

A Study on Librarians and Libraries and the Fight against Insurgency and other Related Crimes

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ABSTRACT

A well informed society does not go on destroying what it collectively has and share rather contributes significantly to the development of the nation as the availability of information resources promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and builds effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This study therefore looks at librarians and libraries and the fight against insurgency and other related crimes with special focus on the roles of librarians and libraries in fighting these societal maligns. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was guided by two research questions. The population of the study was 420 librarians selected from both academic, public, school and specials libraries in Nigeria through random sampling technique with the aid of 2023 Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) membership list while a Likert four point type structured questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from the department of measurement and evaluation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria using Cronbach's alpha. Result showed coefficient of $\alpha=0.80$. The questionnaires were sent through respondents emails and were also returned through the same channel 100%. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentile. The result shows that librarians and libraries have prominent role to play in this fight for it to be won as national security and the fight against insurgency and other related crimes can only be feasible only when the importance of information towards this angle is recognized and libraries and librarians have the tonic when it comes to information management and dissemination. In line with the findings, the study recommended among other thing that government should make it mandatory for security agencies to utilize research works on national security that emanate from universities and other related research agencies and that security agencies and librarians should partner in information gathering and sharing on issues concerning insecurity and other related crimes.

Keywords: Librarians, Libraries, Insurgency, National Security, Crimes, Information, Insecurity, Security Agency

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the eye of many nations, Nigeria is a failed state but the true analogy is that Nigeria is a failure state or one of comedy errors if one should consider the state of insecurity in the country which has even been compounded by high level of mismanagement of the nation's resources and monumental corruption. Inasmuch as the issue of insecurity in Nigeria is not novel, the present situation has left every meaningful Nigeria thinking as no one can freely move without being afraid of what will happen

next neither do most Nigerians especially those from the Northern part of Nigeria sleep with their two eyes closed as a result of the fear of being attacked and knapped by bandits and for the unlucky ones killed. To the farmers in both the North and East of Nigeria, going to the farm is at your own peril as their lives are exposed to danger. Fulani headers destroy their farm crops, rape women, kidnap and kill in some cases.

It is worthy to note, that prior to, and since the return to democratic rule, Nigeria has faced serious internal security challenges – the most critical ones currently being the Jama'a Ahl as-Sunna Li-da'wa waal- Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); and the Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) insurgency, predominantly in the North- East states; the “Fulani Herdsmen” attacks in states like Benue, Plateau, Zamfara, Taraba and Kaduna; Niger-Delta militancy and spates of kidnappings all over the country. There are also security challenges posed by ethno-religious conflicts, resource-based conflicts, violent crimes, and election related violence. Another crisis that recently emerged in Nigeria's Northwest is the ongoing activities of armed groups referred locally as 'banditry which has affected most of the population living in Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Zamfara States. Largely unconnected to the terrorist activities in the Northeast, banditry became noticeable in 2014 with cattle rustling activity. It became progressively worse in 2016 when the bandits started killings people in the focal states (Mohammed, 2021). Presently, the situation has gone out of hands that Nigerians are now living in internally displace people (IDP) camps becoming refugees in their own country. What a sorry state?

In the Southeast, Nigeria there is insurrection of the IPOB as a result of marginalization by other part of the country that has heighten the insecurity in the area leading to incessant killing and kidnapping as well as paralyzing the economic activities of the five states that make up the section as every Monday of the week has been declared a sit at home day in which no one is allowed to be involved in any economic activity. This situation has led to loss of hundreds of lives and with security agencies always having skirmishes with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) that has also resulted in the loss of many of the nation's gallant security men and civilians alike.

In fact, these challenges impede socio-political stability and economic development not only in Nigeria but in the West African sub-region. The causes of banditry in the Northwest are complex and interrelated. At its root, environmental degradation caused by pressures of climate change and rapid population growth has aggravated resource competition between predominantly Fulani herders and mostly Hausa farmers, both of whom have over time mobilized armed groups in the form of bandits for protection. Conflicts over land prompted both farmers and herders to form armed self-defence groups, fuelling a cycle of retaliatory violence that has taken on a communal dimension. In the middle of a flourishing trade in small arms and light weapons, organised groups of criminals operating from ungoverned forest spaces have proliferated, engaging in armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom to extortion, and cattle rustling (Mohammed, 2021). According to available data, the recent space of violence in the Northwest has led to the deaths of many people. For instance, about 1,527 people were killed by bandits in 2020, higher than the 1,508 persons reportedly killed by terrorist groups in

the Northeast in the same year (Crisis Group, 2021) while from 2023 to 2024, over 7000 people were killed and about 279,000 persons were displaced in Sokoto, Zamfara and Katsina by the end of 2020, while more than 2.6 million people across the three states faced food insecurity in 2021 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

Besides the killings and displacement, they have also caused collateral damage on the Nigerian military armaments as the bandits once shot down an Air Force jet and regularly engaged in retaliatory attacks on villagers for providing information about them to security operatives. Most importantly, their demands have now gone beyond demanding ransom from families of kidnapped victims to include the release of fellow gang members or their relatives and a call to end all military or community efforts against banditry. The nature of banditry in Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Zamfara States bears the operational footprints of the terrorists' groups in the country, especially in the abductions of school children and demand for ransom, killings of security operatives, and demand for the release of their gang members (Crisis Group, 2021). The nature of banditry in Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Zamfara States bears the operational footprints of the terrorists' groups in the country, especially in the abductions of school children and demand for ransom, killings of security operatives, and demand for the release of their gang members.

The essence of establishing security outfit by any nation is to safe guide lives and property of her citizenry. As has been observed from the analogy, that due to wider perspective of national insecurity in countries like Nigeria, maintaining national security has overwhelmed the security agencies and everyone is now left at the mercy of God. The irony is in Nigeria billions of dollars are being spent to equip the military and other security agencies, it has even in attempt to keep the nation safe, employ other measures like political economic powers as well as diplomacy but all remain fruitless.

Suffice it to say, that it is to tackle these challenges of insecurity though a global cankerworm, that the Nigerian Government are putting every measure to empower her armed forces, the police and other paramilitary organizations. On the other hand, If one should put into consideration propensity of national security, the deduction is that it is practical impossible for the government supposed security agencies to solely provide the desired security needed for heterogeneous nation like Nigeria. It is true that in the quest to bring to an end the insurgency and other criminalities in the nation, government has employed range of measures such as political, economic and military might even there have been formation of regional forces as well as diplomacy, these seem not to be yielding the needed results. Since, we cannot expect a different result by using the same means, it is imperative to think outside the box and do things differently. The assertion is the war against insurgency and other criminalities such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping among others can be better fought and won by employing the services of information management experts like librarians. As noted by Lawrence (2015), the fight against terrorism and insecurity can be better fought and won through employing the services of information managers like librarians. In the same vein, Chorun et.al (2014) posits that librarians and libraries can contribute effectively in the fight against terrorism, insurgent, youth restiveness, kidnapping and bad government through proper and effective collection and dissemination of information at the right time, mobilizing the citizenry through education and information literacy

programs as well as through propaganda, and bridging ideological and religious divides. The assertion is that a well informed society should take into account the dangers in insurgency and the joy of national security and steer clear from any act or conduct that has the potential to fuelling insurgency and seek for what will promote peace and unity of the society (Kwakpoevwe, 2018).

According to Nelson Mandela, the more informed you are the less aggressive and arrogant you are. In this view, Anasi and Bamise (2010) strongly agreed that information is necessary for people to be liberated from the shackles of ignorance, misconceptions, economic stagnation, social unrest and political instability. The underlying factor is that social cohesion cannot be achieved without timely, accurate and relevant information. Invariably, a well informed society does not go on destroying what it collectively has and share rather as added by Bradley (2016), contributes significantly to the development of the nation as the availability of information resources promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and builds effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Against this backdrop that this study is embarked upon as to ascertaining the role libraries and librarians could play in the fight against insurgency and other related criminalities in Nigeria and the likely factors that may militate against accomplishing this role.

So the study is aimed at achieving two main objectives.

- I. To identify the roles librarians and libraries are likely to play in the fight against insurgency and other criminalities in Nigeria.
- II. To determine factors that are likely to militate against librarians and libraries performing identified and the extent

2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was guided by two research questions. The population of the study was 420 librarians selected from both academic, public, school and special libraries in Nigeria through random sampling technique with the aid of 2023 Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) membership list while a Likert four point type structured questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from the department of measurement and evaluation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria using Cronbach's alpha. Result showed coefficient of $\alpha=.80$. The questionnaires were sent through respondents' emails and were also returned through the same channel 100%. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentile and presented in tables.

3. Presentation of Data

Table 1: Roles of Librarians and libraries in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria

Item	SA		A		DA		SDA		Decision
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Librarians and libraries should properly share information between security operatives	320	76.2	57	13.6	32	7.6	11	2.6	Agreed
Security reports emanating from academic institutions in the library should be promoted using various media to increase citizens information security awareness	420	100	***	***	***	***	***	***	Agreed
Librarians should carryout researches on security information needs of policy makers and make same available to them.	265	63.1	155	36.9	***	***	***	***	Agreed
Schools and public libraries should promote reading culture in youths and children as they have materials that can enhance children's oral values and security consciousness.	235	55.95	133	31.7	40	9.5	12	2.85	Agreed
Librarians and libraries should adopt aggressive campaign for public libraries to bring library services to the doorsteps of citizens to educate them on national security.	243	57.86	168	40	**	**	9	2.14	Agreed

The data as displayed in table 1 above is on the expected roles of libraries and librarians in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria if the fight is to be won. 420 of the respondents representing 100% strongly agreed that security reports emanating from academic institutions in the library should be promoted using various media to increase citizens' information security awareness, while another 100% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that librarians should carryout researches on security information needs of policy makers and make same available to them. Furthermore, the data also indicated that over 80% of the respondents agreed that librarians and libraries should adopt aggressive campaign for public libraries to bring library services to the doorsteps of citizens to educate them on national security, schools and public libraries should promote reading culture in youths and children as they have materials that can enhance children's oral values and security consciousness and that Librarians and libraries should properly share information between security operatives.

Table 2: Factors likely to militate against the roles of librarians and libraries in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria

Item	VHE		HE		LE		VLE		Decision
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Citizens high level of illiteracy	230	54.8	177	42.1	8	1.9	5	1.2	Accepted
Inadequate manpower	102	24.3	60	14.3	58	13.8	200	47.6	Rejected
Lack of needed material resources	299	71.2	121	28.8	***	***	***	***	Accepted
Financial constraints	276	65.7	101	24	18	4.3	25	6	Accepted
Poor networking of resources among libraries	179	42.6	199	47.4	22	5.2	20	4.8	Accepted
Lack of visible publishing industries	75	17.8	37	8.8	120	28.6	188	44.8	Rejected
Government interference	233	55.5	103	24.5	45	10.7	39	9.3	Accepted
Democratic and socio-economic issue	196	46.7	105	25	71	16.9	50	11.9	Accepted
Ethnocentrism and religion	420	100	***	***	***	***	***	***	Accepted
Lack of technological infrastructure for information dissemination	420	100	**	**	**	**	**	**	Accepted
Librarians inexperience on information dissemination on conflict resolution	210	50	105	25	50	11.9	55	13.1	Accepted

Table 2 contains data collected in respect of factors that may hinder the identified/expected roles of libraries and librarians in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria. The data showed that the 420 respondents or 100% agreed that lack of needed material resources, Ethnocentrism and religion and lack of technological infrastructure for information dissemination will on very high extent negatively affect the librarians and libraries expected roles in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria. These are followed by citizens' high level of illiteracy with 95% or 407 out of the 420 respondents indicating that it will affect the roles to a very high extent or high extent. While over 50% of the respondents indicated that inadequate manpower and lack of visible publishing industries will only affect the role to a very low extent. An indication that the two factors are the least of challenges that can hinder libraries and librarians from performing this constitutional role in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria

4. Discussion of Result

The data as displayed and presented in table 1, did reveal that librarians and libraries have pivotal role to play if the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria will be won. According to the analyzed data, libraries and librarians should promote security reports emanating from academic

institutions in the library using various media to increase citizens' information on security awareness; carryout researches on security information needs of policy makers and make same available to them as well as adopting aggressive campaign for public libraries to bring library services to the doorsteps of citizens to educate them on national security among other roles. The finding of this study is in tandem with the assertion of Chorun et.al (2014) who posits that librarians and libraries can contribute effectively in the fight against terrorism, insurgent, youth restiveness, knapping and bad government through proper and effective collection and dissemination of information at the right time, mobilizing the citizenry through education and information literacy programs as well as through propaganda, and bridging ideological and religious divides.

As shown in table 2, the respondents agreed that lack of technological infrastructure for information dissemination; ethnocentrism and religion, lack of needed material resources, poor networking of resources among libraries, citizens' high level of illiteracy, government interference as well as librarians inexperience on information dissemination on conflict resolution are likely factors that may on a very high extent or on high extent affect the identified/expected roles of librarians and libraries in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria. The outcome of this study is in agreement with that of Adewale and Bamise (2015) who in his study revealed that lack of established policy on conflict management of information services, lack of fund for rendering the right information for conflict resolution, lack of technological infrastructure, illiteracy and librarians' lack of knowledge for disseminating information on conflict resolution among others as factors militating against libraries and librarians in promotion of national security and fight against insecurity. As well as that of Kiyiba (2016) who also pinpointed same factors as challenges facing libraries and librarians in the fight against insurgency and promoting national security.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The best solution to having a peaceful society is to build a society that is informed and libraries and librarians being driving access and custodian of information remain a veritable tool to build this type of egalitarians society that will see and embrace peace. Going by the outcome of this study, it will be folly-hardy to down play the importance of libraries and librarians in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria and by extension, national security. The primary purpose of any government of a nation is to safe guard lives and property failure to do that tantamount to planning to fail and denying such nation meaningful development. This is built on the premise that no nation develops in the face of insecurity.

This is indeed what the outcome of this study reveals. In a world that is ruled by information any nation that plays it down is doing that at her peril. This is because, any nation who wants peace and has the desire to create impact in conflict management, promotion of peace and conflict resolution, should allow free flow of information as its absence will result to conflict. Insecurity and insurgency may persist in Nigeria if not tackled head-on with the needed awareness which is through information.

After all, the Bible says, my people perish for lack of knowledge and information we know is knowledge. Since, the security agents and diplomacy have failed to achieve the desired goal, the outcome of this study suggest that there is need to recognize the importance of information and libraries and librarians no doubt are in the forefront. It is against this backdrop that the following suggestions are rolled out.

1. With the high level of insecurity as a result of insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria and also considering global state, it has become imperative for the government, National University Commission (NUC) and Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to inculcate conflict management and resolution as a compulsory course in all library schools in Nigeria.
2. Federal and State government should make fund available to enable academic, national, public, special and school libraries to acquire necessary technological infrastructure for information dissemination, other resources and materials needed for the realization of this mandate of contributing in the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria.
3. Government should make it mandatory for security agencies to utilize research works on national security that emanate from universities and other related research agencies.
4. Government should also make available grants specifically for researches on national security.
5. Serving librarians should be retrained on conflict resolution and management and how to disseminated conflict resolution related materials.
6. Rural dwellers should be exposed and encouraged into using public libraries as the most appropriate place to obtain desirable information. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns and sensitizations by public libraries and National Orientation Agency (NOA).
7. With financial support from the government, networking and sharing of ideas and resources among libraries should be strengthened.
8. Security agencies and librarians should partner in information gathering and sharing on issues concerning insecurity and other related crimes.

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