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### The Place of Book Publishing In National Development In Nigeria

**Linda Ijeoma Uwandu Ph.D.**  
Department of Library  
and Information Science,  
Imo State University, Owerri.  
[ijeomauwandu2014@gmail.com](mailto:ijeomauwandu2014@gmail.com)

and

**Chioma Okere**  
[chiomstep8@gmail.com](mailto:chiomstep8@gmail.com)  
Department of Library  
and Information Science,  
Imo State University, Owerri.

#### Abstract

Publishing plays a vital role in the development of any nation. Publishing industries exist in every country to meet the information needs of its citizens for the overall advancement of the country. To ensure meaningful development, publishers serve as watchdogs of the society. The paper examines the place of book publishing in national development in Nigeria. It discussed the concept of publishing and national development. Emphasis was also laid on the contributions of publishing to national development in Nigeria. The study also identified the factors affecting contribution of publishing to national development which include inadequate funds, non-compliance to legal deposit law, piracy, poor reading culture, dearth of basic ICT facilities, inadequate qualified manpower, negative attitude of investors and banks, dearth of expertise and high cost of production. Conclusion was drawn as well as suggestions that could help to ensure effective contribution of publishing to national development in Nigeria. It is hoped that from this study, publishers and other stakeholders in the publishing industry will rise up to the task of ensuring the production of quality information resources to facilitate literacy which invariably will enhance national development.

**Keywords:** Publishing, National Development, Publisher, Publishing Industry, Nigeria.

#### 1.1 Introduction

Every country requires information to carry out its activities at any point in time. Information has been treated as a very important source for societal development. The progress of any nation depends on information generation, disseminating it to the public and promoting its ultimate use. The impact of information is felt when the right information is disseminated to the target audience at the right time and satisfies the demands of the target audience. Thus, through

publishing, various information resources have been used to disseminate relevant information to the appropriate users so as to enhance development of the citizens who are agents of development. Without publishing books and other information resources, a country is bound to remain ignorant and underdeveloped. It is only when citizens are enlightened and well informed that they can contribute their quota to national development.

National development refers to sustainable growth and advancement of a

country geared towards improving lives and environment of the citizens. Braman as cited in Jerry and Ekeruche (2023) opines that national development is the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. For a country to be developed, it must have attained social, educational, economic, political and technological stability. Unfortunately, with the huge natural, human and material resources in Nigeria, the problem of poor standard of living, unemployment and poverty is still prevalent. This is why Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) maintain that the problem of urban overpopulation, rural stagnation, unemployment and growing inequalities continue to face less developed countries like Nigeria. National development is endangered in a country where publishing is not considered as a critical information resource generation process.

Publishing is an effective instrument for development of societies and nations at large because citizens are liberated from illiteracy, diseases and poverty when they are well informed and enlightened. By implication, no meaningful development can take place in a country where the citizens are predominantly illiterate (Omekwu & Igbo, 2010). Through publishing, information resources emanate which helps to educate, inform and entertain citizens so as to contribute their quota to the development of the nation. One of the important things that a developing country needs to develop is to have a viable publishing industry because it is considered as a critical sector in nation building. The focus of this paper therefore is to examine the place of book publishing in national development in Nigeria.

## **2.1 Literature Review**

### **Publishing**

Publishing refers to the transformation of intellectual ideas and thoughts of man into portable format and making them available to

the public. Carter and Patis as cited in Oyeyinka, Aganbi and Alewolaro-Odule (2016) maintained that publishing is a generic term used to describe the process of producing literacy and information materials for public utility. In the same vein, Eddy-Ugorji (2020) opined that publishing refers to the activity of making information, literature, music, software and other content available to the public either for sale or for free. In other words, publishing is the process of making the literary work of an author available to the public. It involves the selection, preparation, production, marketing and distribution of print communication materials (Ihebuzor & Ihebuzor, 2016). It encompasses conceptualization of ideas, creation of manuscript, acceptance of manuscript, editing, production of books and other information resources, marketing, distribution and sales. This is why Emenyonu (2017) pointed out that publishing includes the process of negotiating with author(s) or agents for manuscripts, design of books in conjunction with printers, book production, publicity and sales through book wholesalers and retailers. In other words, series of steps are taken in order to publish a book. Thus, no matter what stage of development a country may have reached, teamwork is needed to produce a book and make it available to the public. Basically, publishing requires the cooperation of four basic active partners for its sustainability namely: the author, printer, bookseller and publisher. Each stakeholder has key role to play to make sure that the process of publishing is completed. Publishing activities cannot be done singlehandedly. This is to say that every book published has an author, printer, bookseller and publisher. The fact that an individual or firm performed all the four functions does not change the fact that there are four distinct active partners in publishing.

Publishing activities consist of production of manuscript, editing, designing, typesetting, printing, marketing and distribution of printed information resources.

Okwilagwe (2001) submitted that publishing activities involve the production of newspapers, magazines, books, newsletters, journals, reports, and many other printed materials, and the distribution and marketing of these printed materials. But with the advent of modern technology, the scope of publishing has expanded to include electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-magazines, e-newspapers, etc. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can now be used in carrying out all the publishing activities which can only be processed, accessed and used electronically. Without doubt whatsoever, this has made it possible for information to reach a wider target audience compared to paper-based information resources. Published information resources can be accessed by the target audience both online and offline.

## **2.2 National Development**

National development refers to the overall development of a country in all aspect of societal life. It is a remarkable change in all the sectors of a nation as well as a transformation in its human resources (Ofodu & Okwoli, 2023). The advancement or growth of a nation socioeconomically, politically, technologically, educationally, culturally enhances the well-being of the society. Thus, Mohammed as cited in Alabi and Sani (2013) maintained that national development is the advancement or growth of a country especially socio-economically, politically, literally (educationally), culturally and technologically. In other words, national development is the improvement of a nation in all spheres of human endeavour namely social, economic, political, educational, cultural and technological development. For a nation to be in a phase of development there must be some pre-requisites, which include socio-political and economic stability (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011). This is why some nations are regarded as developed while

others are regarded as developing or underdeveloped. Thus, when majority of citizens are poor, ignorant, superstitious, unemployed, rural areas stagnated, urban areas overpopulated and growing inequalities bedevil them, they are regarded as underdeveloped or developing nations while in developed nations, citizens enjoy political, social, economic and educational stability.

Every nation needs to have relevant, updated and adequate information to be dynamic and develop in all areas of life geared towards bettering the lives of the citizens. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the development of any nation in the world has often been connected with information availability and utilization (Jerry & Ekeruche, 2023). Consequently, there is need for human intellectual development which acts as catalyst for national development. This can be achieved through establishment of viable publishing industry because publishers are vanguards for national development.

## **2.3 Contributions of Publishing to National Development**

The contribution of publishing in every sector in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Publishing has increasingly played a critical role in all spheres of human endeavour. The prevalence and rapid development of publishing has transformed human society from ignorant and non-literate to well-informed and enlightened society. Publishing all over the world has been recognized as an indispensable instrument of national development. This is because information and knowledge derived from books and other information resources have helped in the development of the broad areas of human knowledge in arts, science and technology as well as in many other spheres of human endeavour (Omekwu & Igbo, 2010). Thus, publishing has the potential to contribute substantially to social, economic, political, educational, cultural and technological

development of a nation. In fact, publishing contributes strategically to development through facilitating access to the intellectual ideas and insights of individuals, creation of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, preservation of culture and tradition, aids research and educational development, facilitates entertainment and leisure among others (Igwe, Ahmed, Alhassan & Abubakar, 2015). It is one venture that every human society earnestly seeks.

Without publishing, development of human mind, personality and potentials would be impossible as publishing impacts useful and relevant skills to individuals thereby enhancing growth of a nation.

Publishing has impacted on the quality and quantity of research, teaching and learning in the modern-day society. The role of publishing in research, teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary society. Oyeyinka, Aganbi and Atewolara-Odule (2016) opined that publishing is channeled towards promoting learning and expanding knowledge. It has engendered advances in research and improved the quality of teaching and learning through its product which is information resources.

Published information resources add value to the process of research, teaching and learning in our educational institutions. Hence, educational institutions emphasize the need for libraries (Ugocha, 2014). An overwhelming proportion of published information resources get to the hands of the target audience through different types of libraries because these libraries are established as distribution agencies for published information resources. Published information resources encompass different types of information materials in print and non-print format which are the carriers of information, knowledge, ideas, thoughts, dreams, insights, imaginations, values and

norms of the society. Published information resources in electronic format are changing the way in which both students and academics seek information and conduct research. In this information age, published information resources are regarded as catalyst to educational development because the citizens need information to help them contribute effectively to teaching, learning and research.

As an important economic business venture, publishing has made immense contributions to the economic development of the nation. People become fully developed in business and investment because of information resources published in areas such as economic policies, economic data, economic growth, import and export figures, inflation rate among others. Today, for a nation to develop economically, intellectual and creative minds whose novel ideas and suggestions could productively solve many economic problems are required. Such highly able minds are nurtured by a country's publishing industry to publish information resources relevant to the subject area.

Modern society desperately needs highly able writers who can bring innovative solutions to its current challenges and at the same time produce new ideas for ongoing economic advancement.

Publishing provides employment opportunities for citizens and foreigners who studied related courses. Through publishing, many people become employers of labour and job creators thereby minimizing the rate of job dependency on government. Thus, because books and other information resources are written, processed, published, manufactured, sold and read, a whole lot of people involved in the attendant processes earn a living or generate revenue that contributes to the development of nations (Okereke, 2016). Opportunities such as becoming an author, publisher, indexer, editor, designer, printer, binder, literary agent, artist, illustrator, proofreader, marketer, distributor, sales



representative among others are available for young Nigerian graduates and professionals in the relevant areas.

The field of politics has witnessed development because of publishing. Publishing influences public opinion, promote democracy and good governance, influences people's behaviour and support people-oriented policies (Idakwo & Sani, 2015). Keeping records of government activities, disseminating and retrieving information have been enhanced through viable publishing industry. These publishing industries publish information resources that provide opportunities for people to be enlightened and better governed so as to improve their quality of life.

Publishing enhances cultural heritage and preservation from one generation to another. No human society can develop in all its dimensions if its culture dies off (Anka, 2017). Thus, our arts, languages, customs and traditions can be recorded, preserved and utilized through publishing vital information for future generations to promote national development. This is why Oyeyinka, Aganbi and Alewolaro-Odule (2016) noted that the literary works of our known authors like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiongo, Akinwumi Ishola, Adebayo Faleti and so on popularized various Nigeria artifacts, songs and proverbs. With these works of renowned authors, people's customs, traditions, norms and values are appreciated and utilized by the younger ones. This is to say that published information resources, rich in people's way of life are very important for national development because no nation can advance without letting the younger ones know about their customs, traditions, beliefs, norms and values. Through publishing, human activities are preserved for posterity.

Publishing plays a great role in national development as it serves as a veritable source of information for entertainment and leisure. Through reading

published information resources, people are engaged in or occupied with what interest them. Reading information resources is very important as it helps the mind to generate new ideas, widens one's horizon, improves memory and helps one to properly make productive use of his leisure time.

### **3.1 Factors Affecting Contributions of Publishing to National Development**

There are some factors that affect contributions of publishing to national development. They include inadequate funds, non-compliance to deposit laws, piracy, poor reading culture, dearth of basic ICT facilities, inadequate qualified manpower, negative attitude of investors and banks, dearth of expertise and high cost of production.

*Inadequate Funds:* Insufficient funds to maintain publishing firms have been a major challenge towards effective contributions of publishing to national development in Nigeria. Publishing is a capital-intensive business and requires adequate fund for establishment, growth, maintenance and sustainability. It is quite unfortunate that publishers are faced with insufficient funds to set up a publishing firm, expand and maintain a sustainable growth of its operations. Inadequate funds have resulted to inadequate procurement of ICT facilities and other relevant equipment, hiring of manpower and maintenance of ICT facilities and equipment. Without adequate finance, publishing cannot effectively contribute to national development because finance is the bedrock of every organization.

*Non-compliance to Legal Deposit Laws:* Non-compliance to legal deposit laws by publishers and authors pose a great threat to contribution of publishing to national development. Most publishers fail to comply with the legal deposit law in Nigeria which stipulates that publishers of every book

published in Nigeria shall, within one month after the publication, deliver at his own expense to the National Library a specified number of copies of their published work. The Act that established the National Library of Nigeria stipulates that authors/publishers should deposit three copies, state agencies to deposit 10 copies, and federal agencies deposit 25 copies of all their publications with National Library of Nigeria within one month of publication (Asubiojo, 2020). Egbokhare (2020) maintained that by adhering to the requirements, the authors' works are easily accessed in libraries and are searchable from the database of library systems worldwide.

On the contrary, the authors and publishers fail to adhere to these requirements and this situation poses a great challenge to national development since published works of authors are not made visible and accessible if not included in the National Bibliography of Nigeria. The book and other documentary heritage cannot serve as a measure of Nigerian intellectual accomplishment if their publishers or producers do not comply with the legal deposit requirements (Opara, 2020).

*Piracy:* It involves unauthorized reproduction of someone's intellectual work for sale at reduced price without permission and acknowledgment to the author and original publisher. The implication of this for the publisher is that his stock lay stacked in the warehouse while unscrupulous pirates enjoy large patronage from consumers (Kalejaiye & Akangbe, 2007). These pirates connive with some printers, publishers and booksellers to sabotage the efforts of the authors and original publishers. It is unfortunate that government and the regulatory agencies like the Nigerian Copyright Commission, Book Publishers Association of Nigeria and others are yet to find a lasting solution to the burning and worrisome issue (Oyeyinka, Aganbi & Alewolaro-Odule, 2016).

*Poor Reading Culture:* Reading leads to educational development of the people and the entire society. Ogwu (2010) corroborated this situation by stating that the place of reading and learning in educational development is a prominent one. Highly informed citizenry helps in the transformation and development of the entire society and nation at large. In Nigeria, there is poor reading culture which has really affected publishing business. Nigerians hardly read and are disinclined to own personal books (Ogugua, Emerole, Chukwu & Amadi, 2019). The general populace of the Nigerian society prefers other media of disseminating information that do not require much reading to books. Such media include television, mobile phones, computers and internet. This has affected patronage of published information resources invariably affecting the contributions of publishing to national development.

*Dearth of Basic ICT Facilities:* The advances in Information and Communication Technologies have structurally changed the way books are produced, distributed and sold (Ani & Ogboh, 2018). Unfortunately, many publishing firms do not have internet facilities, wireless networks, computers, scanners, printers and other high-capacity technologies. The cost of these ICT facilities limit publishing firms' ability to acquire and use them. Many publishing firms cannot procure these facilities due to insufficient funds. This implies that most publishing firms have not fully embraced the new trend in publishing information resources. Ubogu (2018) affirmed that many book publishers lack contemporary equipment as well as skills and techniques that will enable them to upgrade the quality and quantity of their production.

*Inadequate Qualified Manpower and Dearth of Technical Expertise:* Most of the publishing

firms are grossly short-staffed with qualified personnel, thus a major setback to publishing in Nigeria. Due to inadequate finance needed to pay qualified personnel, publishing firms resort to hiring the substandard ones. Also, there is a dearth of technical expertise in book publishing industry in Nigeria. Technical expertise such as engravers, artists, editors, illustrators, printers among others are hardly employed in the book industry due to inadequate finance to take care of their salaries and allowances. When these professions are not involved in publishing activities, substandard information resources are published thereby, adversely affecting the growth of the industry.

*Negative Attitude of Investors and Banks:* Publishing is capital intensive and the average profit is low. Due to the fact that publishers do not make adequate profit in publishing, they see it as waste of time, energy and money. This situation scares investors away from investing in publishing. Those who apply for loan facilities from banks are discouraged due to the banks' requests for collateral. Kalejaiye and Akangbe (2007) noted that this negative attitude of investors and banks make it more difficult for publishers to raise enough capital for their operations.

*High Cost of Production:* The economic situation in Nigeria poses a great threat to purchasing of publishing materials such as ink, paper, films, printing plates, etc. The price of computer hardware and software continue to rise in most developing countries such as Nigeria. The deplorable state of Nigeria roads, excessive government regulations and interference, poor telecommunication network among others directly or indirectly lead to high cost of production in publishing industries in Nigeria. Consequently, all these affect the cost of production and invariably affect the prices of the published information resources which

are unaffordable to the target audience of the lower class. The publishers find it difficult to make profits due to low patronage and are forced to close down. Adeyokun and Elonye (2015) affirmed that high cost of production, no doubt, translate to low profit margins and even total loss of print jobs.

*Irregular Power Supply:* It has been observed that no sector of the economy can achieve total advancement as far as electricity supply is erratic. Machines and equipment require constant power supply for maximum operation but in Nigeria, electric power supply is epileptic and not regular.

### **Conclusion**

It was established and therefore concluded that publishing plays a critical role in all spheres of human endeavour. Publishers and other stakeholders in publishing industry are expected to rise up to the task of ensuring production of quality information resources to facilitate literacy which invariably will enhance national development. Having seen the challenges, effective contribution of publishing to national development becomes difficult. By fully integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into publishing industry, a fundamental shift in the way publishers publish, accessibility and utilization of these published information resources will be evolved. However, to fully integrate ICT into publishing in Nigeria, there must be proper and adequate funding of publishing industry.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the aforementioned challenges, the following suggestions could help to ensure effective contribution of publishing to national development in Nigeria.

1. The government should;
  - a. encourage publishers and authors by giving them incentives such as soft loans. This will enable them to overcome

- financial constraints so as to be more productive in their publishing business.
- b. review the various publication laws in Nigeria in line with the prevailing developmental changes to correct the contradiction of various provisions in them. Also, organize seminars and workshops through the National Library of Nigeria to sensitize publishers about legal deposit laws.
  - c. embark on the enforcement of copyright protection law at all cost and also make sure that stringent measures are taken against defaulters to ensure that piracy is tackled.
  - d. compel schools to include indigenous literature materials into their school curriculum and also organize programmes such as literary festivals, workshops, book clubs and reading competitions so as to encourage students to read indigenous literature books to enhance their reading skills.
  - e. encourage banks and other financial houses to give adequate loan facilities to publishers to finance their business.
  - f. pay more attention in funding ICT oriented projects through special budgetary allocation for publishing firms to facilitate speedy publishing and also ensure that citizens are provided with fast internet services at an affordable rate for immense benefits attached to it.
  - g. ensure that import duties on information resources, publishing equipment, machines and materials are reduced drastically to enable easy importation of these items. This will help publishers to upgrade their machines and equipment so as to upgrade their business.
  - h. revitalize abandoned paper mill industries while new ones established to enhance production of paper commensurate to national consumption rate.
  - i. explore various options that can consolidate the existing power source such as solar and nuclear energy to ensure regular power supply in the country.
2. The publishers should;
    - a. work together to form cooperative thrift society to enable each other to overcome financial problems when the need arises.
    - b. comply with the legal deposit requirements to facilitate the compilation of the National Bibliography of Nigeria and other databases to create awareness in order to promote their distribution and sales.
    - c. endeavour to tackle piracy by collaborating with the Nigerian Copyright Commission and Nigeria Customs Service to boost the publishing industry.
    - d. encourage book clubs and organize reading campaigns among youths to promote reading culture in the society.
    - e. endeavour to upgrade from traditional print publication to electronic publishing for speedy publications and dissemination of information.
    - f. engage in regular training and retraining of staff to enable them keep abreast with current trends in publishing.
    - g. ensure quick and satisfactory services as regards publishing of information resources.

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