

**RELEVANCE OF LIBRARY AND TRADITIONAL (RELIGIOUS) SOURCES
OF SECURITY INFORMATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19
AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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DOI: 10. 13140/RG.2.2.26135.18082

Abstract

Nigeria as a country is blessed with both human and material resources. These resources were gradually and promisingly harnessed until recent time, when some adverse challenges both health pandemic and mal-behaviour started tormenting the country's welfare. Among these challenges are: Ebola Fever, Lassa Fever, COVID-19, Electoral irregularities, Boko Haram insurgency, militancy and other forms of terrorism. But the specific problems that bother this research are issues of COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria and negligence of Nigerians against the import of the library and traditional sources of security information on the war against COVID-19 and insecurity in the nation. It is found amidst other things in the study, that people take the library and traditional sources of security information for granted on the insinuation that they are just theories and not pragmatic. The paper therefore aims at addressing this problem associated with these negligence and nonchalant character among Nigerians on these issues, and to bring their knowledge to the fact that theories prompt and direct practicalities. In order to address these issues better, the research adopts historical and phenomenological research approach. Data were gotten from both primary and secondary sources. Data collected were analyzed with phenomenological style of data analysis. It is recommended among other recommendations that more information on COVID-19 and insecurity from traditional means and otherwise should be provided for the library, for preservation and guides on measures of tackling COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Library, Traditional Security Information, COVID-19 and Insecurity

Introduction

The relevance of library and traditional sources of security information in the fight against COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria might sound meagre but very imperative. Though COVID-19 and insecurity could be considered as global issues that affect human lives, economic, and social well being, but for Nigeria, they are peculiar experiences. The level of literacy and exposure among Nigerians make COVID-19 and insecurity matters of retentive and traditional attention worthy of secondary documentary preservation in form of writing, printing and safe keep or storage. In the 19th and 20th centuries insecurity issues were rarely heard. Elder Alphosus Ude (personal communication 14 September 2014) stresses that though there were few motor vehicles within these two centuries but men travelled to far distant places on foot, bicycles, camels, later with motor cycles, and vehicles without fear of criminal or terrorist attacks. In various communities human lives and properties are secured through traditional security system and information presently in this country the citizen are in the band wagon of insecurity of numerous forms and kinds, which include: Boko Haram insurgency, militancy, herdsman attacks, robbery of various kinds including armed robbery and banditry, kidnappings, assassinations, child trafficking, etc all these have called for public attention.

Earlier than 2019 and 2020 the world had recognized respiratory virus case and corona virus which were found in animal. In 2019, another development of a similar virus occurred and has lived up till 2021, in addition to with the COVID-19, Nigeria also witnessed similar diseases for example, Ebola Fever and Lassa Fever. There had been instructions and guides that had been introduced against Ebola fever and Lassa fever that worked. But for COVID-19 pandemic such instructions and guides are deemed not enough hence these COVID-19 vaccines. Adherence to COVID-19 rules or guides in Nigeria could be considered to be very low. Therefore, there is need for the library to discharge its relevant values to fight COVID-19 and insecurity in the Nigeria State. On the other hand, the aboriginals of Nigerian Traditional Society had tackled and prevented insecurity with her traditional sources of security information systems. These security information systems are as well needed at this point in time in the country. In fact, the problems this paper is designed to address are issues associated with COVID 19 and insecurity in Nigeria and the negligence of Nigerians against the relevance of the library and traditional sources of security information on the battle against COVID-19 and insecurity in the country. It is found among other things in the research that people take library and the traditional sources of security information for granted on the insinuation that they are mere theories and not pragmatic weapons. The study aims at addressing these problems relating to these negligence and nonchalant attitude among Nigerians on these issues, and to bring their knowledge to the fact that theories galvanize and direct practicalities. The research employs historical and phenomenological research methodologies. Data were sourced from both primary and secondary materials. The study recommends amidst other things that more information on COVID-19 and insecurity from traditional means and otherwise should be provided for the library, for preservation and guides on measures of tackling COVID 19 and insecurity in Nigeria. Data gathered were analyzed with phenomenological style of data analysis.

Clarification of Concepts

The concepts that are given explanations or definitions in this paper include: Relevance, library, traditional sources of security information and Nigeria. Relevance is gotten from

the adjective relevant which according to Summers (2001:1195) is defined as being; “directly connected with the subject or problem being discussed or considered. This direct connection emphasizes at the same time, the importance of the dependent variables to the independent variables.

Library is also defined as a room or building containing books that can be looked at or borrowed: a public library, the college library, a library book... (Summers 2001: 813). Today library scope has gone beyond hard copy storage to soft copy development. These two phases of the library will be discussed further. But in the point here is that library deals with storage of knowledge, history, other information, physical activities, and objects etc. Traditional sources of security information in the words of Ozo Adichie Ozoigboanugo (personal communication, 17 February, 2016) are all those information which are mostly oral, and also physical but had effectively assisted the traditional society in tackling security challenges to its barest minimum. In the traditional setting, there are security information which are mainly secret and preserved by advanced and mature minded men in the society. These information and there source will be elaborated in the subsequent parts of this research.

Insecurity on the other hand is derived from the adjective insecure which according to Summers (2001:735) means: “not feeling at all confident about yourself, your ability, your relationship etc... a building or structure that is insure is not safe, because it is likely to fall down.” Insecurity is a condition in which human lives, properties, jobs, etc are not safe. It affects the health sector, education, economic, social, religious sectors et cetera. COVID-19/ Corona virus is the most common globally pronounced disease today. World Health Organization in Okafor (2020:305) emphasizes on the pandemic thus:

COVID 19 is the name given by the WORLD HEALTH ORGANSATION /W H O/ on February 11, 2020 for the disease caused by the novel corona virus SARS/COV2 it started in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide COVID 19 is an acronym that stands for coronal virus disease of 2019. Historically on December 31, 2019 a strange new pneumonia of unknown cause was reported to the Chinese case or country office. A Chester of these case originally appeared in Wuhan ... China and COVID-19 is a respiratory infection that originated from Wuhan, has gone round the world disturbing, virtually all aspects of human livelihood

Nigeria is a country in African and specifically in West Africa. Nigeria shares common boundaries with Cameroun, Niger, Chad, and Benin Republics. Nigeria has 36 States with her Federal Capital Territory situated in Abuja. The name Nigeria was given to the country by the wife of Lord Fredrick Lugard. In the words of Adama et al (2019:19), they state that: “Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard with Florence Shaw who later became his wife gave birth to an entity known as Nigeria on 1st January, 1914 through the proper unilateral amalgamation, when the Northern and Southern protectorates became amalgamated.” Though amalgamation is an important historical discourse, but the interest here is how the name Nigeria came to be, as a name of a country. Nigeria is a diverse country with about 150 million people: It is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious largely pluralistic and clearly heterogeneous (Umar, et al, 2014:17). The view of Umar et al is better understood when attention is paid to the Nigeria ethnicity numerical strength of above a hundred languages and dialects, cultures etc. Nigeria has 6 geo-political zones which

include: South-East, South-South, South-West, North-Central, North-East, and North-West. Nigeria has 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. She has 774 Local Government Areas. In fact, Nigeria is very large as a country. She shares boundaries with Benin, Cameroun, Niger and Chad Republic.

The Library, Traditional Sources of Security Information and the Fight against COVID-19 and Insecurity in Nigeria

The library itself, is a more developed source of information and at the same time, source of preserving information, while the traditional sources of information are the original measures through which some vital information are preserved. These two bodies preserve information for present and future uses. They keep information affecting health, economy, formal and informal education, social e.g. security, sports and recreation, festivals etc, religion, politics to mention but a few. In the present Nigeria society, one stage of preserving information would not provide a more reliable and dependable source of information. Therefore, both the library and traditional sources of security information become so relevant in tackling COVID-19 and insecurity challenges in Nigeria mainly because of the level of development in the country, to enable both the exposed or digital, analog, civilized, under civilized and uncivilized to be accommodated in fight against the menace of COVID-19 and insecurity.

In response to the efforts of the library to combat COVID-19 pandemic, IFLA Section for Academic and Research Libraries (2020:2) points thus:

In 36 states of Nigeria, activities in academic libraries vary during the pandemic. Most academic libraries have totally shut since March, 2020 with the staff in the technical units working from home, where feasible, online library services were provided. Many quickly subscribed to Open Access Materials such as those offered by publishers and educational facilities locally and abroad. Some private university libraries remain reasonably functional given the circumstances, but they offer reduced services. Physical contact must be avoided only 25% of the usual number of clients and staff have access, and not permanently. They must maintain appropriate social distancing protocols. There is little alternative for academic libraries than to conduct their researches from home and get online trainings. Webinars, workshops, conferences and seminars are being distributed via remote conferencing platforms. In addition, academic librarians individually and in collaboration with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are currently working on sensitization campaigns and information literacy programs. Conversations with a number of academic libraries revealed that the efforts towards providing services to patrons has been mainly through informal than institutional channels. Text messages, Facebook post and Whatsapp chats, in collaboration with some special libraries and NGOs are common place. Some academic libraries especially in the Akwa Ibom State created volunteer groups in a “Community Roving Library/Literacy Development Project”.

It is obvious that the library seriously contributed its own quota in the fight against COVID-19 and its related challenges. The library tried during the lockdown to keep its technical units working so that users will not be completely frustrated. As these technical units are working, some information on cases and better ways of fighting COVID-19 in

Nigeria are steadily provided by the library. In the same vein, while people are battling with COVID-19, issues of insecurity in Nigeria, which are older than the pandemic COVID-19 are still on their increasing and alarming stage. The library, before, within, and after the COVID-19 lockdown have been active in feeding the masses with records and information on security alerts throughout the country Ugbah (2013:7) writes thus:

The library's traditional lasting objective is to provide access to relevant information resources. The aim of this is to give high value to the needs and expectations of users. Generating and sharing information is useless if there's no way to locate, filter, organize and access it. Traditionally, librarians are in the forefront of information dissemination... The issue of national security is therefore core value of librarianship. Since no meaningful learning education and development can take place in a context of insecurity and brazen destruction of lives and properties, the onus lies on the library for responsible librarianship through dissemination of information that can contribute to peace and national security in Nigeria by helping the citizens to understand their role in national security. The library as a storehouse of information has positively altered its scope of influence across time to become not only a place that houses books but a gateway through which information can be conveyed to people irrespective of location.

In fact, library is a teacher even when there is no professional teacher. The library is at the same time, the teacher of teachers. The library with its organized system of operation can informatively infuse security literacy to all and sundry. Sokari; (2020:4) emphasizes that: "it is important to note that the issue of information on literacy has always been a matter of worry and concern to all well meaning Nigerians, particularly, Education Policy Makers and Scholars". Generally speaking, the library has remained a veritable tool to literacy. During the upsurge of COVID-19 and its lockdown a lot of activities were jeopardized. People involved in these activities as their professions, occupations, vocations, menial engagements, hobbies and so on never took it so easy. There were a lot of actions and reaction in response to the situation at any point. All these actions are not left to die off. The library maintains a consistent record update. With these updates people become much aware and enlightened on the best ways suitable for them to play and stay safe against the virus and the possible prevention with the use of vaccine(s)/ vaccination.

African traditional sources of security information cannot be left out in this discourse. They could be accepted as informal and traditional library for security strategies against insecurity and COVID-19. Traditionally, there are people or things that are used to unveil certain security threats. During the dried season people hang noisy shells of snail, tortoise, and plant seeds and hang them within their farms and home steady. At anytime anything touches such materials; they make great noise to keep residents at alert. Ozo Ohaigbo Amulu (personal communication, 14 April, 2017) adds that in the olden days, foot prints are also used to trace robbers during the rainy season. In the rainy season when it rains heavily and steadily, if robbers operated, especially where the soil is clayey or clayey loam, their feet sizes and shapes are used to reveal the suspects. Ozo Ohaigbo Amulu continued that in the years back, people rarely wore foot wears. But even when they are worn during the wet season especially when it rains often, people's foot prints are captured by the wet mud. According to him, crimes that involve taking of human life and destruction of properties are mostly executed in the night, when it rains at night when people will be asleep and hoodlums operate. Within such atmosphere, their foot prints are obvious, and passes information traditionally on who owns a foot print, and the person can be summon

for proper investigation. But the problem today is that the modern people do not recognize these security information as parts of the ways of tackling insecurity in Nigeria, though some communities recognize these security information and use them in their individual communities to manage present security challenges facing the country. Dolisy (2015:12) stresses thus:

A log and event management tool is like the icing on your security cake. It brings all the other pieces together to allow a federal IT pro to see the entire environment – the bigger picture to correlate information and make connections that may not have been visible before. Visibility across all network operations can point to an intruder or attack that may otherwise have gone undetected. As I said at the start of this article, the cyber security landscape is changing right before our eyes. Are traditional security methods dead? Certainly not. They're evolving as threats evolve - as it should be. The ideal solution is to build on what you already have, use what works and keep adding. Create layers of security within every crevice of your environment. The more you can enhance your visibility, the more you know, the harder it will be for attackers to get through and the greater your chances of dramatically reducing risk will be.

It is always advisable that we should not discard original possessions because a new one is introduced in the system. Combination of the two, though with careful evaluation of the weaknesses of either the old or the new is immensely pivotal. There are other traditional sources of traditional security information and strategies that can be applied to uplift and upgrade the modern sources and strategies. Wolf et al (2018:1) posit that:

Security stories and their models were found to often be incomplete and inaccurate, but also influential and not necessarily harmful to non-experts user's practices. Topic modeling was used by Rader and Walsh (a) to examine the differences in how security information from different sources; news articles, peer stories, and web-based articles on computer security advice. The focus of these sources differed when describing threats to users via computer security scenarios.

In this passage Wolf et al mention peer stories in the midst of other modern sources of security information. They also stress on the importance of examining differences in how security information from different sources would receive advice. Among the traditional Nigerian people, security information are gotten formally and verbally from elders of the communities during market days. Mrs. Nnedimma Nwankwo (personal communication, 29 March, 2020) discusses the conviction among themselves (the villagers) on the dangers and arrival of COVID-19 in their community when the elders moved round Afor market as the tradition permits, they confirmed and announced the truth of the arrival of COVID-19 in Nigeria and measures to stay safe. It was at this point that the villagers became careful and observed precautions needed to stay safe. Such information formally announced and confirmed by the elders in market announcement transcend from health security on the basis of what to eat or avoid, places to eat or drink or avoid, etc to restrictions on movement to certain places.

Other sources of traditional security information include: the use of mirror, divination, special secret cults, the age grade vigilante sets, recruited community policing team, medicine-men, the hunters and tappers etc. In the traditional Igbo society for example, just

like other traditional societies in Nigeria, these bodies provide security information for the aboriginals. These sources are also security bodies themselves that protect lives and properties in traditional communities in Nigeria. Presently, in Nigeria, these traditional sources, bodies or strategies for security are virtually ignored. But traditional African perception of life has offered security for lives and properties until this resent time. Community life involved peace, and harmony, legal judicial system to maintain peace, resolve conflicts and sustain security (2019:89). The traditional sources of security information as well as security agents, bodies or strategies are parts of the sources of peace, and sustain security in the community life. In this contemporary Nigerian society we witness Boko Haram insurgency, murder cases, assassinations for many reasons; suicide is becoming common, kidnapping etc.

Kidnapping in Kaduna State has become a major feature of urban and highway crime committed largely by high profile elite criminal in the cities and township on one hand and armed robbers/bandits on the other hand (Ibrahim et al, 2020:182). This is the situation on the ground in Nigeria. Every part of the country faces one or more forms of insecurity one time or the other. Onah and Asadu (2019:361) assert thus: "Therefore, actors in conflict management are people who are involved in one way or the other in controlling and ensuring that conflict is de-escalated or resolved and transformed." The library and traditional sources of security information are actors in the conflict Nigerians are facing as it affects COVID-19 and insecurity. These security bodies, strategies and information at the day security, night security, emergency security, and social interactive / leisure security for example; poisoning drink or food during social interaction, occupational team security for example; people go to their farms in group to be able to confront any security challenge, and so on.

Recommendations:

1. More information on COVID-19 and insecurity from traditional means and otherwise should be provided for the library, for preservation and guides on measures of tackling COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria.
2. Nigerians should praticalize library information on the basis of prevention, control and management of COVID-19 and other health issues existing or might be suspected to exist in future.
3. Some traditional security strategies and information are obvious in traditional societies. Some of them are in the library, they should be sought for and utilized to enhance a more standard measures of human security.
4. There is serious need for collaboration of the library and traditional sources of security information for a strengthened transformation on preservation of information and application of the positive values of those information among citizens.
5. Other sources of information like the mass media should also assist in filteration of material available for the library to encourage accuracy and completeness of information.
6. Government agencies and Non-governmental organization should consider the ministry of culture and information on the area of funding at least at this time security of lives and properties is a threat to the country's national development.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, it is obviously understandable that COVID-19 and insecurity have been issues

that have taken the attention of the citizens. There are other measures, departments, bodies, etc that must have thrown enough weight in the fight against COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria. But this article adds that the library and traditional sources of security information have serious stake in the fight but lack the expected recognition.

In a nut shell, the library and the traditional sources of security information should be noted to have been at work in the struggle to curb COVID-19 and insecurity. The library has over grown the level of keeping books in their hard copies to a more sophisticated digital technological strand. The traditional sources of security information have also performed marvelously well in the fight against COVID-19 and insecurity but these traditional sources of security information face relegation. The old system should not be rejected; rather, it will exhaust its value and relevance more when it is filtered and added to the new trends of development and improvement.

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