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# ACQUISITION AND UTILIZATION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN CAPTAIN ELECHI AMADI POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY, RUMUOLA, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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## **Abstract**

Government publications are vital information resources for research. This study examined the acquisition and utilization of government publications in Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic (CEAPOLY) Library, Rumuola, Port Harcourt. Six research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Population of the study comprised the three library staff in the Acquisition Unit and five working in the Circulation Section of the library. Questionnaire and observation were instruments used or data collection. Data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages. The study found that government publications acquired in the library were top officials' photos, maps, charts, government serials publications, government reports, officials' gazettes among others. Method of acquisition of these publications was mainly through donation and purchase. The study further found that lack of digitization of the government publications, delay in the arrival of the publication to the library and poor funding has hindered adequate utilization of these publications in the library. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that improved funding would enable CEAPOLY Library to purchase more government publications. The study further recommends that CEAPOLY library should engage in online subscription to government publications, and that government publications should be digitized in academic libraries to enhance their utilization and that competent/professional staff should be engaged in CEAPOLY Library to manage government publications and other information resources.

**Keywords:** *Government Publication, Acquisition, Utilization, CEAPOLY Library, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.*

## **Introduction**

The justification for the establishment of any library is to provide adequate information resources to meet the demand of its users. Libraries strive to satisfy the intellectual and information needs and curiosity of their users by acquiring and processing various information resources for the use of their patrons. Onwubuiko and Uzoigwe (2004) cited in Ani (2017) see the library as a social institution whose responsibility

is to collect, preserve, organize and disseminate information for the use of all who require them. That is to say that library collection will be of no use if not utilized effectively by those it is meant for. They stated further that an academic library enhances effective teaching and learning through the provision of its information resources and services.

According to Idachaba (2004), information resources include books, periodicals and audio-visual materials that are provided for use by the people. Glenor (2006) identified information resources to include almanacs, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, periodicals, directories, government publications and legal databases. The focus of this paper is on government publications. According to Ani (2017), government publications are publications that emanate from the government whether at the local, state or federal levels. Government publications are defined as information materials published at government expense or as required by law. Ogunadana et al. (2002) perceive government publication as information resources generated by different arms of government including ministries, parastatals of the government. Similarly, Edeka (2000) classified government publications into executive, judicial, and legislative publications.

In Nigeria, most government documents are published either at the national or state level by the government printer. Every state government has its printer located in the state capital and is empowered to publish the official publication of the government. In some instances, government departments or organs can authorize or use commercial printers or publishers to publish their documents. Omolayole (2002) expressed that government publications are a mine of information on the socio-political and economic life of any nation. Government publications are therefore indispensable materials for research. The acquisition, availability and utilization of these information resources in libraries, is therefore very essential. Libraries acquire government publications through gifts or donations by the various agencies of the government at all levels. Sometimes, the essence was to showcase and publicise government activities and programmes.

### **Brief History of Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library**

Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library started as a School of Basic Studies Library at the then Creek Road Campus of the school in 1980. It was later moved to the Rumuola campus in November 1983. The institution assumed its polytechnic status in 2006 when the National Board for

Technical Education (NBTE) accredited four programmes namely: National Diploma in Accountancy, Statistics, Computer Science and Pre-National Diploma Science. In 2010 and 2019, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) accredited additional programmes at National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) levels respectively. <https://www.portharcourtpoly.edu.ng/>

The Polytechnic is situated at the heart of the town which has made it possible for researchers outside the institution to use the library. The library is stocked with books and non-book materials. The library currently has eight sections and a sitting capacity of five hundred persons. The various sections are: Cataloguing/Classification, Acquisition, Serials/Research, Circulation, Reference, E-Library, Audio-Visual, Bindery/Reprographic.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the importance of government publication as indispensable information resource for research, one would have expected to see a large number of researchers making use of the rich collection of government publications in CEAPOLY library to meet their information and research needs. From the researchers' observation, the extent of utilization of government publications in the CEAPOLY library is abysmally low. This has compelled the researchers to conduct a study on the acquisition and utilization of government publications in CEAPOLY library.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study was to determine the extent of acquisition and utilization of government publications in CEAPOLY Library. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the kind of government publications acquired in the CEAPOLY library.
2. To examine the method of acquisition of government publications in this library.
3. To ascertain the frequency of acquisition of government publications in CEAPOLY library
4. To determine how regular the government publications are utilized.

5. To find out the problems encountered by the library in the acquisition and utilization of government publications in CEAPOLY library.
6. To suggest strategies that could be adopted to overcome the challenges in CEAPOLY library

### Research Questions

The following questions guided the study

1. What kinds of government publications are acquired in CEAPOLY library?
2. What methods are adopted for the acquisition of government publications in CEAPOLY library?
3. How frequent are these publications acquired in CEAPOLY library?
4. How often government publications are utilized CEAPOLY library?
5. What are the problems encountered by the library in the acquisition and utilization of these publications in this library?
6. What strategies could be adopted to overcome challenges encountered by CEAPOLY library in the acquisition of government in CEAPOLY library?

### Review of Related Literature

The term government publication could be used interchangeably to refer to publications emanating from the various organs and agencies of the government reflecting government policies, programmes, laws, decisions and other activities of the government at all levels. In some libraries, government publications are regarded as special collection. Special collection refers to information resources collected because of their special nature, subject and origin. It includes United Nations Publications, Africana publications, archives and government publications (Odu, 2015). They may be published daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, biannually or annually.

According to Alhassan and Abdusalaam (2013), government publications are fundamental information resources generated by different arms of government including ministries, parastatals and agencies. Ajayi (2019) identified the importance of government publications to include:

- They are primary sources of information to the society on which new ideas and knowledge are created.
- Government publications serve as data banks from which records of performance could be appraised.
- They serve as the mouthpiece of government to the governed, it helps the society to criticize the government positively.
- They help administrators and managers to improve their performance.
- They help the government to receive loans and assistance from international organization.

### Types of Government Publications

There are many types of government publications. Ajayi (2019) identified the following:

- Government publications published by the executive arm of government such as annual budget, memos, circulars, administrative records (recruitment/appointments, records of discipline, records of termination of appointment, retirements, wages and salaries), capital development financial records, public administration records, chieftaincy records, gazette, white paper, personnel records etc.
- Legislative records such as motion and bill records, public complaints records, personnel records, appointment records, audit records, records of house proceedings, rules and regulation records etc.
- The judiciary records range from case files, judgement files, public rules and regulations, gazette laws and bills, family law records, business law records, political records, international law records, jurisprudence records etc.
- Government agencies like parastatals and their records, ministries, commissions and their records.
- The international organizations include African Union, ECOWAS, UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc

Similarly, Koga (2005) outlined two major types of government publications as published and non-published documents. Published documents include information products the government imparts on its initiative. Examples are

administrative reports, reports of committee/commission/panel, tribunal proceedings, technical reports, and statistical reports. This type of government publication whether in print or on government websites is created for public use. On the other hand, Opara (2008) opine that non-published documents are primarily meant to be used in-house and are not for public consumption. Examples are institutional bulletins, WAEC and JAMB question papers, conference, seminar, workshop papers, lectures, memo, and official gazettes.

### **Acquisition of Government Publications**

The acquisition is the process by which libraries, archives or documentation centres obtain books and other documents needed by their patrons or clientele. It is the act of acquiring knowledge or books that are relevant to users. Acquisition of government documents is the process of selecting, ordering and receiving materials for inclusion in the library collection whether by purchase, gift, legal deposit, exchange program, or even electronic information retrieval. The acquisition is defined by Okwor et al. (2019), as the process of verifying, ordering and paying for needed information resources. It means securing resources for a library's collection whether by purchase, as gifts or through an exchange program. Acquisition of government documents is mainly through donation, gifts, and deposits from ministries, corporations, parastatals, universities and research institutes. The acquisition department is the only gateway to any library's collection development. Adequate acquisition of government publications at all levels is a major budget item for all libraries and should be so treated (Edoka, 2000; Asogwa & Asiegbu 2010).

In a study on the acquisition and use of government publications in university libraries, Ezema and Okafor (2010) noted that acquisition is mainly through gift, donation, and legal deposit. Publications from federal government ministries, parastatals, and government agencies constitute more than eighty per cent of acquisition within the period reviewed. The study also revealed that the Nigerian legal deposit law is no more effective and that it affects the acquisition of government publications in Nigerian university libraries (Ezema & Okafor, 2010)

### **Utilization of Government Publication**

Uhegbu (2007) asserts that information utilization is the appropriate use of acquired information. The utilization of information differs from person to person and from one corporate organization to the other according to their information needs and other socio-economic imperatives. The utilization of information resources is a function of how proper the resources are organized and made available for use. According to Bida (2011), utilization means the usefulness of something or making proper use of something in order to achieve the desired result. The primary aim or objective of the library or any information centre is to select, acquire, process, store and make information resources available for use. These information resources are meant for the utilization of library clientele.

The utilization of information resources and services is usually determined by library statistics which show the number of materials consulted and those borrowed. In libraries, it is easy to count all the books that were removed from the shelves daily before reshelving them. This constitutes the statistics of consulted materials in the library. On the other hand, the number of charges made, that is, the record of borrowed materials for each day shows the number of books borrowed. Therefore, the number of materials consulted and those borrowed for home reading constitute the actual utilization of information resources in a library. Acquisition, availability and accessibility are prerequisite for information utilization (Adebare, 2014).

Odu (2015), carried out a study on the lack of utilization of government document collections by researchers and the general public. The study recommended the need to create awareness and sensitise the public on the availability and relevance of government publications. Similarly, the Australia Library and Information Association (2003) reported that the unavailability and lack of access to government publications were caused by changes in government policy. The introduction of government online policy which requires government agencies to make their publications online rather than in physical format has affected the availability, accessibility and utilization of government publications. Odu (2011) observes that government publications are

good source of information for research in history, statistics and other disciplines but are not significantly available for users to utilize.

### Research Method

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire, observation and oral interview were used for data collection. Population of the study were library of the staff

working in the Acquisition Unit and Circulation units in Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library. There are currently three (3) staff in the Acquisition Unit and five (5) staff in the Circulation Unit. No sampling was carried out because the population was manageable enough to be studied. The data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages.

### Result and Discussion

**Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>35-45</b>	1	12.5
<b>46-55</b>	5	62.5
<b>56-65</b>	2	25.0
Total	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
Rank		
<b>Principal Librarian</b>	1	12.5
<b>Assist. Chief Library Officer</b>	1	12.5
<b>Library Officer 1</b>	1	12.5
<b>Senior Assist. Registrar</b>	2	25.0
<b>Admin Officer</b>	3	37.5
Total	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
Highest Qualification		
<b>MLS</b>	-	-
<b>BLS</b>	2	25.0
<b>Diploma in LIS</b>	1	12.5
<b>Others (outside librarianship)</b>	5	62.5
Total	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
Professional Experience		
<b>1 – 5</b>	-	-
<b>6 - 10</b>	-	-
<b>11 - 15</b>	2	25.0
<b>16 - 20</b>	3	37.5
<b>Over 20 years</b>	3	37.5
Total	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

Analysis in Table 1 reveals that staff of the library between the ages of 35 - 45 years was 1(12.5%), 46 – 55 was 5(62.5%) and 56 - 65 was 2(25.0%). The study revealed the rank of library staff as follows: Principal Librarian, Assistant Chief Library Officer and Library Officer were 1(12.5%) respectively, while Senior Assistant Registrar and Admin Officer were 2(25.0%) and 3(37.5%) respectively. Also, the highest educational qualification of the respondents

showed that 2 (25.0%) possessed Bachelor's Degree in Library Science; 1(12.5%) have a Diploma certificate in Library Science, and 5(62.5%) possessed other qualifications. Finally, the distribution of the professional experience of the respondents showed that 2(25.0%) had worked for 11-15 years; 3(37.5%) had worked for 16 – 20 years and 3(37.5%) have worked for over 20 years.

**Research Question One:** What kind of government publications were acquired in the CEAPOLY library?

**Table 2: Government publications acquired in CEAPOLY Library.**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Administrative report of local, state and federal governments in Nigeria	1	12.5	7	87.5
2.	Government proceedings	1	12.5	7	87.5
3.	Bulletins	-	-	8	100
4.	Circulars	3	37.5	5	62.5
5.	Debates	-	-	8	100
6.	Digest	-	-	8	100
7.	Directories	1	12.5	7	87.5
8.	Official Gazettes	3	37.5	5	62.5
9.	Government Handbooks	2	25.0	6	75.0
10.	Conference, seminar, workshop papers, lectures of governmental organizations.	1	12.5	7	87.5
11.	Government computer (databases), CD-ROM	-	-	8	100
12.	Serials publications of government Ministries and Departments such as newspapers, newsletters, magazines, journals	7	87.5	2	25.0
13.	Government reports and account (annual budget estimate)	4	50.0	4	50.0
14.	Memorandums of government	-	-	8	100
15.	Top official government members' photos, maps & charts	8	100	-	-
16.	Yearbooks and survey	1	12.5	7	87.5
17.	Publication of international organizations	2	25.0	6	75.0
18.	Government Bills and Acts	1	12.5	7	87.5
19.	Government white paper	-	-	8	100
20.	Government manual	3	37.5	5	62.5

Result of the analysis in Table 2 revealed the kind of government publications acquired in the CEAPOLY Library. Out of the twenty items listed, it was indicated that top official government members' photos were the most acquired, 8 (100%), serials publication 7 (87.5%), government reports and account 4 (50%) circulars, official gazettes and manuals were 3 (37.5). Government handbooks and international organization publications 2(25%) while

administrative report, government proceedings, directories, conferences, seminars, lectures of governmental organizations, yearbooks and government Bills/Acts was 1(12.5%) respectively. The responses also showed that bulletin, debate, digest, government database, memorandum of government and government white papers were not acquired in the library. The above responses were also confirmed by the researchers' observation.

**Research Question Two:** What method was used for the acquisition of government publication in CEAPOLY library?

**Table 3: Method of acquiring government publications in CEAPOLY Library**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1	Legal deposit	-	-	8	100
2	Purchase	6	75.0	2	25.0
3	Gifts	1	12.5	7	87.5
4	Exchange	-	-	8	100
5	Donations	8	100	-	-
6	Subscription	-	-	8	100



From table 3, it could be seen that six methods of acquiring government publications were listed. The result shows that donation was the major method of acquiring government publications in CEAPOLY library. The response rate was 8 representing 100%. The result also revealed that 6 (75%) of the respondents also indicated that purchase was another method of acquiring

government publications while 1(12.5%) of the respondents pointed out that government publications was acquired through gift. The result also showed that the library did not acquire government documents through legal deposit, exchange and subscription as indicated by the respondents.

**Research Question Three:** How frequent are these publications acquired in the library?

**Table 4: Frequency of acquisition of government publications**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1	Weekly	-	-	8	100
2	Monthly	-	-	8	100
3	Quarterly	-	-	8	100
4	Biannually	1	12.5	7	87.5
5	Annually	2	25.0	6	75.0
6	Not specific	8	100	-	-

Table 4 revealed that all the respondents 8, (100%) indicated that the frequency of acquisition of government publications was not specific, meaning that it comes anytime since it was acquired mainly

through donation. However, 2(25%) indicated that acquisition of the publication was on an annual basis while 1(12.5) of the respondents indicated the acquisition was done biannually.

**Research Question Four:** How often are the government publications utilized in the library?

**Table 5: Frequency of utilization of the government publications**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1	Daily	2	25.0	6	75.0
2	Weekly	3	37.5	5	62.5
3	Fortnight	2	25.0	6	75.0
4	Monthly	1	12.5	7	87.5
5	Yearly	-	-	8	100

It was revealed in table 5 that patrons' utilization of government publications was on weekly basis with a response rate of 3(37.5%). It was also revealed that users utilize these publications on a

daily and fortnightly basis as shown with a response rate of 2(25%) respectively. While 1(12.5%) of the respondents indicated that users use government publications every month.

**Research Question Five:** What are the problems encountered by the library in acquiring these publications?

**Table 6: Problems encountered by the library in acquiring government publications**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1	Poor funding	7	87.5	1	12.5
2	Delay in the arrival of government publications	8	100	-	-
3	Lack of current list of government publications	-	-	8	100
4	Poor distribution of government publications	7	87.5	1	12.5
5	Inadequate competent subject librarians to man government publications	4	50.0	4	50.0
6	Government publications are not digitized	2	25.0	6	75.0
7	Poor compliance with the legal deposit law	5	62.5	3	37.5
8	Poor bibliographic control	-	-	8	100
9	Political instability	7	87.5	1	12.5
10	Lack of publishing of government publications	5	62.5	3	37.5

Table 6 shows problems the library encounter in the acquisition of government publications in CEAPOLY Library. The study revealed that delay in the arrival of government publications, 8(100%) was the major problem encountered by the library. Poor funding, poor distribution of the publications and political instability also affect the acquisition of government publications in the library. It had a response rate of 7(87.5%). Poor compliance with legal deposit law and lack of

publishing of the publications 5 (62.5) were also part of the challenges. Other problems were inadequate competent subject librarians to man government publications and lack of digitization of the publications with a response rate of 4(50%) and 2(25%) respectively. However, the lack of a current list of government publications and poor bibliographic control were not problems faced by the library in the acquisition of government in the library.

**Research Question Six:** What are the strategies that could be adopted to overcome these challenges?

**Table 7: Strategies to enhance the acquisition of government publications**

S/N	Item Statements	Yes	%	No	%
1	Improved funding	8	100	-	-
2	Strict adherence to legal deposit law	8	100	-	-
3	Current list of government publications	8	100	-	-
4	Continuous supply of government documents by the publishers	8	100	-	-
5	Training of librarians on government document management	8	100	-	-
6	Digitalization of government publications	8	100	-	-
7	Proper bibliographic control of government publications	8	100	-	-
8	Continuity in government policies	8	100	-	-
9	Timely provision of government documents in the library	8	100	-	-

From the analysis in table 7, the respondents were asked about strategies to enhance the acquisition of government publications in their library. The result showed that 8(100%) agreed on the item listed in the tables ranging from improved funding to timely provision of government documents in the library.

### Discussion of Findings

In research question one, the result showed that government publications acquired in CEAPOLY Library was grossly inadequate for an academic institution situated in the heart of the city where users outside the polytechnic take advantage of the resources in the library. Government publications are very important information resources needed

for research. Therefore, academic libraries are expected to have a large collection of government publication in their holdings. This finding agrees with that of Ajidahun (2006), who observed that the volume of government publication in university (academic) libraries are very lean because of lack of physical availability of government publications. The researcher observed that, government documents were inadequately produced hence they are not available for libraries to collect. The finding also agreed with Odu (2011) who noted that government publications were not significantly available in university libraries in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

The study further revealed that donations and purchases were the major method of acquiring government publications in the library. This finding agrees with the views of Ajidahun (2006), who noted that most university libraries expect to receive government publication free of charge, as that was the usual practice. However, purchasing government publication contradicts the views of Ajidahun who maintained that “state-owned university libraries should not pay for what is produced by the government which established them”. The finding did not agree with the assertion of the National Library of Korea (2010), which stated that libraries are supposed to acquire information resources through legal deposit. The findings also revealed that the library under study does not subscribe to government publications online.

The findings of this study also revealed that there was no specific frequency of the acquisition of government publications in the library under study. This finding is in agreement with the work of Mole (2007) who noted that there is a lot of delay in the supply of Nigerian government publications to registered libraries. Mole further stated that Nigeria's legal deposit law is no longer effective as before. From the result on the frequency of utilization of government publications, the respondents agreed that users make use of these resources which could serve as sources of reliable information for research. However, the frequency of use is quite low. The low level of utilization of these resources could be traced to lack of acquisition and availability of these resources.

The study further revealed several problems facing the acquisition of government publications. These problems include delay in the arrival of government publications, poor distribution of government publications, poor funding, political instability, publishing problems and others. According to Okwor et al. (2019), one of the major problems confronting most Nigerian university libraries in the acquisition of government publications were lack of physical accessibility to government documents. In other words, these government documents were inadequately produced; hence they were not available for libraries to acquire. Similarly, Ajidahun (2006) revealed that another reason why government documents were not available was that some government printers have been privatized, so their publications were now placed on sale. The dearth or inaccessibility of government publications could be attributed to political instability in Nigeria. The problem of finance and other related challenges have been identified earlier by Asamoah–Hassan (2000) as some of the challenges facing the growth of government publications in Ghanaian libraries. Finally, it was revealed from the study that improved funding, strict adherence to legal deposit law, digitization of government publications, and timely provision of government publications among others are ways to enhance the acquisition and utilization of government publications in the library. This aligns with the findings of Alhassan and Abdulsalam (2013) who suggested earlier that an improved level of funding will enable and encourage librarians in charge of government documents to source for publications emanating from government agencies, departments, offices and so on.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Government publications are major source of information to researchers. The importance of the acquisition of such publications in the library cannot be over emphasised. Despite its importance, Captain Elechi Amadi Library could not acquire such publication due to delay in the arrival of the publication, poor compliance with the legal deposit law, poor funding, publishing problems and others. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- There should be an improved level of funding to enable CEAPOLY Library to purchase more government publications and encourage

staff in the Acquisition unit to source for publications emanating from government agencies, departments, offices and so on.

- Most government printing presses that hitherto handle their printing jobs are now moribund and ineffective hence contracting out the printing of government publications to private printing companies. It is expected that government publications should be handled and managed by their printing presses to enable easy access to these publications as a one-stop-shop.
- CEAPOLY library should engage in online subscription of government publications. Similarly, all publishers of government publications should upload their publications online for easy acquisition.
- All the Nigerian government printing presses both at the federal and state levels should be required by law to publish and distribute at least bi-annually, the lists of all the items they published. Some of the copies should be sent to the National Library of Nigeria and other

libraries in their various states. The same should apply to all publishers of official publications outside the government press. The National Library will then compile the list and make them available to all the academic libraries in the country.

- There is a need for academic libraries to renew their bibliographic compilation annually and be conversant with the various government publications in order to know what to acquire or request.
- Delaying the supply of government publications should be stopped. This is because expired information is like an expired drug.
- Government documents should be digitized in libraries to make their utilization easy. Digitized materials could be easily accessed.
- Finally, competent/professional staff should be engaged in the CEAPOLY Library and staff should be trained regularly for proper management of the government publications and other information resources.

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