

Acquisition and Preservation of Newspapers and Magazines in Dr. Aliyu Obaje Library, Kogi State University Anyigba

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses the acquisition and preservation of Newspapers and Magazines in Dr. Aliyu Obaje Library, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. The study outlines and analyses the process for Newspapers and Magazines acquisition and preservation. The main objective of the study is to ascertain and address the challenges affecting acquisition and preservation of Newspapers and Magazine in the Library under study. It looks at the importance of these items, procedure for purchasing them and arranging them. The methodology adopted is observation and content analysis using secondary sources of data like journals, papers, unpublished thesis etc. Conclusion was made and recommendation proffered including a review of Newspapers/Magazines acquisition policy in the Library under study. Binding of Newspapers/Magazines and microfilming same is being advocated.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of preservation is as old as invention of writing, thus man in quest to maintain records has devised places to preserve such records for future use. The most difficult problem that has pressured the minds of librarians from time immemorial till date is the ability to ensure that safety of library information resources against threats such as floods, fire, mutilation, rodents, insects and so on are taken care of. According to Bamigboye and Burriamo (2008), libraries acquire and preserve materials – books, periodicals, maps etc to meet potential information or recreational need. They further stated that it is the responsibility of the library staff to maintain these materials in good physical condition so that they can be readily available for use at all times.

The academic library is a key focal point for teaching, learning and research activities. According to Hayles (2003), University libraries are established to serve as support to faculties in their teaching, research and learning activities. University libraries are repositories of information and knowledge from all kinds of fields of learning to the academic communities. Miracle Eka Njeze (2012), opined that library materials

consists of media, non-book and non –print resources. She gave examples on media resources which includes computer hardware drive, data bases, library software, non book materials which include CD ROMS, audio and video tape, while print materials include pictures, newspapers, magazines, books, maps and photographic materials. Library materials therefore must last as long as possible and be preserved for active use for posterity.

History of Kogi State University Library

The Kogi State university library came into existence in September, 2000. It is located along Ankpa road on the permanent site of the university. The building complex has a total floor space of about 10,000sq metres, with the capacity to hold stock of five hundred thousand volumes of books and journals. Presently, it has a seating capacity for 2,552 readers, a total stock of 29,000 volumes of books in the collections. For administrative convenience, and in a bid to sharpen its service orientedness, the library is structured into the following Units:- Administration, Acquisition, Technical services, Reference, Serials, Circulation and Documentation. The Law library was moved to the faculty of Law in November, 2007. It has a seating capacity of 152 and is administered from the main library.

Definition of Terms

Acquisition is the act of procuring and obtaining materials. This is the act of acquiring

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knowledge or books that are relevant to users. The acquisition department or section is the only gate way to any library's collection development. Acquisition can be seen as acquiring of qualitative relevant information resources to meet the need of users and the objectives of the library. For the acquisition section to function effectively, a solid foundation must be laid through the formulation of written articulate acquisition policy.

A policy statement is a framework and set of parameters within which staff and users work. This facilitate ordering and receiving of library materials and monitoring expenditures of funds for the materials. In Kogi State University library, acquisition of newspapers is through purchase and gifts/donations.

Preservation is an act of preserving something from decay be it food or books, etc. In this context, we are dealing precisely with newspapers/magazines. Preservation is the activities associated with maintaining library information resources for use either in original forms or other ways. Okonkwo (2009), views preservation as the totality of all measures for maintaining the integrity of documents and information contained in them. These includes all the managerial and financial considerations, storage, staffing level, polices, techniques and methods involved in safeguarding documentary materials.

The issue of preservation cannot be overstressed. This is because preservation if well carried out will improve span of valued materials, pave way for the long-term access to information and help to preserve for posterity. According to Omede (2004), preservation assists in enriching our culture and history. She further stated that it will also assist economic historians in their quest to amplify and elucidate the official records if well preserved. In regards to newspapers/magazine, preservation prevents decay and loss of separate issues and maximizes the usefulness of the newspapers in libraries. Preservation is done in libraries or archives to prevent deterioration. The cause of deterioration is a function of such factors as the chemical characteristics of the paper, the mechanical construction of the volume of storage conditions and intensity of use.

Alegbeleye (2002), opined that archives and libraries are prone to disasters that can be classified generally as natural, man made which include lightening, rodents, flood, fire, war, earth-

quakes, and pest attacks. It is also in this regard that the usefulness of preservation cannot be overstressed in libraries today.

Importance of Newspaper/Magazine

Primary materials such as newspapers/magazines constitute important sources of information in Nigeria. Their usefulness is found in the current information they carry. The information these vital sources carry, educate and not just that, it entertain the readers and keep them abreast or informed about what happens in the society around them. The creamy or vital information which is on regular basis, makes them one of the most important and crucial sources of information. On the importance of News papers, Igbeka and Ola (2010), posit that Newspapers provide up- to- date information on Local, State, National and World issues. They stressed that every category of newspaper reader usually find some important, current and interesting information in the newspapers. They further explained that newspapers use design that make information easily accessible to the reader, important stories have large bold headlines, graphics are also used to relate stories.

Consenting to the importance of newspapers, Bankole and Barbalola (2011) asserts that newspapers are vital sources of information, it enlightens society, providing the most recent information to readers and it serves various purposes for different categories of users. Umoh (1991), while writing on enhancing functional reading among the youths through newspapers and magazines concludes that the material are excellent media for reading instruction because they are readily available and treat a wide variety of subject matters. It can therefore be concluded that newspapers/magazines plays significant role in learning, teaching and research work.

According to Kumar et al. (2011), newspapers help to improve reading habits, knowledge and awareness. They further posited that newspapers can be part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization. Huchins (2001) observed that it is no longer necessary to argue for the importance of newspapers in the reference work. He further noted that from childhood up to present generation, he has read newspapers and used them for information. This then implies how vital it is to preserve newspapers

for future generation for reference. Most times, the question that subsequently occupies the minds of professionals and laymen is on how to preserve newspapers or library materials in general. Consequently, answers to these questions are needed, because preservation in Nigeria libraries is of acute importance when viewed with drastic library budget cut by either the government or university authorities yearly. The implication in this drastic budget cut, is that the librarian will not be able to acquire newspapers on daily basis and lack of funds for its preservation. The only way out for the librarian is to apply wisdom to preserve what he has and cherish.

Newspaper/Magazine Acquisition and Preservation in Dr Aliyu Obaje Library

Newspapers are among information resources published in Nigeria and so are part of Nigerian collection; they are purchased by the library on daily basis as part of library's collection. The Kogi State University library has no stated policy on acquisition of newspapers/magazines. The administrative officer liaises with the newspaper vendors, purchases them and brings them into the library. The various titles are then taken to the reference section and stamped with the university library ownership stamp, the various titles are sent to the serials section of the library and are dropped on the stand for users. At the end of each month, all the issues are arranged into different titles tied together and sent into the store for safety keep without binding. In Kogi State University library, the only method of preserving newspapers/magazine is through tying them together according to their titles and kept in the store. There are no other forms of preservation; this can be attributed to lack of funds, lack of skilled personnel in the area of preservation and machinery. The newspapers/magazines regularly purchased in Kogi State University library are: The Punch, The daily Sun, The graphic, The Guardian, Daily Trust and Tribune.

However, the Guardian is purchased only when the Nation is not available. On the other hand, the Tribune is not purchased by the library, but donated by the University Librarian to the library. The magazines on the other hand are purchased the same way and are preserved same way as the newspapers. Nigeria Tell maga-

zine is the only magazine purchased by the library under study.

Problems Encountered in the Preservation of Newspapers/Magazines in Dr. Aliyu Obaje Library

The problem of preservation has become a great headache for librarians. This can be attributed to many years of neglect and the environmental conditions, which cannot be tackled by the librarian. Some of the newspaper problems in Kogi State University library are as follows:

1. Lack of disaster plan and documented preservation policy: It is a known fact that a stated articulate policy is key and a solid foundation for work to be carried out effectively and efficiently since, policy is a framework of parameters and guide to the librarian. Wamukoya and Murtala (2003) stated that disaster control plan is lacking in some libraries, the absence of such plan mean that such a library will not be in a position to respond to the disaster with the urgency it requires. Consequently, there is no preservation policy to guide, enhance or set the framework on what to be preserved, how to preserve and standards to adhere to. In Kogi state University library, there is no documented policy and plan.
2. Storage facilities: Librarians have continued to acquire newspapers as part of their collections and lots of money and time have been spent in the process of storing them. Where these adequate accommodation and storage facilities are lacking, preservation cannot effectively be carried out, ideally, storage area must be humid free, well ventilated, no direct sun rays and must be insect and rodent free. Newspapers/magazines stored in libraries must of necessity be free from disaster of any type. Presently, Kogi State University library have enough storage facility but will have to think of more in the near future due to the bulkiness of newspapers/magazines.
3. Lack of funds and modern equipment for preservation: Kogi State University lacks funds to preserve her newspapers. It is obvious that there can never be any effective programme and policies without adequate funds to run it. These funds are needed to procure latest information techniques such

as microfilm, magnetic tapes/disc, optical disc which are better ways of preservation. Alegbeleye (2002) opined that archives and libraries are prone to disasters that can be classified generally as natural man made which include lightening, rodents, flood, fire, war, earthquakes, and pest attacks. It is also in this regard that the usefulness of preservation cannot be overstressed in libraries today.

4. Lack of air-conditioning: Air conditioners are vital for rare book collections. According to Ogunbare (2009), it assists in stabilizing the temperature and humidity condition in libraries. This helps to sieve out particles and chemical pollutants. A look at the newspaper room in Kogi State University library indicates that there are no air conditioners. However, it is worthy of note that air conditioners are of great necessity to the preservation of newspapers in particular and books in general. Consequently, there will be fast deterioration of newspapers if there are no air-condition in the newspaper room.
5. Lack of trained personnel: Librarians in Kogi State University library are to some extent trained but such training cannot be said to professionally trained with preservation technologies. Faliaye and Isokephi (2001) suggested that more trade schools should be established by government to train technical expertise in such fields as preservation, conservation and repairs of library materials of all kinds, such courses according to them should be introduced in library schools. Subsequently, head of libraries in Nigerian libraries will have both background and expertise in PAC activities.

CONCLUSION

Acquisition and preservation of Newspapers and Magazine are crucial to teaching, learning and research in University Libraries, and as such the needs for its acquisition and preservation cannot be overemphasized. The study showed that there were no written acquisition policy on how to acquire newspapers and magazines, neither were there any written policy on preservation plan against disasters. It was also discovered that adequate funds were not made available for the procurement of newspapers and

magazines, however, some measures were in place for averting or reacting to disaster, but were so limited that they could not have comprehensively covered all the forms of disasters to which the library was disposed. Furthermore library staff were half way trained on the issue of preservation and so are not fully equipped or skilled to keep to recent trends of techniques for curbing disasters in the library under study.

Microfilming is one of the preservative methods that is well known for its durability and efficiency. However, this preservative method is not available in this library, but if ventured into, it will add to the preservation age, conserve space and reduce the deterioration process so that they will be no need for replacement, as money meant for replacement can be channeled towards enriching existing collections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Kogi State University library should formulate a written acquisition policy on newspaper/magazine acquisition and preservation.
2. Disaster plan should be established to form a part of the preservation and conservation programme. This will enable Kogi State University library create emergency response to salvage newspapers and other library materials in case of any disaster.
3. The government should provide adequate funds for both acquisition and preservation of newspapers/magazine in the library.
4. It is recommended that the purchase of the newspapers should be the sole duty of the serial librarian and that trained and skilled professionals in the area of preservation should be employed.
5. In-house training on preservative method should be organized yearly to keep staff abreast with current devices.
6. Regular cleaning of library and its surrounding should be carried out while users and library staff who eat in the library should be sanctioned.
7. There should be a kind of coordination of programmes between libraries for library preservation to create enough awareness.

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