information workers in the middle management level. More often than not it is the middle management staff that provide direct link to users of information. As such, they are the people who are more familiar with the information seeking behaviour of consumers of information and perhaps in the better position to suggest possible solutions to problems of information transfer. Further expansion of the PADIS training programmes should therefore include holders of advanced certificates and diplomas in information work.

To a large extent the success of PADIS lies on the active participation of national information centres in all ECA member states and perhaps more so on the deployment, in national centres, of skilled staff who understand and appreciate the value of information.

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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Concluding Remarks

Attributes of non-conventional literature, i.e. its completeness, quality, timeliness, and above all, its localized nature, render it more relevant to problem-solving than the more generalized published books and journal articles. Therefore policy-makers, social welfare workers, researchers and scientists will derive a great deal of information and data from non-conventional literature. It is in this context that emphasis is placed on the documentation of this literature for the ultimate purpose of enhancing socio-economic growth: a leading priority in development in Africa.

All being equal, a regional approach to information flow, in the context of PADIS, has two basic advantages. First, and perhaps most important, it has high returns in meeting information demands on a continental basis. Secondly, it is a step further towards international co-operation in information sharing.

Having established the role of the information system in Africa, at the ECA, PADIS should now focus on strengthening the linkage between PADIS and national focal points to ensure maximum participation of ECA member states. In countries where national focal points do not exist some form of assistance is necessary to establish them. So far Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia are reported to have operational national focal points. On the other hand Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinee-Conakry, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Zaire and Zimbabwe have indicated their intentions to elect national focal points. It is believed that Zimbabwe would take the seat of a Southern African regional node while Nigeria has been proposed to adopt similar status for the West African sub-continent.

The creation of national focal points does not necessarily mean building new structures, existing resource centres such as national libraries or documentation centres, could be elected to perform functions of 'national focal points'. In fact that is what the British Library has demonstrated in the SIGLE network. Decisions to elect a national focal point may depend on availability of the infrastructure capable of sustaining requirements of a national focal point. That may include availability of sufficient skilled staff, reprographic and/or printing equipment and institutional support, to mention a few.

In Africa moves towards co-operation in information sharing have been frustrated, partly due to lack of consolidated national centres. In Nigeria, for example, attempts to promote co-operative acquisition schemes and interlibrary programmes have in the main failed largely as a result of financial difficulties and technical and administrative problems. The nature of these problems suggests that if a national authority had been established to support and co-ordinate efforts of individual libraries, many of the identified problems of information flow could have been minimised or even eliminated altogether. At the subcontinent level, the launching of the West African Centre for AGLINET (Worldwide Network for Agricultural Libraries) in 1975, was seen as a positive gesture towards a subject approach to regional co-operation[1]. Institutions were elected in their respective countries to act as national resource centres and liaise with the regional centre at the International Institute of Tropical Agricultural (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria. Nevertheless, very little materialized from the West African component of AGLINET. A resolution that each country would compile a union list of agricultural periodicals to be housed at the regional centre has hardly been implemented.

It may suffice to point out, however, that electing a national focal point is in itself by no means a guarantee to ensure success of the PADIS network. The

support of individual governments is essential if at all the national focal points will be fully-fledged operational systems. The mission of national focal points is unlikely to succeed without government support in forms such as grants, legislation and administrative representation.

The influence of Associations in the development of the PADIS ideals cannot be underestimated. Library Associations can offer significant contributions in activities like formulation and promotion of national information policy, supporting efforts of national documentation centres and establishing and strengthening dialog between information specialists and administrators. Library Associations in Africa can learn from examples of Library Associations in Western Europe and North America. English speaking African states are not very far away from examples set by the Library Association in Britain. The Association (LA), through its established contacts with appropriate authorities, meet the Minister responsible for Library and Information Services quarterly and hold frequent meetings with relevant authorities, such as civil servants and local government officials[2]. Librarians in Africa have been talking to each other for too long. They should now shift emphasis by opening meaningful communications with administrators, particularly policy-makers in government, commerce and industry. Librarians in Africa need to tell administrators about what they are, what they are doing, what assistance they require and how they can contribute to national building.

The envisioned subregional nodes, national focal points and their subsidiaries need skilled and competent staff to take key positions in the PADIS network. Perhaps the establishment of national focal points should go hand in had with the training of the necessary staff. PADIS probably needs to reconsider its training practices. Instead of individuals applying for PADIS sponsorship, directly to the Training Co-ordinator, institutions like the national focal points should take the responsiblility of identifying suitable candidates and seconding them to

PADIS accordingly. National focal points or national documentation centres are probably in a better position to determine national training requirements rather than the PADIS Training Co-ordinator. The Training Co-ordinator may then concentrate on formulating training programmes and ensuring that all ECA member states are adequately envolved in the training.

It is common knowledge that the problem of shortage of skilled staff in Africa is unmatched by any other continent. Not only are skilled information specialists scarce in Africa, perhaps they are also unevenly spread across the continent with the North, apparently having a better share of the trained staff than the South. The growth of PADIS requires a more thorough,consistent and democratic approach to development of national focal points and provision of trained staff.

PADIS, perhaps with the assistance of inter-governmental agencies, may consider provision of research grants to indigenous information specialists in Africa, in addition to organizing seminars and conferences. PADIS could emulate the example of IDRC which for some years has been sponsoring research projects in information science, among other fields. Support for research work may go a long way towards resolving some pertinent issues and also evolving an indigenous scholorship capable of initiating information science theories and methodologies relevant to Africa.

Presently, Africa, particularly, PADIS should perhaps refrain from heavy investments in telecommunication systems. It is most probably true that installations of earth satellite specifically for information communications with databases in developed countries is incompatible with the immediate information needs of Africa. Of course there is a temptation, particularly among the information-conscious groups in Africa to look to databases in developed countries for important data. One may refer to people who, having lived and studied in developed countries are now addicted to the use of computerized databases. Incidentally such are the individuals who are

likely to take decisive positions in the design of information policies in Africa. In any case, the inclination towards heavy investment in computer information storage and transfer, similar in scale as in developed countries should be resisted. Africa may adopt telecommunication and computer systems on a small scale when necessary but should concentrate more on non-computerized bibliographic control and document supply. Most user of development literature in Africa do not have access to devices that may necessitate the flow of information through telecommunication and computerized systems.

Africa lags far behind developed countries in technological growth. Technology transfer from developed countries to Africa should be approached with caution. Not only are development priorities different between Africa and the developed world, Africa lacks the infrastructure (e.g. technical know-how, material resources) necessary to harness the technology of developed countries. A tendency towards advanced technology in Africa, will on the whole promote and sustain African dependence on information sources of the developed world. Information sources which are largely irrelevant to socioeconomic development as it is understood from the point of view of Africa.

Information that is crucial to development in Africa is essentially available in a variety of forms generally categorized as non-conventional literature. What remains to be done is to signal its availability and make it easily accessible to potential users.

The formation of PADIS is indeed a blessing to would be users of development literature on Africa, however, many of us believe that a lot need to be done to interpret PADIS ideals into concrete terms for the service of African states.

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