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The Era of Insecurity and the Use of Public Libraries in North Eastern States of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the era of insecurity and the use of public libraries in North Eastern States of Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study and their major finding revealed the benefits of using the public libraries in the era of security in North Eastern State of Nigeria to include provision of conducive environment, aids educational attainment, self development, and facilitates literacy campaigns and training. The challenges are terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, fulani herdsmen, Bokoharam, rituals killing, suicide bombings, fear factor, and ethnicity crisis. The solutions to the insecurity level as to the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria are: preservation of her sovereignty and territorial integrity against external aggression, Deployment of security personnel to strategic locations of the states, National security, A blueprint for security consciousness ,campaign on the war against terror. The study recommended that since the public libraries is the peoples university for both the rich and the poor, adequate security should be the priority of the federal government of Nigeria to drastically reduced this menace in this region.

KEYWORDS: *Insecurity, Public Libraries, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries perform their roles with a view to providing and enhancing access to information in the society without discrimination. The public library also actively support literacy and information literacy campaigns and training, as literacy is the key to education and knowledge and to the use of libraries and information services. Newly literate people need easy access to appropriate information materials and services to maintain and develop their skills. Edom (2012) opines that public libraries are libraries established by the government to enhance independent and continuing education of people particularly those living within this environment or locality. This is necessary as they offer their collection to all members of the community. Furthermore, Reitz (2004) suggests that public libraries are now acknowledged to be an indispensible part of community life, as promoters of literacy, providers of wide range of reading culture for all ages and as centers for community information services.

The North Eastern State Library Service began in Maiduguri on 1st August, 1968 with 5,765 Books on display and others were locked up in boxes due to lack of space. Both the State Library collection and the Native Authority Reading Room collection of Arabic manuscripts were housed in one small room (Pearce, 1968). While the new states were busy trying to lay a solid foundation with a view to consolidating their position in their various States, further political development in terms of state creation took place in the Country in 1976, 1990 and 1992. Within a period of 10 years, the North Eastern State was fragmented into 6 independent states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) each deriving its power from the Centre and each pursuing its unique plan towards public library development.

The environment in which public libraries is situated should be quite and free from noise and any other dangers that would disrupt the activities of the service rendered. The insecurity challenges associated with access to public libraries in the northern part of Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Olowu (2004) identified natural and artificial barriers to access to public libraries in the North Eastern part of Nigeria due to frequent insecurity challenges in both the public and private sectors of which the public libraries in this region is inclusive.

The insecurity in Nigeria is alarming; people no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. Bandits, terrorism, kidnapping is a major threat to the usage of public libraries in these region. Insecurity is a state of being subject to threat or risk. In this regard, insecurity can be considered as threats to the state which regularly accounted for the race for arms and atomic missiles to defend the state to establish their evil deed of the public library is involved. The fear of library users to leave their homes to make use of the public libraries is alarming. Insecurity is the most glaring and much talked about issue in Nigeria today. Acts of insecurity occur on daily basis throughout the country. Right thinking and sane Nigerians are really concerned about this ugly trend. The number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, carjacking, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2009 which made library users not to access the public libraries often in this region due to fear factor (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). People hardly go to public places including the public libraries because they are all living in fears.

It is as a result of this challenges that this topic the era of insecurity and the use of public libraries in some selected states in northern Nigeria is imperative.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The public library is center where library users make use of the library for the purpose reading, research and self development. The usage of public libraries by users has transformed them educationally and made them achieve educational success. The insecurity in the northern part of Nigeria has made so many users not to access the public libraries since everyone is now living in fears in this region. The rate of bandit, terrorism and kidnapping is alarming. Parents no longer allowed their children to go out late and

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attend public functions with large crowd such as the public libraries.

It has been observed that literature exist on Era of Insecurity and the use of public libraries, but no research work has been done on the Era of Insecurity and the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria, it is as a result of this that prompted the researcher to carry out this study to suggest and to improve on the insecurity level in the northern part of Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the study is to examine the Insecurity and the use of public libraries in some selected States in Northern Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the benefits of using the public libraries in the era of security in North East State of Nigeria?
2. To find out the challenges affecting the use of public libraries due to insecurity in North East State of Nigeria?
3. To proffer solutions to the insecurity level as to the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature will be reviewed under Public libraries, Insecurity in Nigeria.

Public libraries are established by the state government and supported by the tax-payers money. They provide access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services which are equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment. Public libraries are also supported and funded by the community through the local, regional or national government and other forms of community organization. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995) states that "the public library shall in principle be free of charge and services should be provided based on equality of access for all regardless of age, race, gender religion, nationality, language or social status". To provide equality of access to users, specific services and materials must be provided for those users who for whatever reason cannot use the regular services and materials e.g. linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, in hospital or prison.

The primary purpose of the public library is to provide facilities, resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for information and development. Public library is charged with the responsibility of providing timely, accurate, pertinent and reliable information in all subjects to their users through materials that communicate experience and ideas from one person to another making them easily and freely available to all people.

For the public library to carry out its functions effectively, the security of the nation is critical. According to Ogebebe and Babatope (2012) National security is important not only to the government, but to the nation as a whole. National security serves many purposes. First of all, the armed forces are a very important aspect of national security. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has a very strong military that ensure that the nation stays safe, however Nigeria's security concerns and threat perceptions emanated from many quarters. Security has to do with self-preservation which is the first law of existence. Security implies a stable, relatively predicable environment in which an individual or group may pursue its ends or objectives without disruption, harm, danger and fear of disturbance or injury (Dasuki, 2013). Security of a nation therefore, is concerned with the well-being, welfare and interest of her citizens, preservation of her sovereignty and territorial integrity against external aggression (Ossai-Ugba, 2013), but the reverse is the case, insecurity in Nigeria has been the most breaking news in the media on a daily basis. Insecurity is a critical issue that has hampered public library services in Nigeria which is perceived as the giant of Africa has witnessed an unprecedented incidences of insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani Herdsmen; Boko Haram Insurgencies, Armed Robber Attacks, kidnapping, political/religious crisis, murder, and destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants, Child Abduction / Trafficking etc. Other crimes committed by these Islamic sect include; destruction of vehicles; burning of churches, police stations, schools, hospitals,

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clinics, shops, army barracks and residential houses; abduction of expatriates. A public library requires a conducive environment to operate and disseminate information to library users.

According to Ewetan (2014), insecurity is defined as "the absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of defence and lack of security." While Achumba, et al. (2013) viewed insecurity from two perspective. First of all, "vulnerability is the state of being exposed or prone to danger of danger, where danger is the situation of being vulnerable to injury or harm. Secondly, insecurity is the state of risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague uncomfortable emotion encountered in anticipation of any misfortune. "This definition of insecurity illustrates a significant point because when they arise, those impacted by insecurity are not only unsure or unaware of what will happen, but often susceptible to the threats and hazards.

In another development, Adebanjoko & Okorie (2014) regard 'insecurity as a situation of fear or something that causes fear, harm or the potential to trigger a person's fear or harm. These may be politico-strategic, socio-economic or environmental problems; such as political turmoil, poverty, and environmental degradation, lack of access to education, gender-based inequality, disease and unemployment. With this threat of insecurity especially in the Northern part of Nigeria, library users in public libraries find it difficult to make use of the public libraries in their states and environment due to the fear factors.

Again, Terrorism and other forms of insecurity and conflicts are not new in the Nigerian state. The activities of Boko Haram and bandits, intercommunal clashes, the herdsmen–farming community crisis and militancy, among others, have ravaged (and continue to ravage) the country, leaving thousands dead and millions displaced. Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (2017) suggested that Acts of terrorism by Boko Haram have been rampant in North-Eastern Nigeria, while banditry is more prominent in the north-western region of the country. In the south-south and south-eastern regions, the activities of militant groups and herdsmen have continued to ravage the area. The south-south dominant militant groups have often operated via kidnappings and oil bunkering. The herder–farmer conflict is associated with struggle over scarce resources, land ownership, proprietorship and community ownership.

To buttress this point further; the lives of fifty five citizens were claimed in Kaduna State on Thursday, 18th October, 2018. Also six farmers were reported dead in Ebonyi State on Thursday, 24th October, 2018 as a result of brutal and inimical attitude of Fulani Herdsmen. Insecurity is a real threat to human existence and economic development, with all this challenges, no reasonable parents will allow their children to use the public libraries period due to fear factors. Terrorism is the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or force a government to act. The United States Department of Defense cited by Terrorism Research (Undated), defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological." The people or individuals that carry out acts of terrorisms are known as terrorists. Characteristically, terrorism involves the following:

Use of unlawful violence believing that violence will usher in a better system; Use of unlawful and assorted dangerous weapons Motivated by goals that might be political, religious or ideological; Secretive in membership recruitment and locations of residence; Fewer in number comparable to the larger society they attack; Have strong will and could die for the course they uphold; Most times, operate as syndicates; Derive financial and military supports from national and international loyalists; They are militant, they use coercion, intimidation and instill fears in people. Their tactics involve: Suicide bombing, car bombing, rocket propelled grenades, assassinations, abductions and kidnapping, disguising and hijacking. Their targets are extermination of human lives and destruction of properties. These are achieved by attacking: Public squares, government buildings and installations, churches and mosques, schools, bridges, police stations, military barracks and installations as well as market squares, and public libraries.

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METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The questionnaire which was structured to answer the research questions were drawn and administered on the six (6) Directors of Library Boards and two other librarians in-charge of Reader Services division in each of the six libraries respectively, making a total of eighteen (18) questionnaires. All the eighteen (18) questionnaires collected were found usable depicting one hundred percent (100%) response rate. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics mean and percentage mean score of 2.5 and above and percentage score of 50% were considered as acceptable by the respondents while below 2.5 mean score below 50% score is considered as not acceptable by the respondents.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S.N.	Name of Public Libraries	Directors	Reader Service Librarians
1	Adamawa State Library Board (ADSLB)	1	2
2	Bauchi State Library Board (BASLB	1	2
3	Borno State Library Board (BOSLB	1	2
4	Gombe State Library Board (GOSLB	1	2
5	Taraba State Library Board (TASLB)	1	2
6	Yobe State Library Board (YOSLB	1	2
	Total = 18		

As shown in the table 1 above, the populations of this study consist of six (6) Directors of Library Boards and two other librarians' in-charge of reader services division in each of the six libraries respectively, making it a total of 18 in the public libraries under study. The breakdown is as follows: ADSLB (3), BASLB (3), BOSLB (3), GOSLB (3), TASLB (3) and YOSLB (3) respectively.

Table 2: What are the benefits of using the public libraries in the era of security in North Eastern State of Nigeria?

Research Question 1 What are the benefits of using the public libraries in the era of security in North Eastern State of Nigeria?

S.N.	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Conducive environment	14	3	1	-	3.7	Accepted
2	Educational attainment	10	5	2	1	3.3	Accepted
3	Self development	8	9	1	0	3.3	Accepted
4	literacy campaigns and training	11	9	-	-	3.9	Accepted
5	continuing education	9	7	1	1	3.3	Accepted
6	For research	16	1	1	0	3.8	Accepted
7	For reading	8	7	3	0	3.2	Accepted
8	Assignment	12	6	0	0	3.6	Accepted
9	It gives opportunities to collaborate on research	11	6	0	1	3.5	Accepted
10	Skills demonstrations	7	6	3	2	3.0	Accepted

The data presented in table 2 revealed that ten (10) identified items on the benefits of using the public libraries in the era of security in North East State of Nigeria are: it provides conducive environment (3.7), it aids educational attainment (3.3), for self development (3.3),its facilitates literacy campaigns and training (3.9), for continuing education (3.3), for adequate research (3.8), for reading (3.2), for assignment (3.6), it gives opportunity to collaborate on research (3.5) and skills demonstration (3.0).

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Table 3: What are the challenges affecting the use of public libraries due to insecurity in North East State of Nigeria?

Research Question 2 What are the challenges affecting the use of public libraries due to insecurity in North East State of Nigeria?

S.N.	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Terrorism	12	5	1	0	3.7	Accepted
2	Banditry	11	9	0	0	3.3	Accepted
3	Kidnapping	12	3	2	1	3.4	Accepted
4	Fulani Herdsmen	11	6	1	0	3.5	Accepted
5	Bokoharam	7	8	2	1	3.1	Accepted
6	Ritual killings	7	9	2	0	3.2	Accepted
7	Suicide bombings	7	1	5	5	2.5	Accepted
8	Fear factor	14	4	0	0	3.7	Accepted
9	Ethnicity crisis	6	9	2	1	3.1	Accepted

The data presented in table 3 shows that nine (9) identified items on the challenges affecting the use of public libraries due to insecurity in North East State of Nigeria are: terrorism (3.7), Banditry (3.3), Kidnapping (3.4), Fulani herdsmen (3.5), Bokoharam (3.1), Rituals killing (3.2), Suicide bombings (2.5), Fear factor (3.7), and Ethnicity crisis (3.1) respectively.

Table 4: What are the solutions to the insecurity level as to the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria?

Research Question 3 What are the solutions to the insecurity level as to the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria?

S.N.	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Preservation of her sovereignty and territorial integrity against external aggression	9	7	2	0	3.3	Accepted
2	Deployment of security personnel to strategic locations of the states	12	5	0	1	3.7	Accepted
3	National security	11	7	0	0	3.6	Accepted
4	A blueprint for security consciousness	11	5	2	0	3.5	Accepted
5	Campaign on the war against terror	6	7	0	5	2.7	Accepted
6	Provision of information that can promote peace and co-existence	12	1	5	0	3.3	Accepted
7	Sensitization on the disastrous effect on national insecurity	8	7	3	0	3.2	Accepted
8	Adequate budget for the ministry of defense	6	11	1	0	3.2	Accepted
9	Provision of adequate weapons to combat terrorism	10	3	3	2	3.3	Accepted

The data presented in table 4 shows that nine (9) identified items on the solutions to the insecurity level as to the use of public libraries in North East State of Nigeria are: preservation of her sovereignty and territorial integrity against external aggression (3.3), Deployment of security personnel to strategic locations of the states (3.7), National security (3.6), A blueprint for security consciousness (3.5), Campaign on the war against terror (2.7), Provision of information that can promote peace and co-existence (3.3), Sensitization on the disastrous effect on national insecurity (3.2), and Provision of adequate weapons to combat terrorism (3.3), respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

Since the public libraries is the peoples university for both the rich and the poor, adequate security should be the priority of the

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federal government of Nigeria to drastically reduced this menace in this region. There is also the need to allocate good budget to the ministry of defense in order to combat the terrorist, banditry, kidnapper, etc.

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