

# **FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST PRODUCTION OF PRINT MATERIALS AND ITS EFFECT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

One of the problems of library in Nigeria is inadequacy of print and non print collection. The problem is of age and less focused for improvement. Dearth of books was observed as major obstruction in Nigeria academic industries. Some of the factors militating against print work production in Nigeria are the publisher, scholar, and the Government. This paper therefore examines the causes of dearth of books in Nigeria institutions of learning and its effect on our National development to suggest the way forward of the predicament.

## **BACKGROUND**

The birth of publishing industry can be attributed to man's eagerness or efforts to have permanent records of events within and outside his environment and to disseminate such to others.

Publishing is an act of making and distributing printed record. The encyclopedia of information and library science (1977) describe publishing as:-

The trade of making and selling books and other knowledge products such as music, art production, photographs and maps. It includes commissioning manuscript, negotiations with authors or their agents, designs of books, book production, publicity and sales through book sellers and retailer.

The responsibility for design and production of book is ideally vested on one person known as the publisher. The activity of the publisher are then sub-divided into department among which are Editorial, Sales, Publicity, Technical, and of course Production department.

The production departments play a very vital role in the design and production of printed materials. The outcome of the effort of production department of a publishing house is what feeds our libraries and information centers.

Publishing industry is an avenue to expose nation's talent such as writer and

researchers. This is done through publication of their works by publishers in form of books, journals, magazines, newspapers etc. It has been said by many authors that through publications, the poetry and drama, the legends and epics, the traditional value of nation are all embodied in the pages of books which are transmitted from one generation to another. Book plays a vital role in individual life and national development. The librarian of Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration has written that if developing country are to progress towards industrialization, they must promote book development and publishing. The printed book he said is still the most widely accepted medium for presenting and transmitting knowledge.

Publication of any form serves as vehicle for the expression of minority views and decent criticism, and serve as free means of communication. Also, it functions to inspire, inform and entertain. It ensures freedom and diversity; contribute to social growth and political stability. According to Hassan (1973) book serves as means of inspiration , entertainment, and development of readers personality in that it make man keep pace with the new technological advances and provide an opportunity for learning new skills or perfecting older ones.

Publishing industries in Nigeria so far not advance the business in book production because of certain militating factors. It has been observed to have been deterred in growth because of its inability to provide available services (Lawal- Solarin: 1997). Nigeria in the book world is still vagrant, in that she has not been able to feed her own mouth and being independent of foreign books.

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY**

There are 53 publishing industries in Nigeria, 33 in the south west, 16 in the south east and 4 in the north (Amali: 1999). Notably among these publishers are: Longman, Macmillan, Evans, Heinemann, University Press plc (Oxford University press) and Nelson which are foreign but now indigenized. Others are indigenous companies who are competing favorably with the oldies. They are, Forth - Dimension, Onibonoje, Spectrum, Literamed, African-Fep, Tabansi , West Africa book publisher, Ileshanmi, ABC, and Jet Publishers.

Despite the chains of publishing houses, yet the nation still experience high dearth of books. Nwafor (1987) examined the book development in Nigerian University libraries and describe it as inadequate. He attributed his result to low publication rate of Nigerian authors and publishers. This paper therefore attempt to examine the problem militating against sufficient production of print materials and it effect on our national development.

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This work sampled the opinion of 67 academic staff of not less than the rank of senior lecturer and above in a polytechnic and a research institution both in Kwara state. The respondent involves 57 lecturers from Kwara State Polytechnic and 10 from National Centre for Agriculture Mechanization (NCAM) in Ilorin. The respondents were given questionnaire to fill and at the same time were interviewed by visit to their offices. The interview was an open ended type that allows the respondent to express their opinion freely. This investigation took the researcher about six week to complete. This was so because the method is interactive and to see the need for the study and fear of objectivity. The opinions of the respondent were analyzed to reach a conclusion as it met the objective of this paper.

**Table i: institution and academic rank of the respondent**

No of respondent	Institution	Academic qualification	Total
20	Polytechnic	Lecturer 1	57
10	Polytechnic	Lecturer 11	
15	Polytechnic	Senior lecturer	
12	Polytechnic	professor	
3	NCAM	Senior agric Engr.	10
4	NCAM	Asst. chief agric Engr.	
3	NCAM	Chief agric Engr.	

Also 5 publishing agents – University Press, Heinemann, and Macmillan, (foreign); African Fep and Ilesanmi (indigenous) were consulted too and freely express the challenges facing them.

## SITUATION OF PUBLISHING WORK IN NIGERIA

### Scholars' respondent

One of the factors that are responsible to the ugly situation was that most of Nigerian authors as seen in table ii prefer to publish their works abroad. 7 professors, 20 Senior Lecturers and all the 10 Engineers prefer to publish their work abroad. While only 10 (15.3%) of all the respondent will not mind to publish their work locally. 10 were undecided whether to publish abroad or locally. During the interview their opinion was that the situation will tell where to publish when it is time.

According to the respondent, another reason had been that, publishing abroad earn prestige and profit (foreign exchange in dollars for royalty). This therefore makes the book published not easily available in Nigeria market. Even when they are, their prices are high than it would have otherwise sold if it were publish in the country.

**Table ii Response to situation of publishing in Nigeria by scholars**

No.	Rank	Prefer to publish locally	Prefer to publish abroad
20	Senior Lecturer	No	Yes
10	Lecturer II	No	Yes
10	Lecturer I	Yes	No
10	Engineers	No	Yes
7	Professor	No	Yes
10	Lecturer I	undecided	-

Nigerian publishing houses discriminate against authors thereby losing potential ones and the new breeds. This some of the scholars said had made them loose vital manuscripts to their foreign counterparts. Ajagun (1982) substantiate with facts that unless a writer carries prefix such as Professor, Doctor, Engineer, Architect and what have you, the writer is not recognized by the editors in some of the houses. This has led the manuscript of some prolific writer either rejected or dumped in waste paper baskets.

Nigerian publishers have become jack of all trade. In the past, various publishing houses are known for their special areas of publication. For instance, Spectrum specializes in the publication of special or general books in Nigeria. Macmillan, Longman, and Heinemann are known for 'series' publications while an indigenouse publisher like Onibonoje publishes a lot of 'fictions'. These are no longer there. Every publisher publishes whatever comes their way. This has been attributed to economic down-turn rather than the reading habit of Nigerians (Lawal-Solarin: 1997).

### Agent response

Marketing has hampered the success of the business. There are so many variables that affect sales of print product in Nigeria. These range from locality –North or South, South- West or South-East, urban or rural setting, number of private or public schools, economic activities, depression or buoyancies for which no publisher can say with certainty how market will look like.

Table iii  
**Sales of books in Nigeria**

<b>Agents</b>	<b>Local Books Sales</b>	<b>Foreign Books Sales</b>
University Press	Low	High
Heinemann	Low	High
MacMillan	Low	High
African Fep	Low	High
Illesanmi Press	High	Low

On the other hand, they said there has been low patronage of Nigerian products by Nigerians. Many of the agents agreed that sales of foreign books are very high especially tertiary level books as seen in table iii. During interview they said there had been low patronage of local products due to Nigerian ideological orientation. Nigerians love whatever comes from abroad than what is made locally. Because of this the sales of local author's product suffers at the expense of the foreign. Hence publishers source for manuscript from outside the country.

Lack of effective distribution system has caused a negative effect on the business. Unlike in the past when book shops run after the publishers, publishers now survive through cut-throat competition and unethical methods. For instance, it was observed by an agent that some publishers lobby state ministries of education to adopt their product as recommended text for the academic year thereby leading schools to change text within a short period of time if not annually.

Capital, (money and equipments) incurred in a business venture, some agent says determine its success, hence, insufficient capital affect most Nigerian publishers. Now that we are in the age of computer and other technology, how many of them can boast of adequate number of computer for their job. They still parade with their old fashion and methods of production instead of desktop. Gone are the days when authors wait so long before he sees his work being published? Many authors will want their work published immediately.

The issue of license restriction on importation of some raw materials has constituted a cog in wheels of publication in Nigeria. The idea is a way of promoting homemade materials. While the objective is good, the agents say the policy has negative effects on the finished products in some cases. Also, the difficulty in the procurement of license has forced many publishers to make do of what is available. For those who are able to secure foreign exchange, it is by black market or by tipping bank officials. All these observed tell on the output of the product and thereafter transferred to the buyers. The end result therefore is high cost of locally produced work while the imported one is relatively cheap. Buyers in many cases do not weigh the content but the price.

Payment of tariff is another way identify by an agent in which government is not helping publishing industries. Tariffs are placed on printing inputs such as paper, ink, and plate. This they said has brought untold hardship on the publishers. For instance there are three paper mills in Nigeria only that of Jebba in kwara state after some years of dormancy is working partially functioning. It function does not last long for, on many occasion the management complain of damage engine, shortage of raw materials etc. This they said therefore slow down the pace of work, when publisher cannot get appropriate raw materials to produce. With the advent of computers anyway, things might change for better.

### **SCHOLARS/AGENTS**

Piracy has become scourge of Nigerian publishers. For instance, of recent were the pirates of Onitsha in Eastern Nigeria who have a combined stock of about N1.7billion worth of pirated textbooks in stock. Such an attitude is enough to wreck the affected publishers. This point was also ascertained by Oyinloye (2000) that the problem of piracy in Nigeria can be classified into three broad categories:

- (1) There are cases where quick-selling titles, usually text books, are reprinted without the publisher's permission.
- (2) Photocopying of textbooks is so rife particular in institutions of higher learning because it is more economical to acquire a book through this graphic "wonder" than to purchase a copy.
- (3) Printers will overrun publishers order and channel the extra copies into the market via a willing book seller at attractive discount.

He concluded that whichever method is used, the bottom line is that piracy denies the true rightful owners of the book their remuneration i.e. the author, who wrote the book and whose intellectual properties it is, losses royalty, and the publisher, who is the manufacturer loses on the investment.

Copyright is another problem identified as a major problem facing publishers. Copyright has to do with taking due permission before reproduction of an authors work. Over the years, most Nigerian copyright belongs to foreign publishers. This is because Nigerian authors published abroad. Quite a number of reasons have been advanced for this. According to Ojiji (1985) the value for foreign currency and rate of sales abroad, because of their reading culture, which local publisher have not been able to beat has been identify as the cause. When permission to reproduce such work is source for, the local publishers are charged with high cost. Apart from this, the exchange rate is killing.

## **DISCUSSION**

Published work does not only contribute to social, economic and political emancipation of an individual but also to the nation. Hence, the problems of publishing should not be allowed to continue for the end result will not arguer well for the nation. For instance, book constitute the bulk of library resources and, our people have not yet come to term with multimedia as means of searching information. Even if we adopt it, cannot take over the functions of printed work. Just for some time now there has been outcry of the situation of books in the country, and that price has gone up. Apart from libraries, students, lecturers and researchers need books for their works. If the statistic of Lawal-Solarin (1997) is anything to go by, Nigeria need 120 millions of books per annum i.e. at least a minimum of 5 books per person in the institution of higher learning alone. Theses exclude libraries, information centers and pupils of primary and post primary schools. Where then is the nation heading to?

A look at the largest book producing countries such as USSR, USA, UK, West-Germany and Japan, there appears to be a direct positive correlation between book published and social economic welfare. Therefore, we need indigenous book industry that can reflect local ideas, culture, and traditions of the nation. The nearer the books are to the need of a specific country the more effective they become as instruments of development.

induction courses periodically to address the problems of members, improve the skills of potential authors, and even educate students and public users.

On the issue of piracy, the only way to prevent regular occurrence is to form 'vigilante group' comprising representatives of publishers, police, printers, book sellers and even renown authors to raid and destabilize the pirates by carting away pirated books and prosecute them.

Sales promotion is one way of reaching users. Book exhibitions, trade fair should be organized. This should not be limited to the cities, but also to tertiary institutions like Universities, Polytechnics and colleges of education. This is to promote sales in addition to catalogue being sent to libraries.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In the light of the above one will like to suggest that, time has come for publishers to come together. The era of individualism is gone and to achieve the best in their business they have to form a broad based association comprising all players of book industry-authors, librarians, publishers, printers and vendors – to liase with government regularly. This will also afford them to speak in one voice and influence government decisions and policies on book production, procurement, tariff on printing inputs etc.

Also, Training plays an important role in getting thing more effectively and efficiently done. Hence, publishers need to regularly organize seminar, workshop and The government should not fold arms and see that publishing industry dyeing. Government needs to encourage publishers by easing exchange rate, subsidies cost of printing materials to reduce prices, reduce tariff and approve license without delay. Where possible, assist publishers to secure new technological materials such as computer, distribute to them, and allow them to pay in installments. I hope with these suggestions if applied will in no doubt solve the problems facing our publishers and the industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

If publishing industry will remain as avenue of exposing the nation's talents, no amount of money that is spent on the industry is a waste "The improvement of the industry is not that of the publishers, alone, but a collective one – government, authors, printers, sellers, and readers.

It is when a cooperative attitude is build that the efforts of each player in the industry will be appreciated. It should be known that a book industry of a nation cannot be pre fabricated and laid on from abroad if it has to suit the specific requirement of a nation.

Let it be known that, it is the local publisher that can produce books which will enrich the nation's culture, that fit into educational systems, and ensure a speedy availability of books to meet the changing needs for our society.



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