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**ABSTRACT**

This article is aimed at examining the causes of insecurity and violence in Nigeria and around the world. It discusses the active roles libraries play in promoting peace and security in different countries. It highlights the fact that several threats to lives, ranging from terrorism, communal and tribal clashes, kidnapping, pollution, health, physical and environmental hazards, and economic crisis among others, can be curbed through information and intelligence services. Premised on these, this article seeks to analyze and make recommendations for the promotion of literacy by libraries, build collaborative relationships between librarians and security operatives, and provide suggestions for the provision of current information against terrorism and security of lives and properties. It also seeks to provide current news on terrorism and intelligence services in Nigeria and around the world, and on social and national security for peaceful co-existence in communities.

**Introduction**

Governments all over the world have the obligation to maintain peace, security, and protection of the lives and properties of individuals and the society. Boyack (2011) noted that “one of the generally agreed facts and the most important single function of government is to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens.” In countries where there is incessant national and social unrest, people have, over the years, been instruments of intelligence, information, and security to their respective communities, nations, and neighboring countries. Individuals and groups have also been involved in the maintenance of peace and securities for the communal good.

National and societal security are parts of the major challenges in Nigeria and the world over; the use of information can help wind down the effects of the series of terrorist attacks, intra- and inter-ethnic catastrophes, and religious and communal clashes that have resulted in the destruction of lives and properties. Nworu and Ndulaka (2015) stated that the basic debate for proper operation and effective utilization of libraries’ resources have been to break open the restrictions besetting them. It makes no sense if those meant to patronize and use libraries are perplexed or terror-phobic. It is very important that everyone in communities recognizes the need for peaceful co-existence, as this will not only enable the easy access and utilization of information resources, it will help to curb disputes and civil unrest, enhance emergency management, and resolve conflict. This article, therefore, attempts to identify the strategic role of libraries in promoting national security and peace.

**Libraries role in information provision**

Information is used with the aim of improving behavior through new ideas or knowledge extracted from changes and increase efficiency in all of human endeavors and environment (Ajegbomogun, 2008). “To disseminate information, those in the media work tirelessly to know the happenings within and around them in the discharge of important duties. Information is needed at all times by governments and citizens; it helps make them aware of happenings around them. When people are informed they know how to act, what to do in times of crises and how to be more security conscious” (Omonobi, 2014, p. 1).

The emergence of information and knowledge societies is a notable involvement with the potential to ensure that knowledge and information are...
very important for achieving consequential progress (Kamba, 2009). The library, media, and other information providers must, therefore, carefully evaluate information provided for the development of the intelligence services and societies.

Provision of information should be inclusive, that is, it should cater for the needs of all citizens, and then it will help to inculcate knowledge, keep people abreast, and properly informed. “Information is the essence of development in any society and it is vital to the activities of both the government and private sectors” (Harande, 2009, p. 1). When people are well informed, they are able to participate in political and developmental activities. They can relate with the media and other information content providers, express themselves easily, contribute ideas and cultures, and learn about the beliefs and customs of others (UNESCO, 2013).

Over the years, libraries have been instrumental in providing individuals with the opportunity to access a range of information. This information, be it electronic or otherwise, has been invaluable in helping to shape opinion, as well as form a basis on which decisions are made. Such information enables accurate and timely actions, and ultimately helps to contribute positive outcomes. Libraries can, therefore, be seen as an agent of socialization through their provision of information in printed and electronic formats.

Saunders (2013) opined that, for decades, libraries have ensured that people have access to information that will keep them informed to make the right decisions and judgments. It is, therefore, imperative to use and share information based on moral principles or accepted standards of social behavior in light of opportunities and potential risks.

Aguolu and Aguolu (1997) averred that the first library in Nigeria was established in 1943. These libraries harbored British political tracts, radio propaganda, newspapers, and bulletins regarding the ongoing World War, though, before then they were first reading rooms established across the country. They, however, remarked that the motive behind the establishment of the libraries across Nigeria by Britain was to promote the British ideas and culture. They were established to inform and/or misinform individuals in Nigeria about the war. This is an example of the importance of libraries in informing individuals and how they meet individual and societal needs.

In his opinion, Okafor (2001) stated that Biafra lost the war to three super powers—the United States of America (U.S.), United Kingdom (UK), and USSR. The position of this writer is based on the mountain of information available on the information super highway, books, and other literature trickling out slowly to the public. Thur (2009) in the same light stated that throughout the war, libraries were the focal point for the community. In fact, many libraries tried to meet the social needs of their patrons. During this period, patrons requested information on war-related topics, including everything from civilian defense and protection to industry jobs. They wanted to know how best to take care of themselves and their families, by letting the libraries serve as air raid shelters, venues for community talks, or mounted patriotic displays.

Ajegbomogun (2008) noted that information sources in printed and non-printed format, such as newspapers, autobiography, biography, Who's Who, etc., are, therefore, valuable tools in the hands of any leader or citizenry. In our constantly changing world, access to vital information on issues, like terrorist attacks, kidnapping, natural disasters, communal disputes, and disease outbreaks, can be provided to individuals or groups by libraries.

**Causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria**

Falana (2015) noted that independence, shielding the sovereign and territorial nobility of the nation, was the central pillar of Nigerian national security policy. It is aimed at upholding the north, south, east, and west as one sovereign nation. However, in recent past, this has not been the case; many parts of the nation have experienced ethnic and tribal clashes with political insurgency. According to Otto and Ukpere (2012) Nigeria is far behind in the drive for societal security, amidst a government constitutional responsibility to provide welfare for the citizens, as captured by the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy.

The Nigerian society is getting more and more insecure, more people are getting into crimes and they are getting more ruthless, desperate, and sophisticated. Nigeria’s security concerns and threat perception emanated from the threat of extreme Islamic sects, known as Boko Haram—a high level of unemployed youths, militants from the oil-rich Niger Delta, ritual killings, incursions of illegal migrants from the neighboring countries, the emergence of political and regional thugs, and the collapse of our justice system. Otto and Ukpere (2012) also averred that the justice delivery system does not encourage the fight against insecurity. Offenders of grievous cases may get very
light sentences if they are not completely let go. Crises in communities are deeply rooted and so must be handled very sensitively. The emergency management units seem to be overwhelmed by the whole epidemic happening in the nation and are not able to handle the situation.

Anasi (2010) stated that it is the duty of the libraries, therefore, to provide current and relevant information to communities that will guide their actions and help them make good inferences that will promote peace, reduce violence, antagonism, and confrontation in the society. Libraries and librarians, therefore, need to promote access to library’s collections and resources to the indigent population, security agents, emergency management units, and the broader community members.

**The strategic role of libraries in promoting peace and security**

National peace and security are important not only to the government but to all people all over the globe. The development of any society to a large extent depends on the security of lives and properties of all citizens. Maheswara (2008) opined that, locally and internationally, there are many records from earliest time to the present that document the fact that libraries and information centers were destroyed and affected during conflicts or war. He further noted that, although there is a long history of threats to libraries, they can also play an important role in creating ethnic harmony. Libraries are expected to change the attitude of the civil society, which is a stakeholder in the peace process.

The strategic role of libraries will, therefore, be discussed under the following sub-headings:
- Synergy between Libraries and Security Agents
- Communities in Crises Alert
- Establish the Security Plan
- Public Awareness

**Synergy between libraries and security agents**

Librarians are responsible and committed to provide information to the populace of the community, institutions, and organizations where they exist, while law enforcement operatives are sworn to preserve, serve, and protect the public. It is, therefore, imperative that they build synergy to better serve humanity and their communities. Ossai-Ugbah (2013) noted that, historically, libraries have always been a key contributor to national development and it is appropriate that they take a leadership role in the current movement on national security. A community’s perception of its local security agency, however, is influenced by many variables (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Law enforcement officers have accepted a position of visible authority within their communities and are held to a tremendously high standard of honesty, integrity, equity, and professionalism. Public trust in law enforcement may be ephemeral if police executives do not continually reinforce sound, ethical policies and procedures to agency personnel and to the public (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.).

Ogedebe and Jacob (2012) posited that a secured atmosphere will encourage intellectual minds who will become great assets to give intelligence services for nation building. This will further guarantee a sustainable co-operation and agreement of communities and an environment suitable for positive growth and infrastructural development. Bhatti (2010), therefore, proposes that different libraries, which include school, public, academic, special, and national libraries, can hitherto bring about the attitudinal changes in individuals and consequently the nation, by collaborating with security operatives providing them with relevant information, user education and literacy service, current awareness service, dissemination of current publications, maintaining clippings, and translation services.

**Communities in crisis alert**

Security of lives and properties is the responsibility of the government and all citizenry.

According to Otto and Ukpe (2012), insecurity is a consequence of internecine territory, caused by man’s insensitivity to man. They stated that many people in authority take advantage of their positions to enact policies, that deplete many, to benefit themselves and a few others, causing poverty, hunger, corruption, high unemployment rates, the porosity of borders, and moral degradation to become prevalent in many communities. Ethnic clashes and crime are manifestations of the aforementioned situation. Asiyanbola (2007) also observed that,

Nigeria is a large multi-ethnic country where ethnic cleavages remain a critical problem and ethnic clash has erupted periodically. Among the prominent conflicts in Nigeria are: Ife-Modakeke Crisis in Osun
State; Yoruba-Hausa Clashes in Shagamu, Ogun State; Eleme-Okrika Conflict in Rivers State; Zango-Kataf in Kaduna State; Tiv-Jukun in Wukari, Taraba State; Ogoni-Adoni in Rivers State; Chamba-Kuteb in Taraba State; Itsekiri-Ijaw/ Urhobo in Delta State; Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State; Ijaw-Ilaje conflict in Ondo State; Basa-Egbura in Nassarawa State; Hausa/Fulani-Sawaya in Bauchi, among others. (p. 1)

As Otto and Ukpere (2012) also noted, security has been the main threat, especially in northern Nigeria where Nigerians and non-Nigerians are killed every day. Though the government and security agents claim to be on top of the situation, the problem persists. They further stated that notably since the advent of the present democratic dispensation, new forms of vicious crimes have become common; these include kidnap-ping (adult or privileged people’s napping) for compensation, pipeline vandalism, Boko Haram bombings, violation, political assault, and many more.

The militant sect “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad,” better known by its Hausa name Boko Haram (BH), has carried out killings, bombings, kidnappings, and other attacks in Nigeria, resulting in countless deaths, injuries, and boundless destruction of lives and property (Country Reports on Terrorism, 2012).

BH fighters deliberately attacked villages and committed mass killings and abducted villagers and school girls. Their attacks spread from northeast Nigeria into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (Boko Haram, Premium News, 2015). According to Otto and Ukpere (2012), “Public and private institutions are attacked and vandalized by gangs, even the United Nations building and the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Abuja were bombed and scores of people were killed” (p. 1).

Nwabughiogu (2014) noted that “From the 2010 Independence Day car bombing at the Eagles Square, to the daring attack on Police Headquarters in 2011, down to the strike on the United Nations building, not forgetting the deadly This Day Newspapers’ building attack in 2012, the Nyanya bomb explosion and, of course, Wednesday’s devastating attacks on Emab Plaza in Abuja, acts of terrorism appear to have permeated the polity, leaving everyone and every place completely vulnerable” (p. 1).

From 2010 to 2015, the BH sect committed devastation in the nation leading to widespread internally displaced people and destruction of lives and property. Moreover, in northeastern Nigeria, the attack of BH fighters spread from Nigeria to Cameroon and Chad, with purposeful attacks, mass killings, destructions of settlements, and abductions of women and children in villages and communities (Boko Haram, Premium News, 2015).

Most recently, however, 21 of the more than 200 school girls abducted by the BH group on April 14, 2014 were recovered on October 13, 2016, two and a half years after their abduction through the intervention of International Committee of the Red Cross, the Nigerian Department of State Security (DSS), and support of the Swiss government (Opejobi, 2016; Soniyi, 2016).

With regards to communal clashes, there have been several instances where conflicts between rival ethnic groups and land disputes between communities have led to bloody clashes with serious implications for future generations. Worth mentioning are the conflicts between the Ife and Madakeke Communities in western Nigeria and between the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups of Delta State (Gumm & Amaize, 2015). Another significant conflict was that between the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups of Warri, Delta State. Between 1997 and 2001, these groups were involved in a series of fierce communal disasters, which led to the loss of lives and property. Right up to April 2015, there have also been clashes and disputes over land ownership. Due to these clashes over the years, many people have been killed, maimed, and rendered homeless. (Tompolo Frees Kidnapped Journalists, 2014).

Anengiyefa (2009) noted that with the discovery of large oil reserves in the Niger Delta region in the early 1960s, ethnic groups tended to claim ownership of a given piece of land because of promises to yield huge benefits in terms of jobs and infrastructure to be provided by oil companies. This is always a new bone of contention.

Establish a security plan

Thur (2009) opined that in the early years of the ALA (America Library Association), the basic codes of belief and doctrines of librarianship were in the beginning stages. ALA established its Code of Ethics in 1939, and three years after the close of WWII (World War II), the ALA adopted the Library Bill of Rights. These two documents empowered librarians to better
understand their role as defenders of intellectual freedom and pursuers of knowledge. Librarians, therefore, partnered with intelligent and security agencies to plan to provide information on national peace and security, while proffering solutions for the peaceful co-existence of their communities.

Obama (2014) opined that after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States, the government decided to increase their information on their security outfits and systems. Obama (2014) posited that it is hard to overstate the transformation America’s intelligence community had to go through after 9/11. “The United State agencies improved their security plans by identifying and targeting plotters in some of the most remote parts of the world, and to anticipate the actions of networks that, by their very nature, cannot be easily penetrated with spies or informants, monitoring hostile powers and gathering information for policymakers” (Obama, 2014, p. 103).

Obama (2014) further declared that after the 9/11 attack, relationships with foreign intelligence services expanded, and the capacity to repel cyber-attacks has been strengthened. These efforts have prevented multiple attacks and saved innocent lives, not just in the U.S., but around the globe as well. Librarians and communities can draw up plans for security purposes and for information alerts in times of community threats.

Public awareness

According to Bhatti (2010), national libraries all over the world take broad steps of transferring myriad of knowledge, focusing on what might be divergent approaches. Information is organized in such a way that is easily accessible to all users, other libraries, and all leaders and citizenry. Librarians should, therefore, project their services from the national library to all other libraries.

From the period of American Revolution, WWI, and WWII to the Afghanistan War to the present time, libraries have been instrumental in giving the government and civil society news, information, and feedback to help chart meaningful paths for their lives, thereby, enhancing effective decision making. Anasi (2010) noted that libraries play a crucial role in inculcating positive values, attitudes, and behaviors that promote harmonious relationships.

Omotayo (2005) also observed that during war situations in enlightened societies, the use of libraries increases, as users flock to libraries to find information to guide them. Anasi (2010) further stressed the fact that information that can promote peace, unity, progress, peaceful co-existence, and harmonious relationships among all the communities must be made available in libraries. Librarians in providing access to this information should act as agents of the promotion of communal peace and reconciliation.

Thur (2009) noted that currently one of the largest groups willing to stand up and defend academic and intellectual freedom are librarians. The roles of libraries and librarians are broadening to cope with changes to reach and enrich its targets with peaceful co-existence. They understand better than anyone else that the survival of a democratic society is inevitably intertwined with the free flow of information.

The use of information communication technologies

In his opinion about the role of the Internet, Obama (2014) declared that “if the fall of the Soviet Union left America without a competing superpower, emerging threats from terrorist groups, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction place new and, in some ways more complicated demands on our (American) intelligence agencies. Globalization and the Internet made these threats more acute, as technology erases borders and empowers individuals to project great violence, as well as great good” (p. 102).

Bhatti (2010) further buttressed this point by stating that, the operation of new information communication technologies (ICTs) is seen as crucial to reaching out to the community to peacefully resolve conflict. Just as they are being used for elections, social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook), Web 2.0 and Library 2.0, Wikis, folksonomy, Flickr, Podcasting, YouTube, and virtual worlds (Second Life), may be used to combat the disasters caused by intolerance and terrorist. She stated that, currently, high tech is seen as positive for widespread awareness and better quality information in the evolving framework of librarianship.

Obama (2014) further mentioned that, as intelligence advances and secret information is digitized, national security recognizes the likelihood for exploitation. New legislation allows information to be gathered and shared more quickly between federal agencies, state, local vigilantes, emergency management, and law enforcement agents.
Bhatti (2010) also notes that the mission, goals, and the objectives of academic, public, school, and special libraries around the world is a facilitator of modern computerized information.

However, drawbacks and obstacles associated with specific environments and infrastructures, either by geographical location or socio-economic factors, has its impact in implementing the technology. Librarians can help solve this challenge, by assisting to preserve such information as special collection in the reserved section of the library.

Thur (2009) opined that for many years, librarians served the public and became the social and information network for thousands of people. The use of new ICTs, such as YouTube, social networking sites, and the virtual world, by librarians and libraries in no small way attracted patrons to get the information required for daily living and personal development.

For security reasons, Obama (2014) mentioned the fact that Blackberries and iPhones are not allowed in the White House Situation Room. He noted that the intelligence services of other countries depend on the information obtained by the U.S. security agency to protect their own people.

Robison and Marlatt (2006) noted that the vision for the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), came when family members, survivors, and rescuers came together along with other members of the Oklahoma City community to examine ways to memorialize and honor those who lost their lives after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 19, 1995.

Robison and Marlatt (2006) stated that after the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma and the multiple events of 9/11, proactive steps were taken to guard against the recurrence of such threats and disasters. The U.S. realized the need to be better prepared, organized, and educated about threats to their national security and to know where these threats are coming from. The MIPT in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) in Monterey, California were established to help set the course for new directions in anti-terrorist education and response.

Robison and Marlatt (2006) further stated that each organization created a library to collect, organize, and preserve information so that those in emergency management and emergency response roles from all over the globe could become more informed and better prepared for future attacks or disasters of any kind. The MIPT established a physical and digital library and the CHDS developed the Homeland Security Digital Library. These libraries, with similar yet distinct roles, chose different paths to further and to support the missions of their respective institutions.

The present Nigeria government seems to have found a way to negotiate with the BH group because out of the 276 abducted school girls, 21 have been recovered. Soniyi (2016) averred that the Chairman of Chibok Local Government Area, Ya’aga Yarakuwa, who spoke on behalf of the girls’ parents, thanked the president for his efforts to recover the abducted girls, but called on the government to fortify security in his area saying a community was raided by the insurgents last Tuesday. The Chibok school girls have also lost two and a half years out of school. The government has promised to rehabilitate them, and ensure that they are reintegrated back to the society (Soniyi, 2016), but the government must take more aggressive steps to ensure such incidents do not recur. This fate could have been prevented or minimized.

Owing to the sensitive position of libraries especially in security matters, Thur (2009) mentioned that in 1942, Harry Stimson, the Secretary of War, demanded that the ALA order all information centers to remove books on weapons of mass destruction and cryptology and to report suspicious users to the Federal Bureau of...
Investigation. Librarians were to hand over the names of anyone who requested information on war-related materials.

Individuals and professionals in their fields and well-meaning leaders and citizens should collaborate to resolve differences; information on conflict resolution should be made available for all parties. Libraries should provide far-reaching, fundamental reports that promote communal harmonious relationship and development.

**Recommendations**

The Nigeria Library Association (NLA), National Library of Nigeria, and other library bodies should intensify their campaign with the Ministry of Education and the federal government. NLA should present a colloquium for activities relating to conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and peace building in the country. NLA should work in collaboration with relevant organizations like the Nigerian DSS, Environmental Vigilantes and Nigeria Security Civil Defense Corps, the National Human Rights Commission, Nigerian Ministry of Defense National Emergency Management Agency, and other international organizations dealing with peacekeeping on networking, partnership, and linkages.

Workshops, seminars, discussions, and public lectures on emergency management and peace keeping should be organized by the NLA for communities where terrorism seems to persist. Libraries can also help promote literacy through book talks, current awareness programs, and mobile library services.

Librarians can also collaborate to provide access of timely, relevant, and quality information to security agents, emergency management units, and community members, and they can maintain a database of information for security purposes within and around communities, thereby, building and sustaining a trustworthy working relationship between the public and the security operatives.

A center for information on anti-terrorism should also be set up where terrorism and threats of disaster seem to be predominant by the federal government, NLA, and well-meaning members of the communities, and it should provide current information on how to prevent future disaster and secure lives and properties in event of future attacks.

**Conclusion**

Libraries provide individuals and the society with a variety of printed and electronic information on issues important to a nation. In times of political violence, religious extremism, communal violence, the Niger delta struggles, and disputes of maritime security and transnational crime amongst others, communities, citizenry, and leaders can all come together and access useful information for peaceful resolution.

Libraries should focus on social networking to enlighten the public. They should collaborate with other information specialists like the media and public relation officers to organize seminars, lectures, conferences, book fairs, workshops, displays, and exhibitions on current issues and news publication about the subject. They can also provide current information to the public through the use of newspaper clippings, electronic resource maintenance, references, and reprographic services of selective dissemination of information, social networking platforms, and current awareness services to support bibliotherapy, peace keeping, and become a forceful agent of change in the society. Our leaders in Nigeria and Africa should also be proactive in the aspect of securing the lives and properties of every citizenry.

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