Pyrex Journal of Library and Information Science

The Roles of Libraries in Provision of Information Services for Alternative Dispute Resolution in Nigeria: A Literature Review

Medinat Dolapo Laaro[1], Francis Olusanjo Oyeyemi[2], Tunde Toyese Oyedokun[2]* and Fausat Ayobami Oyewumi[2]

[1]Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin, Nigeria.
[2]University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Abstract

Information is a fact that provides answers to queries and some kind of resolve to an uncertainty that can cause changes in human perspective as regard to any state of affairs or happenings in the country. But in a country like Nigeria where social unrest as well as insurgency becomes the bane and persist occurrence; and several studies attested to the fact that information is an agent of transformation as well as sharper of minds and perspectives that direct human actions and directions. One is now left with a phenomenon of who, what, where, when and how (W4H) of such information could be deployed for alternative dispute resolution and curbing of social unrest in our society. Without any gainsaying, confirmation from the literature as well as researchers critical observation confirmed that libraries did not only provide access to information but also make provision for an avenue where patrons can investigate subjectively issues that bothered about national security. It is on this submission and solid ground that this current study reviewed the literature on roles of libraries in the provision of information services for alternative dispute resolution. Literature has it that libraries contribute positively to dispute resolution in the society through their service of providing access to relevant and timely information to library clientele. A recommendation was given that for libraries to be able to act effectively on dispute resolution through their information resources and services, they needed to incorporate the use of ICT tool for quick and efficient information service delivery. It was also recommended that selective dissemination of information to appropriate quarters will curb social unrest as each group will be rightly be informed what needed to be known on government policies. Since there are attestations from the literature on the important roles libraries play in resolving a dispute in the society, the researchers then suggest ways in which such information could be effectively be disseminated, which include outreach programs for remote users as well as a Champaign program for sensitization of citizen on national security.

Keywords: Library; Information Service, Information Resource, Insurgency, Social Unrest, Dispute Resolution, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Humankind since time immemorial had been left on a planet Earth where their continued peaceful co-existence was in the state of contrariety. This is because of the plethora rate of conflicts between individuals and groups. Buttressing the foregoing was Urhiewhu and Aji (2015) who opined that conflict is a doctrinaire and innate aspect of human being, as they often have a conflicting interest. Attribution to the aforementioned was because citizens are misinformed or lacking access to right and up-to-date

Corresponding author email: toyex4eternity@gmail.com

information. The proffering solution to this menace of the insurgency was Anasi (2010) who opined that having access to the right and accurate information frees someone from the burden of ignorance, misconception, social unrest and other social vices.

Throughout the world, the issues of insurgency, political violence/crisis, and disputes between individuals, communities, and countries are no longer news. Most importantly, Nigeria that was once a peaceful country in Africa is now one of the crisis nations that attract international debates. Some years back, Nigeria citizens were entangled in a firebox of security challenges, leading to the deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, some members of the nation's security personnel, elected officials and many government workers (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). These challenges had assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic managers, communities and, indeed the entire nation, to regret the loss of their loved ones, investments and the absence of safety in most parts of the country (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). These security challenges had emerged in different ways, such as kidnappings, ritual killings, carjacking, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry, and others have increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

Tinuade and Fadekemi (2015) were of the opinion that without prior experiences of dispute, citizens would not appreciate the important of peaceful coexistence. Over the years, the prevalence of dispute in the country has become a major concern for the well-meaning Nigerians considering the impact on the peace, security as well as the economy of the nation. One of the appendages of a dispute is the destruction of lives and properties that has almost become an everyday affair. These happenings have created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors both domestic and foreign, which subsequently threatened the economy of the nation. The dispute occurs where there is an interaction between (at least) two individuals or groups, whose objectives differ (Tinuade & Fadekemi, 2015). The socials cost of a dispute is so enormous that the government of a nation need to do all within its capacity to discover the best strategy for resolution.

The concept of a dispute is intrinsic and part of human existence. This is the reason why Nkoro (2005) postulated that dispute is inevitable in human society as long as there is existence. Conceptually, Francis (2007) described dispute as of the resort use of force and armed violence in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals. In other words, Batubo and Digitemie-Batubo (2010) defined dispute as of the process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party; as a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle. The authors

explained further that, it could be because of misunderstanding that involves negotiable interests, which could be religious, social, political or economic interests. In another perspective, Kenya government's national policy on peace building and conflict management (2006) affirmed that dispute is the existence of inharmonious relationships resulting from incompatible interests or behavior. In looking at the above submissions, it could be deduced from the foregoing that dispute is not a new phenomenon but rather a problem that grows with time.

With many atrocities caused by the dispute among individuals, communities, nations among others, therefore, it is important to look for ways to reduce or resolute it in our society. The term resolution according to Heitler (2011) refers to as a collaborative problem solving, a cooperative taking together process that leads to choosing a plan of action by both parties. Fred-Mensah (2008) described dispute resolution as the principles, methods, and skills used to prevent, reduce, or resolve a dispute. These methods and principles of dispute resolution include post-conflict activities such as reconciliation, reinsertion, reintegration, and rehabilitation of ex-combatants and war-affected persons, plus the design and implementation of early warning systems. In considering the likely causes of dispute in Nigeria, Igbinijesu (2013) identified five points, which includes tribalism, resource control, religion, land disputes, and trade-related disputes. Leadership tussle is not an exception. The distribution of wealth has also sparked dispute in Nigeria's oil-rich southern Delta region, where militants lobbying for a greater share of oil revenue regularly blow up pipelines and kidnap foreign oil workers (Tinuade & Fadekemi, 2015).

In order to resolute dispute among communities, town, and individuals, the government has tried everything from "force-for-force" to carrot-and-stick approach to diplomacy but the problem seems to rise with a greater monstrosity like the proverbial phoenix. There has also been strong advocacy for a multi-stakeholder intervention to the insecurity question rather than lean on military options alone, but the problem has defied the present medication it is getting (Imhonopi & Urim, 2013; Open Society, 2012; Ujomu, 2001). Even, academic writers, social researchers, scholars, security experts, and consultants have also not rested in making diverse recommendations and probable solutions to address this blight, but all proof abortive. Since the government has tried different methods, and most dispute around the world can be attributed to misinformation by or and complacency of information institutions. In a world plagued by political unrest, war, ethnic and religious violence, and terrorism, the onus is now on information institutions of which library is one, to rise up to the challenge, by becoming more proactive in the dissemination of the right information for maintaining

security, justice, peace, and resolution of dispute. This is because libraries are part of the community. They are more than four walls and shelves of books where all walks of life may be present; and where people can gather to meet new people, discuss books read or articles discovered even get together with others is a valuable component of successful community life and increase people's confidence and self-esteem (Tinuade & Fadekemi, 2015). Consequently, the library as the main custodian of information and knowledge is in the best position to provide access to information

Furthermore, people may go to the library looking mainly for information, but they find each other and discuss current and pressing events in the community. The roles of professional librarians are crucial in this era of fading service personnel. They provide help and ensure the library functions effectively. In the same vein, they are also a part of the community who utilizes available resources within the four walls and outside in the world in meeting the information needs of the community. Librarians know their communities firsthand and are often the first to recognize a pressing local need, owing to their interaction on a daily basis with patrons from all occupations. They are in the best position not only to bring local issues to municipal governments and social agencies but also to collaborate with local governments and agencies to address the needs of a community.

Professionals from social science such as political science, international relation, anthropology and sociology, psychology and host of others have been championing studies of insurgency and dispute resolution (Echezona, 2007). This current study is one of the few studies that seek to examine the roles of libraries in the provision of information services for alternative dispute resolution. Therefore, it is on this solid ground and premise that this paper reviewed the literature on information resources and services that the library could provide an alternative for dispute resolution.

Purpose and Objectives of the Paper

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of libraries in providing information for alternative dispute resolution. Specifically, the paper will:

1). Discuss the potential roles of libraries and their information services in dispute resolution in Nigeria;
2). Identify challenges that the library might encounter while providing information for dispute resolution; and
3). Proffer solution to the challenges that the library might encounter while providing information for dispute resolution.

Potential Roles of Libraries and its Services in Dispute Resolution in Nigeria

The affront of insurgency, violence, terrorism, and uproar in Nigeria are no longer a new phenomenon, as there are Boko Haram (Islamic fighters) in states like Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (North-East senatorial zone of Nigeria) killing and bombing, all in the name of fighting western education. A similar scenario is happening in the Niger-Delta region where agitation for a larger control of the natural resource deposited in the region is incessant. Another is that of southeast senatorial zone ceding to declare Biafra nation (Urhiewhu & Aji, 2015; Adetiloye, 2014). In the past decade, the federal government of Nigeria has deployed many strategies to fight insurgencies battling the country. Most of the strategies employed are not the last longing. Over the years, libraries have always been a key contributor to the national development and it is appropriate that they take a leadership role in the current movement on national security. In the light of this, the role of libraries of all types in national security most especially dispute is not just to spread information in a particular area but to offer a holistic approach, around all aspects of the policies in the country. Currently, the issue of an insurgency is not what the armed forces can fight alone but by all and sundry. Thus, for libraries, this is an objective, which is achievable through the information and dissemination process (Hali, 2003). Therefore, in taking the role of information dissemination through the library resource and programs for dispute resolution, libraries should render the following services, which include talk show, symposium, book exhibition, book fair, a mobile library in rural areas (Tinuade & Fadekemi, 2015).

It is a generally believed that some of the disputes in the community could be avoided if there were adequate communication among the warring communities and peacemakers before they broke out. In other words, if there were information channels that are open to everybody, then the dispute would have been contained. Most importantly, for any nation to make a meaningful impact on dispute prevention, peace promotion and dispute resolution require early warning information. Furthermore, the free flow of information in any society is also very important because the absence of it brings about dispute (Laloo, 2002). In explaining the roles of libraries including law library in dispute resolution, Echezona, Ozioko and Ugwuanyi (2011) postulated that library and information service is a key player in providing unhindered access to essential information resources for economics and cultural advancement. Similarly, Echezona (2007) stated that effective information dissemination through libraries and internet will put the leaders and the people at alert on facts of potential and conflict, including their causes, evolution, consequences, and solutions.

Other information services that libraries could render by for dispute resolution include current awareness services, selective dissemination of information and organizing

seminars, conference, workshops, and symposia as services that could be rendered by libraries for dispute resolution (Haruna, 2009). In the same vein, Adewuyi (2009) opined that government publications such as gazettes, constitutions, government bulletins and materials of cultural heritages are also veritable tools in dispute resolution that should be included in the library collection. In 2005, the World Bank report stated that countries such as Ethiopia, Namibia, Uganda, Somalia, and Liberia had mobilized library community resources in innovative ways, such as organizing seminars, conferences, and workshop on conflict resolution. They create access to free information, providing links with non-governmental organizations, extension services, and indigenous knowledge systems, repackaging information in a way that illiterate ones would be able to comprehend it, creating a website on dispute resolution where the target users can access and discuss matters relating to dispute resolution. These show the efficacy of libraries and information centers in conflict resolution.

Consequently, libraries also have the potentials to work with any of the media such as TV, radio for propaganda through which the ideology and beliefs of a group are expressed to effect a timely intervention in dispute periods. Some early information media through which the library can create awareness of the imminent dispute include internet, community radio, television video conferencing, email, print media, and reference services. In corroboration to this, Ahiazu (2007) stated that the need for libraries and information in the developmental efforts of any society is that of survival. In the light of this, libraries have the capacity to work with non-governmental organizations to organize out-reach programs for distribution of information materials, delivering lectures and talks which would stimulate discussion among the participants to encourage them to embrace simple steps to promote peace and resolve disputes among themselves. Most especially, public and academic libraries are equipped to function in this capacity. However, the realization of the potential roles of libraries in offering services for dispute resolution has prompted some academic institutions to introduce the course "Peace and conflict resolution" as a general studies course. A good example is the University of Jos that is offering a course on peace and conflict resolution studies as one of the general studies course with course code GST222.

In the same vein, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries and other information centers like national archives are in the best strategic position to reach various groups of people in the community. They serve all and sundry; from much younger ones and much older people; an elite group of people such as judges, lawyers among others. In support of this, Bhatti (2010) postulated that libraries and archival centers could also expand their concepts of library services to build up

positive interaction within their community. Libraries and information centers can provide required information resources and services by liaising with these groups in organizing seminars, conferences, workshops, and community development meetings, by so doing they have proven their usefulness and contribute their own quota in maintaining peace and harmony in the society.

Available Information Services in the Library for Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution performs a healing function in society (Batubo & Digitemie-Batubo, 2010). Therefore, the library could be an important instrument in this area. For law libraries to play important roles in dispute resolution, the library needs to include different information services to enable an individual to develop full potentials and widening the horizons of perception, interests, and skills. Therefore, this paper will frame out different information services that law library could render for dispute resolution:

1). Public enlightenment or rights in the society, understanding social values and expected conduct in public life.
2). Assisting to adjust to existing social, political, spiritual and economic activities of the society.
3). Help people in the community to cultivate and maintain reading culture and promotion of good pieces of literature.
4). Information dissemination related to disasters involves various elements in society.

Other strategic services that library could render include:

1). Organization of workshops on dispute resolution
2). Display of topical issues concerning dispute resolution
3). Dissemination of information resources on security issues;
4). Organization of lectures related to dispute resolution;
5). Organization of conferences on security issues
6). Library week activities should include how to tackle security challenges in our community
7). Radio/TV partnership programs on security challenges.
8). On the other hands, the library could also use different media for disseminating information on conflict resolution. This includes:
9). Distribution of handbills/flyers that will enlighten the community about the security issues;
10). The library could also use radio/television interviews by bringing in security agency to radio for enlightenment;
11). Television announcement on dispute resolution;
12). The library could also embark on One-on-one message in the library;
13). Liaison with community leaders;

14). Liaison with NGOs (religious organizations);
15). Teleconferencing

Challenges Library Encountered while Providing Information for Dispute Resolution

Libraries set up different information services for conflict resolution in our society, in the cause of performing this fundamental role of dispute resolution; they faced some challenges that militate against the effective delivery of these services. These challenges include; Funding, Obsolete library resources, Epileptic power supply, Scarcity of professional librarians, lack of technological know-how (technophobia), Non-conducive operational hours, poor telecommunication facilities amongst others.

In the same vein, Adekunmisi (2005) also postulated that the challenges that the library faced are inadequate and qualified staff to man the libraries, lack of funds and a lack of a constant power supply. In addition to this, Akpoghome and Idiegbeyan-Ose (2010) stated that inadequate technical staff, unstable staff, insufficient computer literate labor force and lack of constant power supply are the other problems experienced. The researcher explained further that, the constant electric power supply is the backbone of the virtual library since the electric power supply is required to power air conditioners, computer systems and make hardware and software work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of issues and challenges discussed above, the following actions were recommended for libraries:

1). The parent body including the government should allocate more funds for the library in order to deliver their services effectively.
2). Libraries in Nigeria (and by extension libraries in the world) should organize an outreach program that will sensitize and educate the remote populace on the menace of insurgency in our society.
3). Libraries can also play a leading role in Champaign program for national security.
4). The library should acquire recent and relevant materials on dispute resolution.
5). Employment and retaining of professionally trained librarians
6). Library staff should be trained, most especially on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) tools.
7). Library staff should be properly motivated so that they will deliver their information services effectively for dispute resolution.
8). Library staff may not be military personnel, but through the selective dissemination of information to both side of the dispute, a common ground for a compromise

could be achieve.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussions so far, there is no doubt that libraries contribute positively to the dispute resolution in our society by providing relevant information resources and services to the people, since it is a common premise that information reduces uncertainty. Therefore, it is the responsibility of libraries to provide unlimited access to information that positively transforms individual's perspective and philosophy towards life. It is becoming increasingly obvious that providing relevant information services to the people regularly would help to curb the issue of dispute in our society. Therefore, libraries are the proverbial and literary gateway of information that patrons can access for information that shaped and enlighten them into a responsible citizen.

REFERENCES

Adekunmisi, S. O. (2005). The information needs and information seeking behavior of academic staff in the college of agricultural sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ayetoro Ogun State. Journal of Library and Information Science, 2 (1/2), 25.

Adetiloye T. (2014). The Root Causes of Boko Harama and Other Insurgent Groups in Nigeria-Saharareporters.

Adewuyi, O. W. (2009). The Library as a Tool for Conflict Resolution: the Nigerian Perspective. A Paper Presented at the 47th Annual National Conference of Nigerian Library Association, held in Ibadan from 26-31 July, 2009.

Ahiazu, B., (2007). Administration and management of an electronic library. In Ahiazu, B. et al. [Eds.]. Fundamentals of library practice (pp.117-123). Port Harcourt, David Strong publishers.

Akpoghome, U.T. & Idiegbeyan-Ose, J. (2010). The role of digital library in law research. International Journal of Information Science, 2(6), 108-113.

Anasi, S. N. I. (2010). Curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria: The role of information and libraries. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). Retrieved from: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/388?utm_source=digital commons.unl.edu%2Flibphilprac%2F388&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Batubo, B. & Digitemie-Batubo (2010). Role of Libraries in Conflict Resolution: The Niger Delta Case.

Echezona, R. I. (2007). The Role of Libraries in Information Dissemination for Conflict Resolution, Peace Promotion, and Reconciliation. African Journal of Libraries, Archives, and Information Science.17 (2), 143-152.

Echezona, R. I. Ozioko R. E. & Ugwuanyi, C. F. (2011). Public library intervention in conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria: Librarian's perspectives. International Journal of Library and Information Science, 3(5), 98-106.

Francis, D. J. (2007). Peace and conflict studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts. An Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa: A Reader. Best SG (Ed). Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Fred-Mensah, B. K., (2008). African conflict 'Medicine' an emerging paradigm shift in African conflict resolution? In Terrence Lyons and Gilbert M. Khadiagala (eds.) Conflict management and African politics: ripeness, bargaining, and mediation.

London: Routledge, 136-144pp.

Hali, S. M. (2003). Media Imperialism. The Defense Journal. 34 (10).

Haruna, I. (2009). The Role of Academic Libraries in Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Paper Presented at the 47th Annual National Conference of Nigerian Library Association held in Ibadan from 26-31 July 2009.

Heitler S. (2011). Communication, listening and conflict resolution skill. The encyclopedia of peace psychology. (Ed). Blackwell Publishing. [Online] Availablehttp://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470672532.wbepp042/references.

Igbinijesu, N. (2013). Discover Nigeria: 5 Causes of Conflict in Nigeria. Discover Nigeria. Retrieved from: file:///C::/Documentsandsettings:Administrator/Desktop/CONFLICT RES 2.htm on 7/4/2017.

Imhonopi, D. & Urim, U. M. (2012). The Specter of Terrorism and Nigeria's Industrial Development: A Multi-Stakeholder Imperative. The Paper for the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association (NASA) Conference with the theme "Theoretical and Conceptual Issues on Social Values, Corruption and Security" held at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, November 5-9, 2012.

Laloo, B.T. (2002). Information needs, information seeking behavior and users. New Delhi: ESS Publication. pp. 3-5.

Onifade, C. Imhonopi, D. and Urim, U. M. (2013). Addressing the Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria: The Imperative of Moral Value and Virtue Ethics. Global Journals, 13(2), 52-63.

Open Society Initiative for West Africa. (2012). Nigeria: Ensuring Stability, Human Safety and Security. Briefing Paper, October 2012.

Tinuade, A. O. & Fadekemi, B. O. (2015). Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: The Role of Academic Library. International Journal of Library Science.4(1), 13-20.

Ujomu, P. O. (2001). National Security, Social Order and the Quest for Human Dignity in Nigeria: Some Ethical Considerations. Nordic Journal of African Studies, 10(2), 245-264.

Urhiewhu, L. O. & Aji, S. B. (2015). Issues of conflict, political violence/crisis and insurgency in Nigeria: The role of library and information centers as a tool for solution. International Journal of Information and Technology, 1(1), 1-13. Retrieved from: https://www.unimed.edu.ng/oer.unimed.edu.ng/JOURNALS/8/1/Lucky-Oghenetega-Urhiewhu-CLN-Issues-of-Conflict-Political-ViolenceCrisis-and-Insurgency-in-Nigeria-the-Role-of-Library-and-Information-Centers-as-a-Tool-for-Solution.pdf

World Bank Report (2005). Reshaping the future education and post conflict reconstruction, Washington D.C.: World Bank, pp 5-23.