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An Appraisal of Osun State University Library from 2007-2012

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Abstract: *In most academic institutions, particularly in the third world countries, adequate attention is not paid to the library. This study, therefore, focuses on the growth and development of library infrastructure, using Osun State University, Osogbo as a case study. With the adoption of participatory observation method, the research points out the evolution of libraries in Nigeria. It also interrogates the infrastructural growth and development of a multi-campus university. The findings include the efforts of both the state government and the university authorities as regards effective running of the libraries in the six-campuses. The study concludes that library is the heart of every academic institution and must be given serious attention.*

Keywords : Appraisal of Osun State University, Nigeria. Library Infrastructure. Evolution of library in Nigeria. Development of a multi-campus University. Efforts of Osun State Government. Library as the heart of academic institution. Origin and development of library

Introduction

The Library is generally referred to as agent of civilization and particularly the heart of any academic institution, therefore, the need for some understanding of its concept is essential. In order to effectively do justice to the topic, one needs to first of all understand the word Library. By definition, Library is a designated building where information in print and in other formats are collected, organized, carefully prepared according to some specific or definite plan, and made accessible for reading and consultation by all ages and interests. Also, it is a collection of records of human culture in diverse format and languages, preserved, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of individuals for information, knowledge, recreations and aesthetic enjoyment.

Moreso, library, is a collection of books and non-book materials, systematically organized through the use of codes (rules) and schemes for the provision of services for users or clientele. According to (Aboyade, 1981) library is a collection of print and non print materials i.e. books and non books, acquired and organized by professionals for easy identification, location, accessibility, retrieval for all library patrons. Four (4) components make a library, these are: the books and other library materials, the personnel who arrange the materials for use, the building where the materials are kept, and the users or patrons who make use of the library. The library as an institution is to fulfill the aims and objectives of the parents' institution for which it is established i.e. provide for the needs of the academic community, such as students, lecturers, research fellow, and other supporting staff. To make available reference

works at different levels. Provide a conducive study areas for library users. Have a lending service that would serve all.

Osun state university library falls under the purview of Academic Library, and before we go ahead to consider Osun State University library, it is necessary to briefly examines the historical development of libraries.

General overview of the origin and development of libraries:

The origin and development of libraries have been traced to the early civilization in Samaria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Arab and the Babylonians. The Samaritans were the first people to start the widely known "usable writing style". Early Sumerian writing was simply pictogram, but they later on developed the pictogram to the hieroglyph and then to the phonetic signs. This gave way to the development and production of clay tablets, by which their thoughts and various activities were preserved for future use thus marking the beginning of libraries. More so, they were able to "preserve" their social, political and philosophical thinking; maintaining account of schools and social reforms and the preservation of contents of their hymns, prayers, rituals, sacred legends, magic formulae and work on history.

Thus by 2700 B.C. the Sumerian have had temple, private government libraries in existence where their various writings were preserved in clay tablets. The collection of clay tablets in the library of Borsippa was the only means through which the Babylonian civilization was gotten from. These works were copied and kept in the library of King

Ashurbanipal of Assyria (668-626 BC). Nevertheless, King Ashurbanipal was very information conscious. He established one of the biggest libraries at Nineveh. The materials consisted works on poetry, science, mythology, history, economics, religions etc. The arrangement of materials was usually by subjects and titles.

The Babylonians developed a system of writing different from the pictogram and hieroglyph of the Sumerians. Their style was called the cuneiform. Between the 6th and 7th centuries B.C there were libraries in Greece. The Alexandrian library, which was one of the biggest libraries at that time, had staff whose work was to make books. Then book making was based on copying process, normally done in places called scriptorium. Alexandria city became one of the world's literary and intellectual centres at that time. The ancient Egyptian civilization existed along side with that of the Sumeria, but the Egyptian developed a style of writing different from that of the Sumerian, they called their style of writing hieroglyphic- this word was gotten from the Greek language meaning to "sacred" and "to carve".

They believed that writing was meant to glorify kings and so inscriptions on monuments and wall of temples aimed at impressing the world. Most of the writing was pictorial in nature as most of the people then were illiterates. Since pictorial form of writing could not be used for writing manuscripts, a cursive style called hieratic was evolved for daily use, but later a much acceptable one called demotic was devised. Around 3200 BC the papyrus was invented and this enhanced the process of writing. During this period the educated class was the priestly class and so most of the learning during this period took place in the temple schools. In addition, temple libraries played a big role in the preservation of manuscripts etc. Though there wasn't much known about the Egyptian libraries, however, records of libraries owned by Khufu was well documented. The library was at Edfu situated within the temple. The list of works in the library was inscribed on the wall. A very significant library known was that owned by Remises II at Thebes (1250 BC). He took great interest in books and the library was said to have over 12,000 books and the entrance of the library was written "a place of healing for the soul".

In Greece and Rome, during that time Crete was the central focus of highly developed civilization, this spread to the mainland Greece and shortly after embraced the whole of Aegean area. The Cretans developed a style of writing from the pictographic type to a cursive style known as Linear A, and by 15th century BC, to a style called Linear B. But after a while the Linear B style of writing was phased out. Nothing was known of any style of writing until the advent of Greek civilization when they adopted the consonantal

twenty-two-letter alphabets of the Phoenician". With the introduction of alphabet scripts a new era of literacy in Greece came into being. Between the 7th- 6th century BC, there were libraries in Greece.

Plato the great philosopher and Euripides were known to have libraries. But Aristotle (384-322) had a lot of works because he wrote himself and also collected a great deal on various subjects. His source of information was through dialog and dialectics. By the 3rd century BC there were a lot of libraries in Greece- public, Government and even school libraries. The greatest influence was the Alexandrian library which was one of the biggest libraries at that time, it had staff whose work was to make books. Book making then was based on copying process, this was done in place called scriptorium. Here, books were labouriously copied by the scribes. The city of Alexandria then became one of world's literary and intellectual centre. The city was established at the demand of King Ptolemy Soter (322 BC).

By 146 BC the Romans had totally taken control of the Greek empire. The Romans having read the Greek literature, philosophy and science got fascinated with them. Therefore they sent their sons to Greek Athens to acquire education and sometimes spoke Greek. Private libraries became a fashion in Rome as war generals established libraries from gains of war during their confrontation with Greece. Sulla was in the Roman army that captured Athens in 86 BC and with it he captured the Aristotle's library. People (private) vigorously went about collecting manuscripts from Rome and Athens to copy and swell the holdings at their libraries. With the demand for book so rose production of book through copyright; books stores were scattered all over the place and this turned to solace for scholar as they were usually found there.

The peak of Roman civilization produced a new writing materials to replace the roll which was very cumbersome to write on. The codex was used in place of rolls. Hence parchment sheets were fastened together and bound in form of books. This development

Medieval period: during this period, there were three (3) major types of libraries in Europe, namely: The Monastery Libraries, the Cathedral Libraries, and University Library. The Monasteries contributed to the development of libraries and learning in Europe. The monks were responsible for copying of Christian, and other religious works, which they preserved. An example is the **Bible** found in the British museum. Also as a result of the establishment of the cathedral, more churches were established with more educational institutions. This development led to the establishment of libraries in addition with the establishment of Cathedral tertiary institutions, for example the Oxford University in England, University in Paris to mention but a few was a boost to learning which led to the establishment of libraries in those

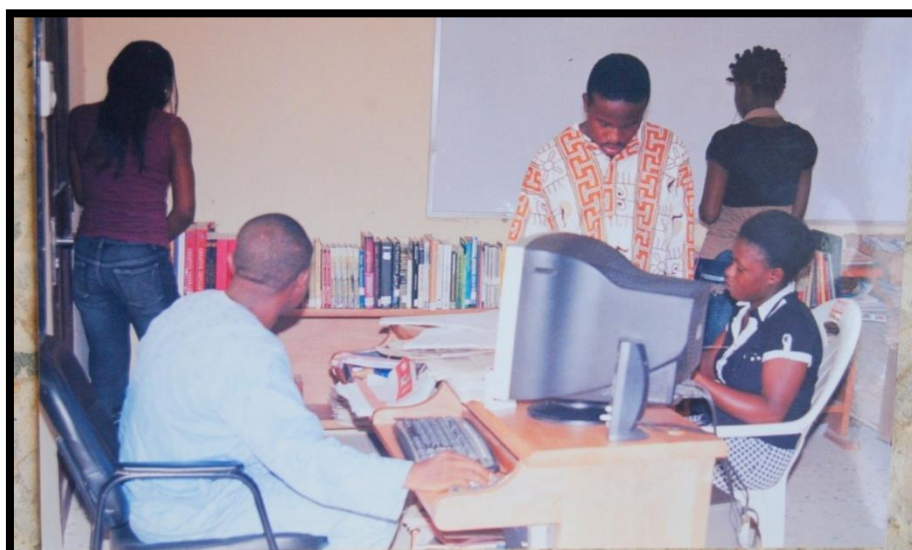
institutions. The invention of printing especially by Johannes Gutenberg, a German, invented printing of movable type in 1450, and by the end of that century printing had spread to all parts of Europe. As more books were being produced, more Libraries were opened. Learning became more accessible to people. It was no longer the exclusive preserve for Monasteries and Universities.

The Evolution of Libraries in Nigeria: Library development in Nigeria has gone through many historical developments. The colonization of Nigeria by the British and the coming of the missionaries into Nigeria open the way to the establishment of schools and libraries. However, the first library to be established in Nigeria was ‘**Tom Jones Library**’ which was founded between 1910 and 1920. There was also the formation of Lagos Book Club in the late 1920’s. In 1932, the Carnegie cooperation of New York gave the Book Club a grant of about #6,500; this allowed the formation of Lagos Library in June, 1932. Books formally owned by the Lagos Book Club formed the nucleus of the Lagos Library. In 1948, the University College, Ibadan (Now University of Ibadan) was established and the late Henry Carr’s collections form the hearth of the University library’s collections. The National Library Act, which made provision for the establishment of the National Library of Nigeria, was passed in 1964. The National Library opened to the public the same year. In 1970, the National Library Decree was enacted to correct some weakness of the activities of the National Library.

Osun State University Library: Development and Projections:

Osun State University Library is as old as the institution itself. It is the heart of the University. It helps students to develop critical thinking skills and be creative by connecting them to wide range of scholarly resources. The Library exposes staff and students to new technologies, innovations and findings in their area(s) of research.

However, the library took off from one of the lecture halls in the main campus at Osogbo with few professional librarians headed by Dr M.A Oloosun, who with other professors interviewed the Librarians, who were later employed. The library materials were purchased, some came in as gifts and donations in all areas of human endeavour. Following the processing of these materials, they were distributed to other campus libraries, because Osun State University is a multi campus institution operating collegiate system located in the six (6) geo-political zones of the state. The UNIOSUN library is decentralized in each of the six campuses namely: Osogbo, Okuku, Ikire, Ejigbo, Ipetu-Ijesa and Ifetedo. All campus libraries share the responsibility for supporting the University’s information needs, and pools knowledge, resources and personnel together to create efficiency. The main Library, Osogbo co-ordinates the activities of all campus libraries and ensures that they all work together to achieve the mission and vision of the University.



Sample of UNIOSUN Library Ikire Campus, 2007-2008 session (A replicate of other Campus Libraries at its inception across the six campuses with limited resources then)



Ikire Campus Library (A replicate of other Campus Library Libraries) 2007/2008).

THE LIBRARY BUILDING:

Based on the mission and vision of the University management and Government of Osun State to create a unique institution committed to the pursuit of academic innovation, skills- based training and a tradition of excellence in teaching, research and community service, moved the library from the lecture halls in each of the six (6) campuses to a bigger and spacious place within the main college building that could accommodate the increasing number of library users/clientele, library materials, staff and furniture. This was as a result of the completion of the college buildings as at that time. However, to further enhance the infrastructural development of the library to accommodate Electronic Library (e-library) department, set up a standard “stand alone” library buildings in all the six campuses with internet facilities.



Pictures Showing Stand alone Library across the six campuses.

Nevertheless, apart from these stand alone libraries in Osun State University, the state government and University management to fulfill their promises to the people of Osun State, specifically and Nigerians in general have commenced the building of a magnificent library that is comparable to any standard library in the world, “seen is believing”. This project is to be completed soon to accommodate students beyond vision 2030. For these reasons, one should not be surprised that UNIOSUN has tremendously performed exceedingly well without any blemish during the University accreditation exercise, in all the six (6) campuses, even as a young institution.



Pictures Showing the Construction of the new library building across the six campuses, projected beyond Vision 2030.

Library Books and other Literary Materials:

The library has purchased over 50,000 titles and more than 80,000 volumes of books which spread into all campuses according to programmes. The titles are current titles. It also subscribes to over 2,000 Journal titles, both local and international, print and on-line. There are many current References (e.g Encyclopedia, Handbooks, Dictionaries, etc.). In response to recent development in ICT, the library's services are automated. The software, the library uses is KOHA . It has the circulation, cataloguing, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and serial modules. It supported multi-campus system and so suitable for the University. With this software, library routines are done on-line by Library staff, students and members of staff do not have to come physically to the library to check the holdings of the library. The campus libraries holdings are all visible to all users regardless of which campus they are, hence if they require a title in another campus library, reservation can be made. OPAC can be accessed on: www.opac.uniosun.edu.ng.





Pictures showing Library Books and Journals across Campuses.

Internet Connectivity:

The Campus Libraries are connected to the internet. This becomes imperative for access to the rich information on the World Wide Web (www). Also, the library subscribed to many databases and access in only on-line.

These electronic resources include:

EBSCOHOST Database,
JSTORE,
SAGE ONLINE,
HINARI,
AGORA,
SCIENCE DIRECT,
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH NETWORK,
NIGERIAN VIRTUAL LIBRARY.

These E-resources are boosting the print Journals collection. This way, staff and students have unhindered access to current articles. Since many students may not have enough funds to acquire personal computers, the library provides access through the provision of over 200 computers all linked to the internet at its E-libraries in the campuses. The library has trained staff and students. The library Website can be accessed on: <http://www.uniosun.edu.ng>, and via the University Webpage by clicking on 'Library' while the E-resources are accessed by clicking on E-library.



E- Library Section of the Library (Replicate of other Campus Library)

Library Furniture:

All campuses libraries are well laid out with comfortable and modern library furniture for the users e.g.: tables, chairs, catalogue cabinets, security desks, circulation desks, wooden and steels shelves, office cabinets, cloak shelves e. t. c. have been acquired for all campus libraries. No campus library is left out in terms of facilities which are acquired in multiples to go round. Each campus library can accommodate over 300 uses at a time. The shelves are well arranged and the library staff members are well trained and always ready to assist users. The library laid emphasis on delivery of good service.



Pictures showing Library Furniture across the six Campuses.

Staffing:

The library is headed by an Acting University Librarian. This medium is used to appreciate the effort of Mrs B.A. Asubiojo, who has contributed to the progress of UNIOSUN library when she was here as the Deputy University Librarian (She is currently the University Librarian of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife) and Dr M.A. Olaosun, the present Deputy University Librarian, for his effort and contribution hitherto towards the development of the library. There are plans in top gear to employ a substantive University Librarian. All these are possible because of the love the University Vice Chancellor, Professor Sola Akinrinade and his teams have for the library. Similarly, each campus library is headed by a qualified librarian and a number of qualified supporting staff. Though, a young University, the institution has employed well qualified librarians and can boast of a large number of staff than some older Universities. There are professional librarians, Para-professional staff (senior staff), junior staff, and secretariat/ supporting staff.

College/library relationship:

There is a healthy relationship between the library and Member of the University

community. Both staff and students recommend titles for purchase and are regular users of the library.

Impact of the State Government:

The development of UNIOSUN Library right from inception of the institution hitherto, is the outcome of the efforts of Osun State Government in all ramifications, and the love the University management has for the library. Osun State Government has allocated billions of naira for the development of the library in the areas of library buildings, book and other literary materials.

Conclusion

The library is a growing organism. New titles, both print and electronic must be acquired from time to time, to keep the stock alive. Also, by the time the main campus library building is completed, there will be enough space for all library patrons/users/clientele. The issue of frequent power failure needs to be addressed. Small generators should be supplied to each of the campus libraries, in case the centre generator is not switched on. This will be highly appreciated by the University library.

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