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### **SPECIAL LIBRARY SERVICES IN ANAMBRA STATE: A CASE STUDY OF FACULTY LAW LIBRARIES IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY AWKA AND ANAMBRA STATE UNIVERSITY, ULI**

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#### ***Abstract***

*Law libraries are not only essential but also crucial to the study and practice of the legal profession. They are the mainstay of any successful legal practice. This paper examines law library services in the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the Anambra State University, Uli. A questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. The findings are presented in four tables, analyzed and discussed. Recommendations are then made on how law library services in the state can be improved upon.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The theme of this year's conference: "Librarianship in Anambra State: the state of the art" is a pointer to where we are in professional practice in Anambra State. I have chosen to write on the sub-theme "special libraries," using the law library as a focal point.

There is much argument over what constitutes a special library. These arguments bother on the issue of ownership of special libraries, subject coverage and library accessibility to the public. Web definitions of 'special libraries' include: a library that focuses on the interest inherent in the institution it serves. Libraries in hospitals, corporations, associations, museums and other types of institutions are all special libraries. In many cases, they are not open to the public. Special libraries tend to have a relatively small number of users and restricted access to relatively small but highly

specialized collections [Robin 2000]. Thus, special librarians of all types share the same goal: they must evaluate, analyze, package and present information in a way that maximizes their libraries' usefulness. In the words of Bauer [2003], special librarians must be intimately familiar with the needs of their organization and those of the library clientele and in many cases have exclusive training or degrees in the pertinent subject matter.

### **The law library as special library**

Dada [2001] states in unequivocal terms that law libraries are a special hybrid of the art and practice of librarians. Be it the academic law library, the in-house Chamber law library and the Ministry of Justice law libraries, the primary objective is directed at serving the research and information needs of the parent organization. The legal collection is to a lawyer what the laboratory is to a scientist. Thus law libraries are not only essential but also crucial to the study and practice of the legal profession.

The Council of Legal Education during accreditation of any Faculty of Law always insists on:

- i. a separate law library for each faculty
- ii. a professionally qualified law librarian
- iii. a well-equipped office for the law librarian, and
- iv. a well stocked law library.

It laid down these conditions as minimum standards for a law library. The National Universities Commission which is the second Nigerian accrediting body in law in its approved minimum standard for Nigerian universities clearly states that the law library is the lawyer's laboratory and should be seen as such by both the nation and its policy makers.

### **Methodology**

Pursuant to this requirement, this research was conducted on the Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and the Faculty of Law, Anambra State University Uli this year. A questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. It sought to examine the services of these two law libraries in the state under the following sub-headings:

- i. Staffing
- ii. Library holding

- iii. Funding
- iv. ICT development.

**The research findings were summarized in Tables 1-4 below**

Institution/Year established	Employment status of law librarians	Qualifications		No of Librarians in the Law Library.
		Library Law	Science	
NAU, Awka [1985]	Permanent	BA[Lib Sc]		2
	Permanent	Diploma MLS Dip. In Lib Sc	LLB	
ASU Uli [2001]	Contract	None	LLB	2
	Permanent	MLS None		

Table 1 reveals that both libraries have two law librarians each. However, as at the time of writing this report, none has all the required qualifications according to the CLE requirement. Basically, law librarianship is an example of an area within librarianship where many individuals are successful because of the training they received in a subject specialty, which is law. Going by the NUC standard, a law librarian should be a professional librarian and also preferably a lawyer. The Council of Legal Education insists on the law degree. The advantage of the law degree is obvious but as Auyo [2001] observed, it is doubtful if in any Nigerian University, specialized training in law librarianship is offered. To ensure compliance with the requirement of these two accrediting bodies, a law librarian is faced with the challenge of obtaining dual degrees in both law and librarianship.

**Table 2: Library Holding: [Law Reports/Statutes]**

Institution	Nigerian Law Reports [no of titles]	Foreign Law Reports [No of titles]	No of Foreign Statutes	No of Nigerian Statutes	
				Federal 2004	State
NAU, Awka	44	23	10	6sets	15
ASU, Uli	41	21	5	3 sets 10	

The inquiry sought to ascertain the strength of the library collection of these two libraries with regards to their law reports and statute books. The result, however, shows that considerable effort has been made to acquire an appreciable number of titles in both foreign and local law reports and statutes in the two libraries.

**Table 3: Funding**

Institution	Separate Law Library building	Year last accredited / quota	Source of funding	Source of acquisition	Separate Library budget	Outside Sponsorship
NAU.Awka	Yes	2007 [180]	Univ. Lib	Univ. lib	No	No
ASU, Uli	Yes	2006	Univ. Lib	Univ. Lib	No	Yes

The two institutions have their separate law library buildings but these libraries are not autonomous in terms of funding. The main University library still acquires for them and they do not have a separate law library budget. Virtually all the Nigerian universities faced the joint NUC/CLE accreditation in 2007. Faculty of Law NAU, Awka, has gained full accreditation with its quota at the Nigerian Law School increased from 150 to 180. It is obvious that the level of funding in state-owned law libraries cannot be compared with that of the Federal-owned; Federal-owned universities obviously fare better. Considerable effort still needs to be made to improve the funding of state- owned universities.

**Table 4: ICT development**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Is your Lib computerized?</b>	<b>Is your Lib connected to Internet?</b>	<b>Do you subscribe to any legal data Base?</b>	<b>Collection of resources</b>	<b>No of computers</b>
NAU, Awka	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
ASU, Uli	No	No	No	No	1

Table 4 reveals that the level of ICT development in both libraries is still very low. At NAU, Awka, they have 6 computer sets, and Internet connectivity. Although they have 6 computer sets and internet connectivity, the library operation is still manual. They have not subscribed to any legal database such as the LEXIS, NEXIS etc. They should borrow a leaf from both the University of Jos and the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus.

These facilities are non-existent at ASU, Uli, although they have just one computer set. Considering the rapid technological development which has transformed the world of knowledge into a global village, there is an urgent need to facilitate ICT application and development in these law libraries by their staffing.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The cost of maintaining a virile law library is enormous in view of the fact that the Nigerian law has a common law origin. The nature of resources in a law library can be categorized into two - primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are those, which actually make the law [statutes, delegated legislation and report of cases], while secondary sources are texts, which discuss the law. The bulk of materials in the law library comprise primary materials. The problem of funding in these libraries is further compounded by lack of a separate budget for the law faculty. Faculty law libraries need a separate budget different from the main university library budget.

### **Bibliographic Control**

As Ademola [1994] observed, there is no place in Nigeria, not even in the Federal Ministry of Justice nor the Supreme Court Library where a collection of all the written laws in force in Nigeria can be found. At the state level, it is almost impossible to

ascertain what has been enacted in other states, let alone have access to the text of their laws. Effective networking can bridge this gap.

Some other nagging problems, which face many law libraries in Anambra State, include lack of autonomy, lack of indigenous law publishing in the state, lack of networking, absence of a virile special law library association in the state, etc. The writer is of the opinion that the alternative sources of funding should be sought to complement government allocation to these libraries.

Faculty law libraries need some degree of viable autonomy to enhance their funding and resource allocation.

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Web definition [www.webliminal.com/search/qlossarv.htm](http://www.webliminal.com/search/qlossarv.htm)