The Role of Language and Religion in Using Libraries and Information Centres for Security Awareness in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of library and Information awareness services in combatting security challenges have been placed with premium values across the globe. These values have also placed information as the fifth (5th) factors of production necessary for human survival. Security is a necessary part of human existence. In the recent past, every society is hardly without any form of security challenges as humans naturally want to establish their authority and dominance in all affairs or events. The word "peace" may not be appreciated without prior experiences of violence futility. If there were to be no security challenges at all in the world, humans would never have appreciated the value of peaceful co-existence. If there is peace and co-existence of the people, it makes us appreciate futility, especially where there are armed insurgencies like Nigeria. However, conflicts, insecurity can be curbed using Languages and Religious conviction as determinant factors. This can be done by fast tracking and strengthening the traditional authorities that exist in local or rural and urban areas. Using information centres such as

libraries, town halls, Churches and Mosques in villages and in all nooks and crannies through their local dialects to disseminate and communicate peaceful discussion for the survival of the citizens. Therefore, this paper examines the role of the languages and religious context as determinant factors with a view of using libraries and information centres to create information awareness to curb identified types of insurgencies in the country.

Keywords: Library and Information Services, Language, Religion, Security and Insurgency, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria is now at a dreadful precipice. No matter the justification, insecurity or insurgency of any type does no good to the society in any given circumstances. Adejumo (2011) viewed insecurity in a simplest term, as he described insecurity as the absence of internal security in a country. He stressed further that insecurity is the inability of a particular country to ensure absence of violence, lawlessness, civil disorder and insurgency to mention but a few; also, it is the inability of a country to keep peace within her governing territories. A former defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Secretary General once said; "Conflicts have cast a dark shadow over the prospects for united, secured and prosperous in Africa Countries. Also, conflicts have caused immense suffering to our people, and in the worst case, death. Men, women and children have been uprooted, dispossessed, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown into exile as refugees as a result of conflicts..." (Deng, Kimaro, Lyons, Rothchild, & Zartman, 1996).

Nigeria is seen as a nation at war by itself AbdulRasheed (2014), speaking on the dangers of do or die politics in Nigeria. He noted further that the path Nigeria is treading now is a threat to the continued peace, unity and prosperity of the land we call our home. In his words.......
…...… "this is not the Nigeria we inherited from our predecessors; this is not the Nigeria we envisioned as young men. Favouritism, nepotism and tribal sentiments have made it impossible to run a merit driven system. Hard work, brilliance, honesty and integrity in our dealings are no longer rewarded. Rather, we celebrate mediocrity soaked in the corruption we claim is our common enemy. I am scared and deeply worried. The situation is grave".

The presence of armed groups and the increase in economic motivations for crime makes peace and conflict mediation efforts more complex and undermines traditional dispute resolution and local governance mechanisms (Ikoh, 2021). Insecurity occurs when and where incompatible

activities of different parties or more members of a group are unacceptable to and hence resisted by one or more group members. Take for instance, since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been experiencing various forms of insurgencies in which some were even threatened the existence of the country. This was followed by the secession by the Eastern Region of Nigeria which forms Biafra State in 1967. The civil war claimed thousands of lives. Although, the civil war ended in 1970, the agitation of the people of the Niger - Delta secession over oil rich Regional Control still took a stand till today. The annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election by the then Military Government was another interesting package to democracy as it may. Recently, the Nigerian Citizens have been witnessing different and incessant inter- ethnic crises among neighbouring communities. As if these were not enough, the Herders - Farmers clashes everywhere in the country. The Boko-Haram insurgency in the North-East is still an on-going phenomenon and presently the Bandits' attacks in the west and almost every nook and cranny of the country. All these insurgencies can cause anarchy and segregation within a country.

Globally, libraries are committed to providing information thereby, bridging the information gaps through service delivery to people in the society. Libraries as the 'heartbeat' of organisational learning environments provide a place for users to advance their knowledge with relevant information resources. The role of the libraries in national security is not just to disseminate and spread information in particular areas but to have a pragmatic, holistic and proactive methods of approach in order to gain more attraction and the attention of the people. Presently, the war on insurgencies, bandits, kidnappers and the Herders- Farmers are not only to be fought by the armed forces alone but the whole nation as individuals. Therefore, using library and information resources to engage the people through information technology tools to keep abreast of the people on the present security menace, would sensitize them on the utilization of the economic, scientific, political and social activities and happenings in all-inclusive disciplines and activities. This is a feasible objective which the libraries and information centres could achieve through information dissemination and distribution of adequate information resource processes that are made readily available in the libraries and information centres to the right people, at the time and at the right places.

Libraries and information centres serve as catalysts to educate and enhance security for individuals, groups and countries and to also discover their existence for human race. The library

allows citizens to be liberated from their ignorance, prejudice and knowledge manipulation through the provision of information accessibility and availability. For several years, efforts made by the Government, Local Authorities, International Governmental Organisations and Non-Governmental Agencies to resolve these security insurgencies in the country have had little or limited success probably because not much attention has been accorded to the contribution of libraries and information centres service strategies to curb the challenges of security insurgencies in the country.

This is where it takes all well-meaning Nigerians to embracing dimension of national life, because threat posed to any element of national power creates a security problem which doesn't speak well on Nigerians as far as the insurgencies are concerned. Although, some people in some places may have believed that insurgencies and other violence have its own value like every other thing. Therefore, Nigeria today's security challenges in some quarters were seen as a way of segregation in the mind-set of many. The citizens and government must recognize the need for information use and literacy as means of national security (Noruzi, 2006). The provision of information to the society is the only product and the powerful weapon the library has gotten including all the media channels that shaped information, and that is the only means through which the real integration of people living in socio-political, economic, religious and ideological extremities could use to be harmonized together. However, it is through this actual cooperation and exchange of vital information between the extremist and the threatened can be overwhelmed. It is very disgusting to realize that the attackers were utilizing telephone networking systems to operate yet, the Nigerian Government cannot use the same gadgets to avert them. The attackers arrived in large numbers using telephone networks in the neighbouring country, Niger, a military spokesman, Benjamin Sawyerr, said (Africanews, 2021).

Electronic media resources are most effective and powerful means of mass mobilization in this present day of information digitization. A nation that is not mobilized with information and communication technology to withstand insurgencies like Nigeria cannot be aspired to preserve its freedom and political ideology. Strongly mobilized society cannot be forced to abandon its national security at the detriments of insurgencies. Consequently, libraries and information centres can be utilized rigorously for the use of electronic media to promote and expand security awareness among the citizen of this country to tackle these identified insurgencies at large.

Although, libraries through the media have been initiating methods and strategies to counter these intimidating insurgents, bandits, terrorists, kidnappings etc. The government can as well tackle these identified insurgencies such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram (Western Education is Nonsense); bandits and kidnappings by funding libraries and information centres effectively to counter insurgents' programmes and sensitize the citizens to their ills of insurgencies. One of the most effective means of maintaining national security is through propaganda and the primary tool of propaganda is the media (Ossai-Ugbah, 2013). A cursory look at this diagram below explained to us that an effective use of information and communication in any language can be a source of unity in diversity.

Figure 1

Adapted Four Pillars of Counterinsurgency

Source: Wikipedia (2021)

Gamble and Kwerliambli (1990) stressed further to assert that some of the techniques adopted in a conflict to gain the desired results are the deceptions and deceits of the terrorists, attacking personal opinions and disguised as fact, headlining propaganda, selective control of information and the yellow journalism. The library and information centres played a boosting - morale role by distributing pamphlets, flyers, campaigning against and providing vital

information that can change the hearts of bad intention of these vibrant Youths who could organise themselves with ill thoughts to carry out any types of insurgencies in their local areas. In the military parlance, morale is the will to fight for the national cause to the last (Hussain, 2008).

Thus, in the war on terror, psychological operation is not the only function which the library can perform in the context of national security; it can act as a bridge of gap with the provision of useful information between the armed forces and the people (Hali, 2003). The library provides not only information resources and guidance, but it is also seen as a place of judgment-free entity in which citizens can investigate, express and interacts with interested type of the insurgencies without any fear or favour in any form of embarrassment.

An effective communication and greater understanding of the differences and similarities between the people irrespective of language, religion, sex, culture, status and occupation can potentially initiate emotional feelings, tolerance and empathy for one's immediate environments or atmospheres. Omotayo (2005) noted that: "in war situations an enlightened society, the use of libraries increases as users flock to libraries to find information to guide them. Information that can promote peace, unity, progress, peaceful co-existence, and harmonious relationship among all the communities must therefore be made readily available in libraries. Libraries and information centres are therefore, the agents of promoting access to information needs of the citizen for communal peaceful resolution.

Language distinguishes human beings from other living things. Human beings do expresses themselves through vocal or spoken conventional signs of characteristics to interact with each other or one – on - one or more in the kingdom of human race. Language is the means by which human communicates though it is much more than spoken or written words. Language encompasses five major elements of characteristics that distinct its true meaning. These include: i). Language is seen as a system. ii). It is dynamic. iii). It has dialect. iv). It is socialist. And, v). Language is idiolect. These are the basic term of phonological levels in language spoken which brought the twisted Mother Tonged in us while speaking.

Kluckorn (1972) defined language as the body of words and combination of words used by a nation, people or race for the purpose of communicating their thoughts. Language, as it may, is the goal and purpose of enquiries that can be viewed from many perspectives by the people. The
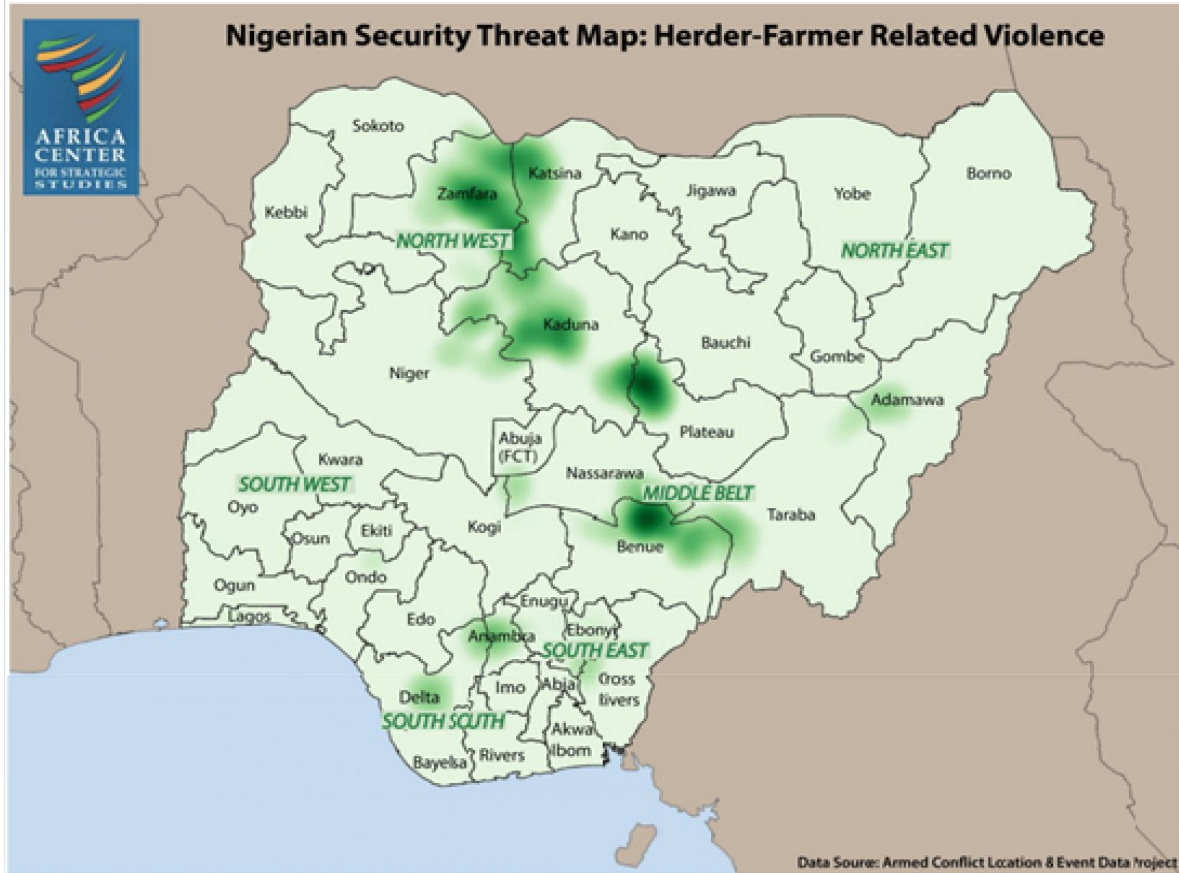
major part of being human is the variety of ways in which we communicate through language by using sounds and words while speaking, singing or writing to others and reading what others have written (Bamidele and Adama, 2019). Crystal (1994) sees language as species of specific. He defines it as human vocal noise (graphic representation of this noise in writing). Sapir (1921) in Afolayan and Bamisaye (2006) presents language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotion and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols while Osinsanwo (2003) defines language as the human vocal noise or the arbitrary representation of the noise used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for the purpose of communication. According to these linguists, language is a universal phenomenon peculiar to mankind.

Research from the literature has it that Human beings are the only animals to acquire a highly developed complex system of communication. Language as a linguistic endowment is one of the major distinguishing features between man and animals. Both man and animals communicate; the former employs language in communication while the latter lacks the ability to use language to communicate (Bamisaye, 2006). Osimen, Aniga, and Bateye (2015) stated that "the power of language in conflict is so influencing that it even controls the actions of the user. Accordingly, language is seen as morally a means of communication thus laying emphasis on the communicative value of language (Dada, 2004). Language is important because the skill for communication underlines the most successful human interaction while a failed or distorted communication can lead to unpleasant misunderstandings, rifts, chaos and even war.

Communication is essential, it is of several opinions who believed that lack of proper understanding of the people in a Common Language or a National or an Indigenous language that could be spoken by ordinary citizens of Nigeria everywhere in every places is one of the major issues of insurgencies in every niches, nooks and crannies in Nigeria at present. NOW, the Question is: Does a Nigeria Citizen have a National Language? NOT a BORROWED Language called English as an Official Language. The Nigerian Map below shows areas where the herders or the bandit resides and where they stay to plan. Most of these insurgents are not speaking the so-called Official Language (English) according to those who had survived as victims.

Figure 2

Map of Nigerian Security Threat by Herders

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2019), Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (2019).

It is obvious that because human beings are social animals, our ability to communicate through language is one of the things that clearly separated us from other beasts. The language provides us with cognitive reminiscence means for storing our intellectual knowledgeable and wisdom which allows us to transform, translate, interpret and transfer that knowledge for use in different ways. Language makes possible the sharing of human experiences. Language is the main vehicle by which we know about other people's thoughts, and the two must be intimately related. It is a vital tool for all human beings because it is through it that people share feelings, ideas, and emotions (Bamidele & Adama, 2019).

The social development theory by Vigostky states that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Since language is a cognitive aspect in human life, it therefore, develops effectively as people do interacts with them in the society.

Speech and language are essential tools for every human being because it is through them that one shares or communicates feelings, emotions, ideas, and thoughts. Language is, therefore, the set of rules shared by the individuals who are communicating, that allows them to exchange thoughts, ideas or emotions while speech is talking which is one way that language can be expressed. According to (Opara, 2018), the field of cognitive linguistics had demonstrated that language influences peoples' thought, feeling, reasoning and ways of communication in everyday life. Froman (1992) stressed that those who control language control what knowledge meanings and reality are taken to be. However, language has the power to entertain, to instruct, to reach, to satirize, to reconstruct and even to destroy.

Aniga (2011) explained further that language is a vehicle of interaction, intercommunication, and a practical tool for state administration in both modern and ancient times.

On insecurity, there is a need for the government and security agencies, especially the Police and the NSCDC (Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps) to dispatch their Officers and Men of their Organisations to their individual states of origin. This will enable these security personnel to engage and interact with people in their indigenous languages. It will also enhance proper investigation that would stop or reduce crime rate, bandits, kidnappings and all sort of identified insurgencies and incessant killings that is happenings everywhere, day in - day out in this country. This vital and significance point needs to be jointly addressed, because, Nigeria is a country without a common spoken language by the general citizens but an imposed common spoken Official Language called English Language which has to be taught in the curriculum of our national School calendars year in, year out.

Nigeria is sovereignty country without a National or indigenous Language that are being spoken by every Nigerians irrespective of sex, tribe, status and place of birth or state of residence.

Nigeria is a country with a population of just over 200 million as at the last Census that took place in 2006. Nigeria is evenly divided between Christians and the Muslims. The Western media and many Nigerians see the terrorist attacks of Boko Haram as part of a wider global religious war between Muslims and Christians. Muslims in Nigeria include: Sufi, Izala women's organisations, student organisations, emirate traditions and ordinary people as well as Boko

Haram extremists. While the Christians, on the other hands ranges from Catholic to mainstream of Evangelical to Pentecostal to African syncretism and the rest a like. These identified insurgencies in Nigeria which include Boko-Haram, Fulani-Herders, Bandits, Kidnappers, Human trafficking's, Religious and Ethno - Crises, just to mention but few among many more have been existing with us long time before now.

Research from the literature reiterated that the adoption of the Sharia criminal legal system by a slew of Northern Nigerian Muslim-majority states between 2000 and 2002 was the highpoint of religion crises in Nigeria. The Christians alleys the fears that the introduced Sharia Law would only added to the Christians that would be persecuted and their freedoms, guaranteed in the Nigerian constitution curtailed. Clashes between Christian and Muslim communities with a history of peaceful cohabitation followed, in which thousands of people were killed, property destroyed, and hundreds of thousands displaced (Ochonu, 2014). Example of this was the case between the Christians and the Muslims counterparts in Borno, Benue, Plateau and Kaduna States. For over the past two decades, Kaduna State has experienced a sharp segregation along religious and ethnic lines precipitated by dozens of outbreaks of violence.

Kaduna-Hausa-Fulani residents, who are mostly Muslims, are the majority in the northern half of the state, while the people of southern Kaduna are predominantly Christians, although tribally and linguistically diverse. It is obvious that the on-going crisis cannot be ended simply, through military or law enforcement means alone – no matter how sincere these actions may be. It will require a long-term, multi-pronged and well-resourced security and rural development plan (Hoffmann, 2017). "National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic, diplomacy, power projection and political power" (http://en.wikipedia.Org/wiki/National_security). Information is therefore a crucial factor in national security. This is because the line between security and insecurity lies in information given or information withheld. The ability to use information and its associated tools is a source of power for any nation (Bordbar) which the library and information centres are best equipped to do and reckoned with.   Nigeria's present security challenges must be collaborated by both the citizens and government for the recognition of information use and literacy as means of safety.

Information is the only product which is the library's costume to handle as the custodians of information and this includes all media resources in which the information is shaped. The only

means through which the real integration of people living in political, economic, religious and ideological poles could be brought together is through the actual cooperation and exchange of vital information between the terrorist and the terrorized (Ossai-Ugbah, 2013). The philosophy behind the library and its services is based on information collection, categorization, conservation, and management. As Nigeria is still crawling with democracy dividends and political ideological threshold, insurgencies like bandits, Herders-Farmers and terrorism thrives can be countered through effective information dissemination.

There is an urgent need for provision of "right information, in the right format, for the right people, at the right time, and in the right places" to stem the tide of ignoramus decadence of these insurgencies in Nigeria. The long years of political and religious distrust in the country has fanned the flames for crises that have polarized the society and divided Nigerians across ethno-religious lines (Ossai-Ugbah, 2013). To allow every Nigerian to read from the same page, it is important to flash the searchlight of information dissemination on restive areas that has been identified with peculiar types of insurgencies nation-wide.

Conclusion

Insurgency in Nigeria has inflicted colossal brutality on our people. The identified insurgency groups within this study can be crushed with the entire collaboration of the military forces, which should comprise of every Nigerians without any sentiments. Defeating these insurgencies required the attention not just the provision of informational tools and military weapon or material problems in a particular location, but also to the cyclical violence that has strengthened every sense of victimhood in the Country. It is obvious that at this junction, every Nigerian Citizens must be battle ready to carry out the responsibility of militancy for the safety of the livelihood of Nigerians.

Recommendation

Some recommendations made include:

- The consequences of insecurity in Nigeria have shown that a Common, National or Indigenous language that can be spoken and understood by every citizen of Nigeria is highly needed.

- Libraries, Information and communication technologies have a part to play in ensuring peaceful coexistence among Nigerians through collection and collaboration of dissemination of information to the people.

- Understanding the differences and similarities between peoples of the world can potentially initiate and expand feelings of tolerance and empathy therefore information and communication technologies utilization is a crucial factor to be considered in order to confront these identified insurgencies in Nigeria.

- Library and information centres should be established at the grass root and employ indigenous librarians from the local community areas for easy dissemination of vital information and communication of peaceful resolutions.

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