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109509**Kate Kwafo-Akoto**

Librarian/Documentalist
University of Botswana
National Institute of Development Research and Documentation
Private Bag 0022
Gaborone
Botswana
Telephone:267-31-356364/5
FAX:267-31-357573
Internet:

**Acquiring and Disseminating Unpublished Economic
and Social Development Materials in Africa:
The Case of the National Institute of Development Research
and Documentation University of Botswana**

ABSTRACT

Generally in Africa, the identification and acquisition of both published and unpublished documents can be an extremely difficult task due, among other factors, to the unsatisfactory state of the publishing industry and the poor state of bibliographic control.

The paper analyses the various problems involved in the acquisition of documents produced in Africa, and illustrating them with the author's personal experience as an acquisitions librarian working on an information project which necessitated her having to travel to about 15 African countries to acquire population materials.

Introduces the role being played by the National Institute for Development Research and Documentation in the bibliographic control of socio-economic development literature by providing first a brief history of Botswana and also the Institute.

Describes at great length the collection, acquisition methods, products and services of the Institute's specialised library by stressing the importance of government publications and the need to undertake personal acquisition trips to obtain them. In the area of multiple media, the paper points out that in Botswana as in many African countries, on-line databases, CD-ROMs, videos and films are not commonly used in libraries. The major reason being the lack of start up capital which is usually beyond the reach of most African libraries. However, in South Africa, there is the South African Bibliographic Information Network (SABINET) made up of the South African Co-operation Library Database (SACD), South African National Bibliography (SANB) etc. which can be accessed via Internet.

Concludes that Africa has lagged behind in the utilisation of multiple media because of the factors such as lack of funds, poor telecommunication facilities and even lack of fuller knowledge about these technologies. However, with the gradual increase in the use of microcomputers and electronic transmission of information in Africa, eventually overseas

countries would have easy access to information generated within the continent.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generally in Africa, the identification and acquisition of both published and unpublished documents can be an extremely difficult task due among other factors to the unsatisfactory state of the publishing industry and the poor state of bibliographic control.

With the exception of South Africa, there are very few large publishing houses in Africa which have the capacity to produce good quality books. The African publishing industry is still at the rudimentary stage, and it has not attained the level of sophistication which is exhibited in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and France etc. In addition, many of the existing publishing companies are not very well organised to facilitate easy procurement of documents.

On the one hand, it is indeed very disappointing to observe that a number of publishers have not been able to establish procedure for the acceptance of manuscripts. Therefore, authors who submit their manuscripts to them often have to adhere unnecessary and excessive formalities and even the terms offered to them are unattractive and unacceptable. As a result, some authors send their manuscripts to publishers overseas who can get them published promptly and also advertised them through worldwide distribution and marketing networks, which in the end, earn them appreciable royalties in hard currencies.

On the other hand, it can be argued, that African publishers also do face problems which impede the development of the industry. Very often, they do not have adequate capital to finance their businesses, because the commercial banks often refuse to give them the necessary loans. They also encounter difficulties in obtaining import licenses for the importation of essential inputs, such as printing machines, computers, paper etc. owing to strict foreign exchange regulations. In cases where they depend on local suppliers for the necessary equipment, these can be extremely expensive, and this invariably affects the price of the publications.

On the whole, however, African publishing houses are established with great enthusiasm and determination, but when it comes to the operation of an effective distribution network, efficient order processing and back-ordering systems, etc. then the performance may, more often than not, leave much to be desired.

The problem of poor bibliographic control of documents produced within Africa has frustrated information handlers working on the continent. According to the literature, only a few countries such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Zimbabwe and South Africa produce national bibliographies of books published within these countries. Kohl (1975) mentioned that 40 out of the 50 countries in Africa South of the Sahara are known to have bibliographic references, yet in real terms only 20 of these can be said to have satisfactory bibliographic referencing and even these are not adequate acquisition tools.

Consequently, Otike (1993) emphasized that the bibliographic activities in Africa are ineffective

because scarcity of funds and skilled manpower have seriously hampered acquisition and documentation programmes to the extent that national bibliographies are not only demanding in terms of comprehensiveness, but have tended to play a greater rôle as retrospective rather than current bibliographies.

This lack of effective national bibliographies in Africa greatly affects acquisition programmes undertaken especially by foreign acquisition librarians who usually assume national bibliographies to be comprehensive in coverage and up-to-date as a vital bibliographic tool.

At this juncture, I would like to share with you my personal experience when I was appointed in 1978 as a documentalist for the population information project called, Population Information and Documentation System for Africa (PIDSA), established within the framework of the United Nations Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), based at the University of Ghana. The project was set up to locate, process, store and retrieve current population documents concerning Africa, South of the Sahara. The PIDSA project was funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

As the documentalist responsible for acquiring unpublished population materials for the project, I adopted the initial strategy of sending letters to individual demographers, directors of population institutions, and various government ministries and departments engaged in population activities in the various African countries, requesting them to send their publications list(s) to PIDSA, subsequently to which the necessary procedures would be followed for their acquisition. To our great disappointment, almost all of them failed to do so. There was no other alternative but to undertake very expensive acquisitions trips to collect materials from over 15 African countries, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Zaire and the Congo.

The poor state of bibliographic control in Africa generally made the identification of documents a haphazard activity, as the PIDSA experience showed. In some of the countries I visited, census and survey reports and other government publications were regarded as restricted documents and in the estimation of some of the officials, it was "politically inexpedient" to give them away since they were supposed to contain pertinent information on the country's population. In such situations, no amount of persuasion would make the officials permit the purchase of such documents and, that being a sensitive issue, one had to let it be! After all, the documents were kept under "lock and key" in file cabinets. There were instances where some government officials offered the excuse that they had to seek an approval from the appropriate minister before such documents could be released. Thus from my own experience, acquisition of especially unpublished documents in Africa can be a Herculean task.

I have tried to highlight some of the problems that can be encountered when acquiring both published and unpublished documents in Africa, in order to bring home the point that acquisition activities on the African continent can sometimes be a mirage. Also what are listed in national bibliographies can be only the tip of the "iceberg".

Despite all these problems, African information handlers do have the onerous responsibility of collecting unpublished documents to be used by scholars, policy-makers and planners and the

general public, as the continent strives to achieve the desired economic and social development.

This was one of the fundamental reasons for the establishment of the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation by the University of Botswana in 1975.

2.0 A BRIEF BACKGROUND HISTORY OF BOTSWANA

Botswana is a large country with a relatively low population density. It has a total land area of 582, 000 kilometres and 1.3 million people. It is a landlocked country sharing borders with the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The land is of generally subdued relief dominated by grasslands and the thick and sandy layers of the Kalahari Desert cover more than two-thirds of the country. Botswana is situated close to the subtropical high pressure belt of the southern hemisphere. The country is as a result largely arid or semi-arid. Eighty-five percent of the population live in rural areas and depend on some form of agricultural activity. Water is scarce. Rainfall is seasonal and highly erratic in its distribution. Water supplies dictate both fixed settlement and the grazing patterns of the 3 million cattle in the country. Damage to desert eco-systems by expansion of livestock is a major development problem. Although the population is predominantly rural and scattered, the condition of drought and lack of rural employment are causing a very high rate of urban migration.

The geographic location of Botswana and its colonial legacy create an economic dependency on the Republic of South Africa. The Republic is the major consumer of Botswana's exports and both the source and doorway for most of Botswana's imports. Another major tie between the two countries is the annual migration of about 30,000 Botswana men who find employment in South African mines. This deprives Botswana of a much needed skilled labour force for its own agricultural and industrial development.

However, in co-operation with the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Botswana is striving to reduce its dependence on South Africa. Now with the institution of a new democratic government in South Africa, it is hoped that things will change for the better.

In Botswana, the importance of scientific and technical information is being appreciated to an increasingly large degree by those responsible for policy-making. However, the possibilities open to Botswana to avail herself of information for development planning and economic and industrial development are, with only few exceptions, very restricted. Infrastructure, organisation, expertise and financial means are inadequate. Although it is generally recognised that the development-related information that exists is of a high quality, it is not presently being systematically collected and disseminated. In addition, the rate of research and development activities is increasing in what is considered to be one of the most researched countries in the region. The lack of infrastructure to capture this development information and the increasing production of that information accentuate the need for the co-ordination of information and documentation activities.

Presently, there is a marked commitment to strengthening the capacity to utilise national information resources and to participate in regional co-operative programmes aimed at

exchanging information. Therefore, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education in Botswana, efforts are being made to establish a national information policy for the country.

In the attempt to find a national focal point for the organisation of socio-economic literature generated within Botswana, the government has mandated the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation, of the University of Botswana to play that role.

3.0 Background information on the University of Botswana's National Institute of Development Research and Documentation

The University of Botswana was established on 1st July 1982 by an Act of Parliament, and it is closely involved in the national development of Botswana. It is engaged in improving the quality and expanding the quantity of the human resources needed for development, and it also acts as the repository of the collective knowledge and experience of the nation and the rest of the world.

The first of these functions is fulfilled through the teaching programmes offered by the University and its affiliated institutions, leading to the award of degrees, diplomas and certificates. The second function is carried out individually and objectively by the staff of the University and its affiliated institutions, through the research, consultancies and information services which they undertake.

The University established the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation within its framework in 1975 first as a documentation centre of the University, and 3 years later as a fully-fledged research institute.

The objectives of the Institute as set out in the University of Botswana Statutes, are as follows:

1. to promote, coordinate and conduct research on issues of socio-economic, environmental and cultural development affecting Botswana.
2. to develop the national research capacity within Botswana; and
3. to conduct, publish and disseminate the results of such research.

In accordance with these objectives, the Institute has been actively engaged in launching various research projects, organising seminars and conferences, mounting short training programmes and workshops with a view to increasing the research capacity of Botswana, and also carrying out documentation and publication activities so as to disseminate the relevant research findings.

The Institute's research activities are focused on the major theme of rural development with special reference to:

1. Agriculture
2. Education
3. Environment

4. Health and Nutrition and
5. Gender issues

In selecting research projects, the Institute is guided by a number of criteria. It gives priority to research activities which:

1. are directly concerned with national development and aim especially at improving the living conditions of the less privileged groups within the country;
2. form part of a broad multi-disciplinary approach to development;
3. are related to educational and training activities of the teaching departments of the University of Botswana and contain, in particular, a substantial training component for graduants and students; and
4. contribute to comparative research within the South African Development Community (SADC) region.

In the field of documentation, the Institute's Documentation Unit plays a major role in providing information services to the Institute's own staff and to other research workers within and outside Botswana. The Unit collects, processes, and stores information, mainly unpublished, about the socio-economic development of Botswana, and disseminates it to public institutions, private organisations and interested individuals.

The Institute is part of a number of national and international networks which link together major research and documentation institutes dealing with problems of development. Materials are currently exchanged with approximately 200 organisations. Researchers at the Institute are provided with an information service and a series of bibliographies on specific themes which the Institute has brought out at different times.

Currently, attempts are being made to develop the Institute's library into a specialised research library which seeks to acquire source materials on the 'invisible' part of the 'iceberg' of the development literature of Botswana and Southern Africa. The Institute has been trying to achieve this objective in cooperation with the Main Library of the University of Botswana and the National Archives of Botswana. At present the Institute's Library has over 13,000 documents on different issues relating to the development of Botswana, Southern Africa region and the continent of Africa in the same order or priority.

Furthermore, the Institute holds and assists in the organisation of national and international seminars, workshops and conferences, which serve as platforms for the discussion and dissemination of research findings related to development.

Again, the Institute plays an important role in assisting the Office of the President of Botswana to formulate a national research policy. It advises the Office of the President on applications made by researchers. It also counsels and assists individuals and institutions on all issues related to development research and documentation.

4.0 The Activities of the Institute's Specialised Library

As already mentioned, the Institute was originally set up to perform the role of a documentation centre for the University of Botswana. This has made the Specialised Library a vital component, responsible for providing the information needs of the Institute's researchers and other scholars.

It needs to be mentioned that the University of Botswana has a well-equipped University Library which provides reading materials for both the lecturers and students in the various disciplines being taught at the University. Therefore, to avoid duplication, the Institute's Library collects unpublished materials in the field of economic and social development in Botswana, Southern Africa and Africa generally. Some documents are also acquired from outside Africa for comparative studies by the users.

4.1 Description of the Collection

The Library serves the information needs of a special clientele who are mainly the researchers of the Institute and the University of Botswana academic community. These are both producers and users of information in the field of economic and social development.

The Library in line with its acquisitions policy collects the following types of unpublished documents:

4.1.1 *Conference papers*

The Library makes a special effort to monitor all relevant conferences, seminars and symposia being organised locally, regionally and internationally. Regarding the local conferences, a member of the Library may be assigned to approach the organisers of such conferences etc. to request for copies of the papers presented. In the case where a member of the Institute will be participating, he or she will be requested to make available his set of papers to be photocopied for the Library.

4.1.2 *Research Reports*

Many organisations are now known to be issuing formal report series which may be identified in acquisitions lists, bibliographies, annual reports etc. Since it is difficult to locate any one source one can turn to for information and news for ordering individual research reports, one has to keep track of and be keenly aware of current relevant research activities going on, especially within Botswana.

4.1.3 *Government publications*

As explained by Cillie (1987), "government publications are the results of the legislative, executive, judicial and administrative acts of the government. They are very important sources of information that reflect the activities of the government. The economy, government activities, policy, research etc. are set out in them. The policy and activities of a government are also promoted in its publications in an unemotional, factual manner. It is essential for this

information to be easily accessible to all the citizens of a country. It is also a way of creating informed public opinion."

Much information is available only in government publications and they are therefore important primary information sources. Thus, great efforts are made to acquire these documents by the Library.

However, in Botswana as in other African countries, the Government issues many documents through the Government Printer. Since their catalogues are normally not complete, other techniques have to be adopted to track these down.

4.1.4 Reprints

The interdisciplinary nature of social sciences and the free-ranging nature of some of the research conducted in the field, creates a situation where the same subjects appear in many different contexts thus it is necessary to constantly review materials that are not concerned entirely with a specific area being dealt with in the Institute in order to find particular items which are relevant to the focus of the collection.

4.1.5 United Nations Documents

These are a very useful source of statistical and other information, especially on other African countries which can be used for comparative study. Usually, these documents are requested for through the United Nations Economic Commission in Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Although many documents are listed in the United Nation's major index, UNDEX, and other publications announcements, there is no single, complete listing of UN documents. One just has to keep constant track.

4.1.6 Newspaper Clippings

As public concern about AIDS, teenage pregnancy, maternal and child health etc. has increased, a lot of research is being carried out in Botswana by both local researchers and their foreign counterparts. Thus an increasing number of newspapers, as well as other media have accordingly carried topical entries of relevance to these and other issues in their columns. These are clipped, indexed and stored for eventual use.

4.1.7 Theses/Dissertations

These constitute a major source of primary data resulting from academic investigations/surveys etc. Currently the Library has a thesis collection consisting of research projects and theses submitted to the University of Botswana for the award of degrees in the field of the social sciences.

5.0 Methods of Acquisition

The Institute's specialised Library charged with the responsibility to acquire essentially unpublished materials in the field of socio-economic development information has to grapple with all the problems associated with the collection of unpublished documents.

The following strategies are adopted to facilitate the identification and the acquisition of materials:

5.1 Purchase

Since the Library does not acquire conventional materials, very little purchasing is done. The Main Library of the University purchases the books and journals for the University academic community.

The Institute's Library only subscribes, through the Botswana Book Centre, to daily newspapers published both in Botswana and in South Africa. These are read by the users and are later marked and processed for the Newspaper Clippings collection.

5.2 Written Requests

Using the University Of Botswana Research Directory, the Library is able to learn of various researches being carried out in the University, and letters are sent to the relevant persons requesting for copies of the reports when completed, together with copies of any other recent publications. May I add that sometimes, these requests are ignored especially where the authors plan to publish the work overseas.

5.3 Acquisition Trips for Government Publications

Information generated by Government according to Cillie (1994), " is not only of legislative, administrative, or statistical nature, but also has bearing on most subject fields. This information supports decision-making, improvement of productivity, research, generation of new ideas, and advancement of development... If this information is not freely available, and if users do not have quick access to it, the impact that the use of this information could have on all sectors of the economy is seriously affected."

Periodically, trips are made to the relevant government ministries and departments, non-governmental organisations and other institutions within Botswana to acquire documents. In Botswana, as in other African countries, government documents do constitute one of the largest sources of grey literature needed for research purposes. Indeed, their importance partly derives from the fact that they embrace a wide subject coverage and are factual in their presentation of information. Furthermore, government publications provide authoritative and up to date information covering almost every field of knowledge and endeavour. Yet, it is very difficult to acquire these materials, and one needs to make periodic personal visits to acquire them. Sometimes, the Institute's researchers who travel to the remote districts on field work do collect some government documents for the Library.

There is therefore no doubt that the needs of researchers are grossly affected by the often

non-availability of information from this important resource. It appears that sometimes the non-availability of particular government publications, is a result of government legislation which stipulates (for archival materials) periods when information cannot be accessible to users. The effect of this legislative stipulation is to deprive researchers of vital information at the time when it is still relevant to the issues at hand.

5.4 Gifts and Exchanges

The Institute, as part of a number of national and international networks which link together major research and documentation institutes dealing with problems of development, it is presently exchanging materials with over 200 institutions. Once a research report or any other document is published by the Institute, copies are mailed to these organisations both within and outside the University with whom we have an exchange arrangements. Reciprocally, we also receive very regularly, documents from them. May I add that the Library actually builds its collection more through its exchange programme.

The exchange arrangement is extremely useful because there are no serious financial implications considering the fact that libraries in this region usually operate on very tight budgets. The only important requirement is that the partners in the agreement, have materials to offer in exchange.

Again, we do receive gifts from other individual researchers and institutions, but sometimes we need either to discard them or pass some of them on to other libraries who may find them more useful.

The question now is, how can the U. S. Federal Government Community gain access to socio-economic development information in Botswana?

In order to promote scholarship internationally, as already pointed out, the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation, is co-operating with several international institutions and organisations in the exchange of information. It has been recognised that international exchange of publications promotes a free flow of ideas among institutions belonging to different nations. It is therefore possible for colleagues in the United States to obtain documents from the Library's databases.

Unfortunately, the Library's computerised database cannot be accessed on line presently, because the relevant technology for on-line searching is not installed. What happens is that when requests are received, a search is made by a member of the Library and the information retrieved is sent by post to the requester who may be in the U.S. for example.

The Institute's Library is ready to have an agreement to exchange documents through either a formal contract or a simple form letter. No matter what form is agreed upon, there are certain basic facts which must be stated clearly:

- a) Specific titles or general types of materials to be exchanged;
- b) Basis for exchange, for example,
-item-for-item (monographs);

- page-for-page;
 - value-for-value (price); and
 - lot-for-lot (everything available for everything available);
- c) Exact postal address of each partner; and
- d) Shipment methods.

The Institute's Library sees the exchange programme as a means of obtaining scarce documents and of exchanging gifts between libraries and therefore is flexible on its demands. Even where the other institution has not in a particular point in time got any documents for exchange, it still sends its available publications.

It is hoped that colleagues who are interested in having documents from Botswana will get in touch with us. Since exchange enhances relations among institutions, and it is also a valuable method of obtaining publications which are of benefit to all parties.

6.0 Products and Services

The Institute, as already mentioned, is mandated to promote the research capacity of Botswana and in an attempt to improve and strengthen the collection and dissemination of development literature on Botswana especially, the Institute initiated the DEVSIS-Botswana information project.

6.1 The DEVSIS-Botswana Project

In 1981/82, Botswana and other members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), recognised the importance of information sharing as a vital resource for achieving economic and social goals of the region. A decision was therefore made to establish a regional development information network to further the strategic economic objectives of SADC, to be called the Southern African Documentation and Information System (SADIS). It was to put in place an organisational and technical structure at the regional and national levels that would aim at facilitating the sharing of information within and outside the region.

There was no doubt that the success of SADIS would depend on the extent to which each member state was able to develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate its own national planning requirements as well as its full participation in the regional system.

It happened that Botswana was the first country to take the necessary steps towards the establishment of a national infrastructure through the initiative of the Institute. A project proposal was approved by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and was submitted to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, which agreed to fund the project.

The project agreement was signed in 1984 and it was to enable the Institute to organise the national economic and social development information in support of the planning process in Botswana, particularly with reference to the priority for development in the communal areas and to strengthen Botswana's capacity to participate in the regional Pan-African Development

Information System (PADIS), based in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the proposed SADIS programme.

In order for the Institute to participate in the activities of PADIS as a national focal point, the cataloguing, indexing and abstracting of documents for the Library's collection, are based on the PADIS methodologies and the Macrothesaurus for Information Processing in the Field of Economic and Social Development prepared by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations is used to assign descriptors to the documents.

The collection was computerised in 1986 using the UNESCO package called CDS/ISIS, which is an information storage and retrieval software for use by non-profit making institutions.

In 1987 therefore the Library began to build its own database, known as LIBRA, and from which DEVINDEX-Botswana, which is an index to literature on economic and social development in Botswana is produced.

This index is presently the most up to date specialised development bibliography developed in Botswana which can be used to monitor some of the unpublished documents produced within the country.

Apart from the DEVINDEX-Botswana, the library has started preparing specialised bibliographies in the areas of health and nutrition, the Basarwa people (or the Bushmen), energy, rural development, women, youth and teenage pregnancy.

6.2 Reference Services

Reference service is at the heart of the Unit's activities. All policy procedures for collecting and organising the information in the Library are intended to make materials and information rapidly available for use. In accordance with the reference policy, reference services are offered primarily to the researchers of the Institute, who are also the only ones who can borrow documents, and also to the University of Botswana academic community and the general public. However, mail requests from outside the country are handled expeditiously.

On the whole, the Library aims to provide personal assistance to its readers, and when appropriate, to provide the specific information required. Also when necessary, the user is assisted in identifying other resources where specific information may be available, either in Botswana or in another country.

6.3 Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)

This is a specialised service which the Library offers to only the researchers of the Institute to alert them to new documents published in their fields of interest received in the Library. The Library has the profile of each of the Institute's researchers and as soon as a pertinent document is added to the database, the attention of the relevant researcher is drawn to it. The document can then be borrowed for a short period and returned to the Library.

6.4 Conference/Seminar Support

The Library prepares bibliographies, assembles special collections, conducts surveys, and other similar activities in conjunction with conferences and seminars sponsored by the Institute.

6.5 Photocopying Service

Photocopying is an essential support service in the Library. A lot of the Library's specialised materials are not in duplicate copies but these individual copies are heavily used. Photocopying such documents reduces the pressures on these limited items and relieves the readers of the frustrations in their inability to borrow and use at a specific time, urgently needed items. A fee is charged which is reviewed from time to time.

7.0 Interface of Electronic Media with Print Media

In Botswana, as in many African countries, the use of multiple media such as on-line databases, CD-ROMs, videos and films are not a common feature in libraries. The major reason being that these require start up capital beyond the reach of most African libraries.

According to Ojo-Igbinoba (1993), "in 1990 the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) surveyed 200 individual libraries in Africa on the use and availability of computer and CD-ROM. The survey as reported by Levey (1990), found that 16 libraries in sub-Saharan Africa have CD-ROM units (9 university and 7 research libraries)... From the AAAS survey, only one African library bought its CD-ROM unit entirely from its own fund. The rest obtained theirs through donations and/or grant from the British Council, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the French Mission of Co-operation, the Royal Tropical Institute of Netherlands, USAID, the Health Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, to name a few."

However, of late many African university libraries are acquiring CD-ROMs, including the University of Botswana. Since full text information such as encyclopedia and other reference books are now published on CD-ROM, it has enormous potential for African researchers in their efforts to gain access to scientific data and international literature. Furthermore, with the current competition among CD-ROM publishers, their prices are comparatively low. Cost is very important for African libraries as the decision to buy or not to buy is a matter of cash.

It needs to be pointed out that when it comes to the use of multiple media in libraries, South Africa is ahead of most African countries. There is presently the on-line South African Bibliographic Information Network (SABINET), which the Main Library of the University of Botswana gets hooked on request. It is not a full member because it is quite expensive. SABINET offers access to a variety of databases which are updated regularly. These include:

1. South African Co-operative Library Database, (SACD), with some 1.7 million records. It offers an overview of available books, periodicals, audio-visuals, and other information materials in South Africa. Participating members contribute records on-line and through record transfer.
2. South African National Bibliography (SANB) having 25,000 records on the lists of books, periodicals, etc. published in South Africa.
3. Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP) with 110,000 records of index to articles published in more than 375 South African periodicals; from 1987.
4. Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations containing 52,000 records of the overview of completed research at master and doctorate level.

Furthermore, the Department of National Education in South Africa is compiling a **data base of databases**, which is a computerised register of all databases existing in South African Government departments. A typical database in a Government department in South Africa

would contain information generated by officials of that department, as well as information obtained from outside sources, from professional journals published commercially, for example.

8.0 Conclusion

In Botswana, together with the rest of Africa, librarians do have the indomitable task of acquiring both published and unpublished documents. The major obstacles being the poor state of the publishing industry and ineffective bibliographic control programmes. Regarding the utilisation of multi-media too, Africa has again lagged behind because of factors such as high cost, poor telecommunication facilities and even lack of fuller knowledge about these technologies. There is no doubt, however, that gradually, the impact of microcomputer and electronic transmission of information will grow in Africa.

It is my ardent hope that with the intensification of the establishment of databases in Africa and the use of microcomputers and electronic transmission of information, other countries would have easy access to information generated within Africa.

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About the Speaker

I was educated at the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana, where I was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Philosophy in 1975. In 1977, I obtained a Post-Graduate Diploma in Library Studies from the same University.

After working for about 6 years as an Assistant Librarian/Documentalist at the United Nations Regional Institute for Population Studies, based at the University of Ghana, I was offered a British Government Scholarship in 1983 to pursue a further programme in Information Studies at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. At the end of the programme, I was awarded a Masters Degree in Librarianship in 1984.

Before joining the University of Botswana as a Librarian/Documentalist, I worked from 1977 to 1990 on the project, known as the Population Information and Documentation System for Africa (PIDSA), funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada. This was the first population information system to be established in Africa.

During the period, I also served on a number of technical committees for the then Population Information Network for Africa (POPIN-Africa), established within the framework of the Population Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Also in 1990, I worked as a consultant to help in the re-organisation of the Documentation Centre of POPIN-Africa.

My current research interests are in the areas of effective bibliographic control of grey literature in Africa and the development of social science data archives.