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NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF AN OPEN AND DISTANCE ACADEMIC LIBRARY.

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**NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF AN OPEN AND DISTANCE
ACADEMIC LIBRARY.**

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Abstract

This paper discussed the role of open and distance learning academic libraries in supporting national security in Nigeria. Peace is an antidote to conflicts; no nation can experience proper development without peace. Thus, no meaningful development can occur without appropriate knowledge which is the library and information services based. The study demonstrated how open and distance learning academic libraries can effectively fight against terrorism, insurgency, youth restiveness, and militancy that threaten national security by gathering and disseminating information properly and effectively to the right people at the right time, mobilizing the populace through civic education, and promoting information literacy programs. The non-empirical study and document research methodologies were used in this report. The article recommended, among other things, that all libraries and librarians should be at the forefront of national security discourses through sponsorship, guiding principles, and actions that can further the country's national security; the academic Library should open public reading centers where citizens can have easy access to books.

Keywords: Academic libraries, role; terrorism; National Security, Nigeria.

Introduction

Over time, academic libraries have expanded from being a repository of knowledge to being a location and a structure within an organization. Although it contains well chosen and arranged books, it also provides access via which information can be digitally or electronically repackaged and distributed to individuals wherever they may be. Since man has changed so much throughout his evolution, change is inevitable. It is expected that the man's services will represent his place in the society right now. Consequently, all information practitioners—including libraries, librarians, and other—have a part to play in the term. The recent upsurge in violence and terrorism in Nigeria requires the involvement of all information professionals. Issa (2003) asserts that access to and utilization of information and knowledge are essential for achieving and maintaining economic and political power and status. While academic librarians and other

information professionals are ultimately responsible for academic libraries and other information centers, there is also a need to work together to provide the best information services possible to the general public while reducing security risks.

The definition of security as it relates to self-defense, the fundamental principle of existence, Security indicates a secure, largely predictable environment where a person or group can pursue their goals without interference, risk, harm, or concern for upsetting the peace or getting hurt (Dasuki, 2013). Therefore, a nation's security is concerned with protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity from outside invasion as well as the health, welfare, and interests of its population (Ossai-Ugba, 2013). It is impossible to overstate how crucial security is to a nation's and its residents' economic prosperity. For instance, Section 14 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, effectively expresses the value placed on Nigeria's security: This declares that "the welfare and security of the people should be the main object of the government." Therefore, the Nigerian Constitution consistently places the burden of protecting all lives, assets, and the welfare of Nigerians from both internal and external threats, including other types of risk, on the shoulders of the government. For the sake of national security, it is the responsibility of the government to oversee public peace and safety, including law and order.

Several foundational elements of national security span the military, economic, social, religious, and political spheres. How secure residents' lives and property are has a significant impact on how developed a nation becomes. The promotion of intellectual minds as valuable assets will only occur in a secure environment to its building as a nation. Securing an environment also ensures that it will be safe for the expansion of infrastructure.

Ogebebe and Babatope (2012) assert that the importance of national security extends beyond the government to the entire country. The armed forces, which are a crucial component of national

security, perform several purposes related to national security. The military of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is very effective and protects the country. However, threats to Nigeria's security came from a variety of sources. These include the risks associated with poor leadership, severe threats to people's lives and property posed by Islamic sects like Boko Haram, officially known as Jam'at-al-Sunnah fli-Da'wahwa'l-Jihd, The Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP), the country's high unemployment rate, local militia from the oil-rich Niger Delta, ritual killings and abductions of citizens, Fulani Herders' abuse of farmers' lives and destruction of farmland, which drives up the price of food, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the influx of illegal immigrants from nearby countries, the emergence and sponsorship of political and regional terrorism, as well as regional thugs to aid election rigging and malpractice and injustice due to the collapse of the judiciary system (Ugulu and Oghuvwu, 2015).

Along with the aforementioned issues, emergency readiness is another aspect of national security. It should be noted that given the bigger picture of national security, government security services cannot guarantee the necessary level of security for the country or the environment. National security should be everyone's concern rather than being the only responsibility of the government. Therefore, the goal of this essay is to investigate how academic libraries might help Nigeria's government with its security-related problems.

Concept of an Open and Distance Learning Academic Library

Academic libraries for open and online learning are experts at meeting the information demands of distance education staff, students, and researchers. It guarantees that those who enroll in and instruct distant education courses have proper access to library resources. The major goal of any academic library, whether it be one at a traditional institution or one that offers open and online learning, is to give students, professors, and researchers access to the material they need for

learning, teaching, and research reasons. By meeting the educational and informational demands of the open and distance learning community, open and distance academic libraries must make sure that these goals are achieved. The duties of an academic library for open and online learning include, but are not limited to least:

1. Acquisition of knowledge
2. Organization of knowledge
3. Preservation of knowledge for easy access
4. Dissemination of knowledge.

An academic library is a collection of organized, accessible materials, both book-related and unrelated to books (such as films, CD-ROMs, slide filmstrips, and Microforms Video). The decision-making for acquisition, organization, preservation, and dissemination is typically done by librarians. Regardless of their format, it unifies all information sources and makes them simple for anyone looking for information to access. Information is viewed as fresh ideas or knowledge collected from the environment for human use to affect behavior, bring about improvements, and increase efficiency in all human endeavors because information is today's currency (Ajegbomogun, 2008). All citizens are more equipped and informed thanks to the information. No matter what kind, the library is the entrance to knowledge. Information is obtained, processed, repackaged, stored, and distributed to the dispersed university community, including students, lecturers, and researchers, for the purposes of learning, teaching, and research in an open and remote learning academic library.

According to Youngkin (2014), university libraries serve as testing grounds for cutting-edge communication and learning tools. These technologies provide robust ubiquity support in the form of web 2.0 tools, social networking, online course materials, etc. Information and

communication technology have enlarged the idea of academic libraries (ICT). There are currently additional types of libraries outside the classic or physical ones, such as the virtual library, digital library, online library, etc. which open learning institutions employ to serve their widely scattered library patrons. With the help of information and communication technology devices, library users of the open and distance learning academic libraries can access whatever information they need from the library while sitting comfortably in their homes, offices, stores, etc. Academic libraries, however, have a serious obligation to ensure that people's traditions and culture are passed down from one generation to the next as well as the preservation of these cultures while effectively addressing security issues. Academic libraries, museums, and archives are significant sources of the knowledge and information that individuals require on a daily basis.

Nigeria's Security Challenges

There are currently security challenges in every country, and they differ from one country to the next. Terrorism, youth unrest, maritime security, Niger Delta militancy, abduction, illegal bunkering, pipeline vandalism, armed robbery, youth unemployment, and climate change are among Nigeria's security challenges, according to Dasuki (2013) in Panle & Nwokedi, (2020).

Terrorism/ Insurgency

Terrorism or concerns related to insurgencies are without a doubt the biggest and most prevalent security challenge in Nigeria at the moment. Today's terrorism in Nigeria is heralded by Islamic fundamentalist organizations like Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The sects, which are based primarily in the Northern and Eastern regions of the country, hold the anti-Western education and anti-all that it stands for as their core values. The Islamic group wants to establish Islamic (Sharia) rule throughout all of Northern Nigeria. In

particular, the Boko Haram organization frequently carried out armed assaults and suicide bombings on churches, schools, government buildings, police and military camps, and media outlets.

Youth restiveness

According to Elegbeleye (2005), youth restiveness is "a sustained protest launched by an organized group of youths to enforce the desired outcome from a constituted authority." It is characterized by violence and the interference with legal activity. Losses of lives and property are the most evident repercussions of young unrest on Nigerian society, and they pose a serious threat to both the state's security and corporate viability. Additionally, it stifles actual economic and democratic advancement. Mass agitations, protests, marches, looting, vandalism, cultism, ethnic militia, and political thuggery are just a few of the tactics used. Panle&Nwokedi,(2020).

Militancy

To bring the attention of State and Federal Governments to the lack of development and environmental devastation of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the Militancy Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) engaged in hostage-taking, blowing up oil pipelines, and kidnapping.

Traditional Roles of the Academic Library and Librarians

Libraries were historically collections of books, manuscripts, journals, and other forms of written information, according to Ogunsola (2011). Libraries have evolved over the past 50 years into a provider of information resources and services that don't even need a physical location. Access to pertinent information resources is the library's long-term, conventional goal. Giving people' needs and expectations great importance is the intention behind this. If there is no mechanism to

find, filter, organize, and retrieve the information that is generated and shared, it is meaningless. Nwokedi & Panle (2020). Practically speaking, academic library librarians are and will remain at the forefront of information distribution (Ramos, 2007). In libraries, information is gathered, stored, processed, organized, disseminated, and distributed sources and formats that are both documentary and not. Academic libraries and other institutions that handle and manage knowledge and information are indispensable to national security since they are so important for all aspects of human and national development.

Therefore, the fundamental principle of librarianship is the concern for national security. Since there can be no meaningful learning, education, or development in an environment of insecurity and blatant destruction of people's lives and property, academic libraries have a responsibility to practice responsible librarianship by disseminating knowledge that can promote peace and order in Nigeria by educating the populace about their role in national security. The Academic Library's role as a repository for knowledge has positively expanded over time, becoming not only a location where books and information are kept, but via which everyone, regardless of where they are, can access the material.

According to Panle & Nwokedi (2020), several service-oriented industries have undergone numerous changes since the dawn of the human race. This is due to the fact that services provided to humans should vary and adapt to reflect the social norms and situations of the day. Issa (2003) noted that the widespread use of the information and knowledge that the Library supplies, for example, is leveraged on economic and national power and position. While it is acknowledged that librarians and information scientists are responsible for the library and information services, there is also a need to work with the security agencies to provide the public with the most information services possible case for national security.

The Roles of the open and distance learning academic Library and Librarians in National Security

Academic libraries for open and online learning have a focus on meeting the information needs of researchers, staff, and students in distance education. Its contribution to national security goes beyond simply disseminating knowledge to a specific group or individual; rather, it makes sure that people who enroll in and instruct distance education courses about all facets of Nigerian policy have proper access to library resources and information. Currently, all citizens are involved in the nation's fight against terrorism and terrorism, not simply the military services. This is a realistic goal that can be attained by appropriate information acquisition and dissemination, specifically for the open and distance academic libraries. The importance of information to national security is due to there would undoubtedly be a stir in the country if false information about citizen security is widely spread. This is so that the difference between security and insecurity may be seen in the information that is disclosed or kept secret. Any country's ability to use knowledge and the instruments that go with it is a source of power (Bordbar, n.d.). The academic library is best placed to handle this, together with its employees. Given the security difficulties now being faced in Nigeria, both the population and the government need to understand the significance of information in terms of usage and literacy as a tool for national security (Noruzi, 2006). The library continues to only deal in information, which includes all forms of media the data has been shaped. Real cooperation and information sharing between the two groups—the terrorist and the terrorized—is the only way to achieve the true integration of people who live in opposing political, economic, religious, and ideological camps. Panle&Nwokedi (2020).

Ideological divisions, which are the foundation upon which terrorism develops in a democracy like Nigeria, can be thwarted by efficient information transmission. To stop the flood of ignoramus decadence, it is imperative to deliver the "correct knowledge, in the right format, for the right people, at the right time, and in the right location." Long-standing political and religious mistrust in the nation has fueled conflicts that have split society and Nigerians were divided along ethnoreligious lines.

In order to educate the public about the value of national security while offering information services, librarians may need to use campaigning or mobile libraries. Town hall meetings, jingles for radio and television, as well as the creation and distribution of leaflets, might all be used to accomplish this. Information was described by Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2006) as "structured data that induces a human mind to change its view about the current state of the real world and contributes to a reduction in the state of the system's uncertainty." The responsibility for ensuring that Nigerians have access to information rests with libraries as information hubs and librarians as information managers because information is a transformative force that shapes viewpoints and life philosophies the appropriate knowledge that will guide their conduct. As seen by the gasoline subsidy protest that took place from January 9th to 15th 2012, some Nigerians who took part in demonstrations around the nation were uneducated (NTA News Bulletin, 13th January 2012). Therefore, access to information is a requirement for achieving both individual and group freedom as well as national security. "Information is important for people to be liberated from the chains of ignorance, misconceptions, economic stagnation, social discontent, and political instability," says Anasi (2010), quoting Sokari (2006). Information that is timely, accurate, and pertinent is necessary for social cohesion. This is because the information is new concepts or knowledge that has been extracted from the environment for the purpose of changing behavior

across all spheres of human existence (Ajegbomogun, 2008). The knowledge fosters the development of informed, accountable citizens. The entrance to information is the library. It is a location where data is gathered, processed, repackaged, maintained, and shared (Anasi, 2010).

One of the most potent and successful vehicles for public mobilization today is electronic media. A country cannot hope to retain its freedom, faith, and philosophy for very long if it is not sufficiently organized to combat terrorism Panle&Nwokedi (2020). On the other hand, in the face of terrorism, firmly motivated people cannot be made to give up their sense of security. In this context, academic libraries for open and online learning and librarians can increase public awareness of security issues through electronic media. Terrorists, personal ideas presented as reality, propaganda in the media, the selective use of information, and yellow journalism (Gamble &Kwerliambli, 1990). Thus, the academic library and librarians perform a morale-boosting role. Morale, as used in the military, is the determination to battle to the bitter end for one's country (Issa, 2003).

In addition to offering information resources and advice, the open and distant learning academic library serves as a judgment-free space where patrons can access and research their potential sympathies for terrorists without fear of exposure or disgrace. According to Omotayo (2005), "at times of conflict in enlightened countries, use of libraries increases as people swarm to libraries in search of information to aid them. Information that can encourage harmony, cooperation, progress, and peaceful coexistence between all communities. Therefore, it must be offered in academic libraries so that users can get the information they require. Therefore, by facilitating access to this knowledge, librarians serve as agents for the advancement of racial harmony and peace in society.

The numbers of persons who utilize academic libraries to access print media in Nigerian society demonstrate the significance of these institutions. Academic libraries serve as a resource for access to print and electronic material, email, aid with information gathering, and leisure reading for students, instructors, and researchers at open and remote learning schools around the nation. (2003) Becker Some people decide to only learn about the world from sources that support their opinions and give them confidence that their perceptions are accurate. While some library patrons might occasionally have inquiries regarding newsworthy topics like politics, abductions, bombings, or individuals or cultures distinct from their own, such as religion or race. Some information requests can be motivated by a school assignment, a news article, hot topics on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, or just plain curiosity. The academic library can safeguard and foster curiosity and the desire to learn about the world. The flexibility to research other cultures and read about them is essential to national security, particularly as a means of reducing and averting radicalization In fact, academic libraries have a significant role to play in ensuring national security.

Recommendations

In the fight against terrorism, Nigeria's security agencies, including the State Security Services (SSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), and Nigerian Armed Forces, closely cooperate with open and remote academic librarians. The federal and state governments of Nigeria should make sure that all academic libraries at all university levels are well-stocked with the required materials. No of their race, religion, or other affiliations, all library patrons will have access to qualified staff who will meet their information needs. To raise awareness of the devastating impacts of a lack of national security, open and distant learning libraries should create and post posters on their notice boards, websites, social media platforms,

and in public spaces. Through sponsorship, guiding principles, and actions that can advance the nation's national security, open and distant learning academic libraries ought to be among those at the forefront of national security discourses. A good learning environment should be evident. Academic libraries for open and distance learning should designate a reading area with easy access to the appropriate information.

Conclusion

It goes without saying that academic librarians need to be properly trained and equipped in order to better serve all library users in this era of information and communications technology (ICT). In order to meet the information needs of their patrons and remain relevant in society, academic librarians must carefully consider how to provide each member of society with adequate information about the level of security in the nation. As a repository for knowledge inside the university, the open and distance academic library has constructively expanded the extent of its effect over time to include not just a venue for informational resources but also a channel for dispersed audiences to access information. The importance of librarians and libraries should be recognized. Utilizing and working together with library, human, and material resources is possible for national security. This essay has demonstrated the crucial significance that an academic library for open and online learning plays in the security of a country like Nigeria.

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