

## THE IMPACT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study is to find out the impact of the establishment of Women's Research and Documentation Centre, University of Ibadan on the patronage and library resources available to researchers with keen interest on Gender Studies. Also the library resources made available with particular interest on the library collection and its users. Participant Observation and Oral Interview with the Senior Library Officer were used to check the statistics of library users and collection of library resources available between 2004-2014. The study further revealed that from 2004 to 2014, 8000 volumes of books, 2,500 journals, 2,000 magazines and 25 files of newspaper cuttings were acquired. The study also showed that statistics of library users between 2004 and 2006 was low. 2006 to 2012 was very high because of the awareness. 2013 to 2014 was very low because of strikes embarked upon by academic staff of tertiary institutions. It was found out that, with the influx of library users more recent books and journals need to be acquired for the library because some of the books are obsolete. Recommendations based on the findings were made which include more staff, shelves, a photocopy machine to discourage mutilation of books and journals for security of library resources.

**Keywords:** WORDOC, Library Resources, Library Use, Statistics, Women.

### INTRODUCTION

A "Special Library" may be defined as a library maintained by an individual, co-operation, association, government agency or any other group of collection, organization and dissemination of information primarily devoted to a special subject and offering specialized patronage. An example of such libraries is the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC), University of Ibadan. The library is the first of its kind in Nigeria. It was established in 1987. This Research Centre is a "Special Library" catering particularly for those with keen interest in research and documentation about women, their various activities and achievements in Nigeria and all over the world. The Ford Foundation was initially the main sponsor of the centre. The other collaborative sponsors include philanthropists, organizations both within and outside Nigeria. (Awe, 1987). The external donors are the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA) and Univertheilen Stiftung Fur Eine Solidarische (Foundation for World Solidarity) based in Germany. This centre was established as a national centre for research, training and dissemination of information for men and women who are interested in the study of gender related issues.

In September 1988, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria established the National Commission on women which was a step in the right direction. The Federal Military Government also took the initiative for setting up Departments of Women's Affairs at the state level. A fair was organized by the Better Life Programme for Rural Women (September

14-18, 1988). Many women's organizations, including the National Council of Women's Societies have called for the creation of such a commission. At the end of a national seminar on Nigerian Women and National Development (June 20-21, 1985) at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, participants urged the government to set up a permanent commission on women's affairs responsible to the Head of State and to appoint an experienced women's leader with a proven record of commitment to women's needs and activities to head the commission. Two years later at its first seminar on women's studies in November 1987, WORDOC issued a communique which called on the Federal Government to create "An Independent National Commission on Women that would be responsible to the President to promote women's studies and to initiate reforms in the social, economic, legal and political structure so as to improve the general welfare of women. The Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria hosted The First Regional African Meeting of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) September, 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 1988. The participants comprised of 108 delegates from nine countries deliberated on two major issues: 1. Women's Movements and Visions. 2. Food, Energy and the Debt Crisis in relation to women.

### **Location**

WORDOC library is located beside Lady Bank Anthony building, Institute of African Studies, South East of the University of Ibadan campus. The environment is serene and conducive for research. The Centre occupies three rooms in the building. A section for the Senior Library Officer's office, another where reference sources are kept and a sizeable well ventilated reading room that can take about twenty clients at a time. Lady Bank Anthony building is specifically used for hosting conferences, seminars and workshops related to women.

### **Development of Special Libraries**

Special Libraries took their roots from academics where narrow specialized interest sought satisfaction. In those ancient times, the media of communication were clay and parchment, very few professional bodies and specialized learned societies were keen enough to establish special libraries for their members. Some of those professional bodies that set up their libraries were The Medical Association, The Engineering Association and The Architecture Association to mention just a few. Collections of books were also made by -Monasteries, which specialized in religious texts, scriptures, epistles and commentaries. Private collections were also put together by educational institutions established by individuals. For instance, Universities of Kings, Noble men, Bishops, and Rich Merchants. These usually catered for special interest. In addition, Government Collection like the National Archives and The Museum also played a part in the development -of special libraries. Finally The Industrial Revolution contributed immensely to t-his effort, in that during the period and after, literacy awareness intensified among workers- as paper became more readily available and faster means of printing was placed at the disposal of workers. The libraries that were set up for workers were usually for the specialized information of the different groups and workers.

### **Special Libraries in Nigeria**

There are quite a number of special libraries functioning today in Nigeria and from empirical evidence, they are usually better cared for than public libraries because of the unique role attached to them by their patrons. Below are some special libraries existing in Nigeria:-

1. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan.  
Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Ibadan.

2. United States Information Services (USIS), Lagos.
3. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos.
4. Nigerian Institute of Advance Legal Studies (NIALS), Lagos.
5. Federal Institute of Industrial Research (FIIRO), Oshodi-Lagos.
6. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Abuja.
7. Court of Appeal, Abuja.
8. Lagos Business School.
9. Ministry of Justice Library in (all the states of the federation).
10. British Council Library, Lagos.
11. Development Policy Centre, Ibadan.
12. Nigerian Institute of Social & Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan.
13. Nigerian Society of Engineers, Victoria Island, Lagos.

It should be noted that, most of these libraries have a collection of over 10,000 volumes.

### **The Women Research and Documentation Centre**

Most countries of the world, including African countries, now have women-centred programme of study in their universities. Women studies are now recognized as a legitimate field of academic research, backed up by facilities such as archives, libraries, presses, journals and books. They are even institutes and research centres devoted to the study of women. Although women integral part of the society have contributed significantly, like their men folk, to economic and social development, their activities were neglected in study programmes in school and universities. This meant that the achievements and contributions of a large section of the population were ignored and over looked in the consideration of the development activities of the whole society. People are now aware of the positive role of women in national development. The change came about in the wake of the declaration by the United Nations of the Nations Decade for women which covered the period of 1976-1985. During the period, the contribution of women to nation building was emphasized.

Perhaps it is the consciousness that awakened Nigeria during this period that led to the establishment of WORDOC in 1987 with the initiative of Prof. Bolanle Awe, then the Director of Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. The Research Documentation Centre was sponsored by The Ford Foundation, the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), Univerteilen Stiftung Fur Eine Solidarische (Foundation for World Solidarity) based in Germany, Public Spirited Individuals and Organizations. The University of Ibadan took over WORDOC in September, 2000. The University of Ibadan since then has being responsible for the staffing and library resources.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Centre according to WORDOC News Letter Vol. 1 No. 1 May 1987 include the following:

1. To provide a focus for women, in Nigeria and promotion of new methodologies in the study of Nigerian women.
2. To set up a women's work and promote a more accurate understanding of the various roles and concerns of women in Nigeria and West Africa through projects, publications, regular seminars and other activities, with a view of providing a basis for policy formation on issues.
3. To establish a documentation centre for the use of scholars, researchers and other interested persons.
4. To seek sources for funding research on women and to facilitate its implementation.

5. To provide links with other women's Research Centres and International Agencies in Africa, the West Indies, North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia.

### **Organizing Committee of Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC)**

The establishment of WORDOC was initiated by Professor (Mrs) Bolanle Awe, an eminent Professor of History and the Director of Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. Status and qualifications of members of the organizing committee is as follows: AWE, Bolanle: Chairperson, O.F.R., M.A. (St Andrews), D. Phil. (Oxon). Professor of History; Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. ADEDEJI, Folasade: B. Ed., M. Ed., A.L.A. (Ibadan). Librarian, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. ADEKANYE, Tomilayo: B. Sc. (Ibadan), M. Phil., Ph. D. (Nottingham), Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan. AKANJI, Bola: M.Sc. (Ibadan). Research Fellow, Agric and Rural Development Department, NISER, Ibadan. ABAYEMI, S. O., Oba (Dr) The Olufin of Gbongan, B. A. (Ife), M. A., Ph. D. (Birmingham), Senior Research Fellow of History, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. DENZER, Laray: B.A. (Kalamazoo), M.A. (Legon), Ph. D. (Birmingham), Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Ibadan.

DI-DOMENICO, Catherine: M.A. (Edinburgh), Ph .D. (Ibadan) Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan. EZUMAH, Nkoli: B.Sc., M. Sc., Ph. D. (Ibadan). Co-ordinating Secretary (WORDOC), Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. IGODAN, Chris, O.B. S., M. S. (Missouri), Ph. D. (Ohio State) Lecturer, Dept of Agric. Extension Services, University of Ibadan. IWARA, A. U., B.A. (Ibadan), M.A. (Sorbonne, Paris), M. Phil. (London), Ph. D. (Wales), Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. IYUN, Bose: F.B.A. (Ibadan), Ph. D. (Legion), Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Ibadan.

JAMES, Sybil, L., B.A. (UCWI/London), M.A., M. Ed., Ed. D. (Columbia), Dip. Ad. Stud. Ed. (Cape Coast), Reader, Department of Communication and Language Arts and Co-ordinator, General Studies Programme, University of Ibadan. LONGE, Oyebiodun, G., B. Sc., (Ibadan), Ph. D. (Nottingham), Reader, Department of Animal Science, University of Ibadan. MAKINWA-ADEBUSOYE, Paulina, K.: B.A. (Vassar), M.A. (New York), M. Sc., D. Sc. (Harvard), Professor of Geography, University of Benin MBA, Nina.: B.A. (Sydney), Ph. D. (Ibadan), Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Lagos . ODEJIDE, I. Abiola: B.A. (Ibadan), Dip. T.E.S.L. (Edin), M. A. (Leeds), Ph. D. (Ibadan), Reader, Department of Communications Language Arts, University of Ibadan.

ODUBOSUN, P. Kasse: B.B. (Georgia State), M.B.A. (Xavier), Ph. D. (Ibadan), Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Ibadan. OGUNYEMI, Chikwenye Okonjo.: B.A. (London), M.A. (Columbia), Ph. D. (Ibadan), Reader, Department of English, University of Ibadan. OKEDIRAN, A. Y.: LL.B. (Ife), B.L. (Lagos), M.I.L.R. (Ibadan), LL.M. (Ife), Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan. OLARINDE, E.S., LL. M. (CLW-Napoca Romania), B.L. (Lagos), Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan. OLORUNTIMILEHIN, Olufu.milayo.: B. Sc. (Ife), M. Sc. (Ibadan), Reader, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

OLUYOMI, Olufumilayo. B. A. (Toronto), M. A. (Ibadan), Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. OMIBIYI-OBIDIKE, Mosunmola, A.:B.A., M. A., Ph. D.(U.C. L.A.), Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. OYATOYE, E. T. O. B. Sc. (Ibadan), M.A., M. Phil (Leeds), Senior Lecturer, Department

of Agric. Economics and Farm Management, University of Ilorin. TAIWO, Sade. B. Sc. (Ife), M. B. A. (Ibadan), Research Fellow, Economic Development Department, NISER, Ibadan. UDEGBE, Bola. B. Ed. (Benin), M. Sc., Ph. D. (Ibadan), Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan. VINCENT-OSAGHAE, Gloria N., Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin. AKINGBADE, Sandra: B. A. (Maiduguri), Administrative Secretary (WORDOC). Banjo, A. A.: Secretarial Assistant, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

### **Board of Trustees (WORDOC).**

A Board of Trustees of ten prominent Nigerians and an Organizing Committee consisting of fourteen members were established to execute the objectives of the establishment of the centre.

1. Lady Kofoworola Ademola.
2. Lt Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (RTD).
3. Alhaji Jibril Liman.
4. Chief (Mrs) Mercy Eneli.
5. Lady Elizabeth B. Mbanefo.
6. Prof. Akin Mabogunje.
7. Chief Emmanuel C. Iwuanyanwu.
8. Chief (Mrs) Margaret Ekpo.
9. Lady Oyinka Abayomi.
10. Hajiya Gambo Sawaba.

The library had been autonomous since its establishment in 1987, until in September, 2000 when WORDOC became a branch of Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.

### **WORDOC Membership**

The Documentation and Research Centre is open to all men and women in all academic disciplines in relation to gender studies. The Centre works in collaboration with both the public and private sectors in policy making to enhance the development of Nigerian women socially, politically, technologically and economically.

### **Registration, Rules and Regulations**

A letter of introduction from the Head of Department or any of the WORDOC members must be presented to the librarian. After registration, the card must be presented at each visit to the library. Researchers from other universities, within and outside Nigeria are given the opportunity to use the library.

The rules and regulations guiding the use of the library are as follows;

The library card must be presented to be allowed to use the library. The library users must fill the register with the correct information and she/he must sign in and out each time the library is patronized. Bags and folders are not allowed to be taken into the library. Readers must drop their bags on the shelf at the entrance of the library. Smoking, drinking and eating are prohibited in the library because that will breed rodents that will destroy the materials in the library. Silence is required and must be maintained at all times in the library. Group discussions and the use of mobile phones are prohibited. Borrowing of materials is not allowed. The materials are only to be consulted but photocopying of library materials is permitted.

### Research Methodology

Library visit was organized with the Senior Library Officer in-charge of WORDOC library for two months. This was to enable the researcher observe the usage of the library, to check from the register the number of library users for the past ten years. The data was collated and analysed.

### The Library Collection

The library collection includes Books, Journals, Conference proceedings, Seminar papers, Symposium papers, Newspaper cuttings, Conference/Workshop papers, Theses and Dissertations. The library holds about 10,000 volumes of books and journals. Most of these books were donated by the British Council, the Canadian International Development Agency and the United States Information Service. Some of the books have also been donated by individuals. Given these present sources of books available in the library, it is obvious that most of the books were published abroad. Because of their foreign orientation, the books have rather limited use. They serve as background studies, but they cannot replace the need for in-depth studies of our own Nigerian situation. It is the hope of the library that these foreign books will inspire more work on Nigerian women and their contributions to development. Recently books and magazines about African and Nigerian women abound the library.

**Table 1 WORDOC Collection**

Textbooks	8,000
Journals	2,500
Magazines	2,000
Newspaper Cuttings	25 files

The collection has been increasing gradually since the establishment of the documentation centre. It has a sitting capacity of 20 researchers at a time and is well ventilated with electric fans and air conditioners to make the reading environment comfortable. Some of the library holdings are as follows;

Childhood abuse, Female genital mutilation, Girl child education, HIV/AIDS –mother/child transmission, Human trafficking. Sex and Gender (Sexuality). Sisterhood, The Home front .Women’s empowerment. Women’s development, Women in law, Women in librarianship, Women in education, Women’s rights, Women marginalization, Women in media, Widowhood. WORDOC library also keeps documents and materials on popular programmes and pet projects of some wives of the past presidents of Nigeria. These include; Better Life for Rural Women and the Home Front by Late Chief (Mrs) Maryam Babangida; Family Support Programme by Chief (Mrs) Mariam Abacha. The Women’s Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative of Honourable Justice Fati Abubakar. There are hosts of materials on other projects at state and national level. President Goodluck Jonathan’s wife, Dame Patience Jonathan’s pet project is HIV/AIDS Mother –to - Child transmission. Dame Patience Jonathan is also fighting hard for women’s 35 percent presentation in the government. She is also a strong advocate of Peace in Nigeria, Africa and Europe. The library keeps photographs of notable women as a kind of honour to the women achievers who have contributed to the development and progress of women in Nigeria. Other important documents kept in the library are The United Nations Declaration on Women 1988 and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. The resources in the library are kept under “Closed Access”. Readers are not allowed to borrow books, they can only consult the materials. But photocopying is allowed following copyright rules. Current issues of the most important books and journals are displayed on the racks for a while before shelving.

Some of the Theses and Dissertations are as follows:

1. The Impact of Gender-based policies on Peace and Security in Nigeria by Maduemezia, Nneka Joy.
2. The contributions of Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC), University of Ibadan towards Women Empowerment in Oyo State by Bankole, Kayode Adewale.
3. Better Life Programme Implementation Strategies as correlates of outcomes in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria by Alajuruonye, Lucky N.
4. A Sociological Investigation of Female Circumcision among the Yorubas : A case study of Onidundu Community, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria by Bayejo, Olayinka Temitope.
5. The Changing roles of Women in Ibadan Politics, 1960-2007 by Ogundayo, Titilayo Yemisi.
6. Feminism and Women in Islam by Oluwakemi, Salawu Guniyat.
7. Female Education in Egbaland 1900-1960 by Kusoro, Tolulope Mosunmola.
8. The Woman, the Earth and Enviroment in recent African Narratives by Owhofasa, Dorcas Ovuoke.
9. The Role of Women Organization in Development of Ase-Azaga Town by Obidinnu, Damian E.

WORDOC established in 1987 was taken over by the University of Ibadan in September 2000. In an academic environment, the library users are students from the University of Ibadan, other higher institutions of learning across the country. Also, researchers from Africa, United States of America, Europe and researchers from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) make use of the library. Library users in the past ten years were about 10,000 and about four hundred foreign research fellows have also consulted the library.

**Table 2 Statistics of library users 2004 – 2014**

2004	400
2005	500
2006	1000
2007	1,100
2008	1,227
2009	1,155
2010	1,465
2011	1,258
2012	1,480
2013	980
2014	675
Total	10,871

The patronage from its establishment 1987-2003 was very low. People were not aware and as such no records. Statistics of library users between 2004 – 2014 began to increase because of the awareness. For the past 10years, about 11,000 persons had consulted the library resources made available. Clients come from far and near to consult library resource materials. The materials can only be consulted. The library users are not allowed to borrow any material. Low patronage was observed in 2013 to 2014 because of the strike embarked upon by Academic Staff of Tertiary Institutions.

### **Main Activities**

The library organizes activities such as :International Women’s Day Programme on 8<sup>th</sup>March of every year .Workshops, Conferences, Symposia and lectures on themes related to women. Themes of some of the conference papers presented at Lady Bank Anthony Hall, University of Ibadan are as follows; 2012 “*Women, Power and Politics in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic*”2013 “*Gender Agenda: Gaining momentum – Accessing the journey so far*”. 2014 “*Inspiring Change*”2015 “*Emerging Issues in Gender Studies*”.

Seminars were held in Lady Bank Anthony Hall by Professor Remi Sonaiya of KOWA party (The only female presidential candidate). An interactive session was held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 with her with the theme: “Women and Politics in Nigeria” personal experience. Professor Mojubaolu Olufunke Okomo on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. Narrated her experience as the only female presidential candidate.

### **Significance of the Documentation Centre**

WORDOC is a National Institute for Research, Training and Dissemination of information for women and men who are interested in the analysis of gender issues with respect to scholarship, socio-economic policy and action. This Documentation Centre provides a focus for women studies in Nigeria through co-ordination of research projects on women issues in Nigeria and promotes new methodologies for the purpose overtime. It is also a woman study network set up to promote a more accurate understanding of the various roles of women in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. This is with a view to entrenching gender-sensitivity into policy formulations on issues affecting women. This is also to operate a documentation centre for the use of scholars, researchers and other interested persons.

WORDOC has already made its mark in the past as an outfit for serious research and intellectual discourse on women by organizing conferences, seminars, and newsletters which served to publicise its efforts in virtually all corners of the globe. Recently things are changing as women are becoming more responsive and taking up decision making positions, though much is yet to be achieved. One of the initiatives of the founder of WORDOC Prof Bolanle Awe and other members is the introduction of Gender Studies which has been materialized in the 2014/2015 academic session to start MA and Ph D programmes in Gender Studies.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings suggest that, since WORDOC is the first of its kind in Nigeria, just like the University of Ibadan, this centre is likely to have great potential for research on women’s studies in Nigeria. Expansion of the library is recommended to accommodate the influx of clients.

As a Special Library, with the acquisition of library resources, more shelves are required for the incoming stock from Kenneth Dike Library.

The library needs a photocopying machine and an operator. This will discourage stealing and mutilation of books. A part from generating funds for the library, it will also serve as a means of security for the books.

A Library Assistant should be employed to assist in attending to the library users.



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