



GENERATION OF INDIGENOUS SECURITY INFORMATION TO CURB BANDITRY BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN SABON - GARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explored the indigenous security information generation for curbing Banditry by community members in Sabon - Gari Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. One research objective was raised; to determine the indigenous security information generation in curbing banditry by community members in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area, Kaduna State. Qualitative research methodology and a case study research design were employed. Data was collected using in – depth semi – structured interview. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of 10 participants as study sample. The data was analyzed using grounded theory analysis. Findings revealed that peer group discussions, community vigilance, agent roles, market squares, places of worship, and inter-village cooperation were the indigenous ways of generating security information by community members in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area, Kaduna state. This study concluded that the indigenous security information generation used to curb banditry are still relevant. The incorporation of peer group discussions, market square interactions, places of worship, inter-village cooperation, community vigilance, and agent roles for generating security information adds another layer of community strength. This study recommended that community-based security workshops and training programmes should be organized by the local Government to empower residents with the skills that will help in generating security information

Keywords: Banditry, Community members, Indigenous security information, Indigenous security, information generation

Introduction

Indigenous security information is the knowledge, practices, and intelligence rooted in the culture, norms, and lived experiences of a specific community, used to maintain safety and order. It encompasses locally developed strategies, often informal, for preventing and addressing security threats like banditry, theft, or conflict. For existence to be meaningful, lives and properties have to be valued and secure. Every individual has the right to life and own a property as contained in the fundamental human right

(Obidiegwu & Elekwa, 2020). To secure lives and properties, communities do generate indigenous security information to keep their community safe.

Indigenous security information generation is the processes and methods through which communities create, gather, and share security-related knowledge and intelligence based on their local experiences, traditions, and social structures. This practice is deeply rooted in the cultural and social frameworks of a community and is designed to address security challenges such as banditry, theft, or conflict within their specific context (Abubakar, 2020)

Banditry remains a significant threat to lives, property, and socio-economic stability in many parts of Nigeria, including Sabon Gari Local Government Area in Kaduna State. This phenomenon has resulted in the displacement of communities, loss of livelihoods, and strained local governance. They operate under the disguise of kidnapping and cattle rustling, mass abduction, and arson, including armed robbery, majorly conducting their deadly attacks on villages in states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Kastina, Sokoto, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Borno, Bauchi and Niger as well as around the borderlands such as the Chad and Niger borders. (Ojo, 2020).

While government and formal security agencies have implemented various measures to combat banditry, it has continued to be a serious factor stagnating the political, economic, and social development of Nigeria, especially Kaduna State.

Statement of the Problem

In many rural and semi-urban areas like Sabon Gari, indigenous knowledge and community-driven security measures remain underutilized. Despite their potential to address security issues effectively, these mechanisms are often excluded from formal security frameworks. This gap has led to a disconnect between communities and security agencies, undermining efforts to curb banditry. Governor Gboyega Oyelola of

Osun State in Nigeria observed that for proper security of lives and property of our people and the prompt containment of growing challenges, we must inevitably now engage our traditional institutions; this is because every conflict is local and as such, traditional institutions cannot be excluded out of the scheme. He argued that traditional rulers know their people and have better strategies for engaging them, suggesting that we must ride on this to protect our nation from implosion (Kabir, 2021).

It is in relation to this that this study intends to find out the indigenous ways of generating security information to curb banditry by community members in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to determine how Indigenous security information is generated for curbing banditry by community members in the Sabon- Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Literature review

Indigenous security information generation involves the use of locally rooted knowledge, practices, and networks to address security challenges. According to Yusuf (2021), communities with strong cultural and traditional ties often have mechanisms for detecting and addressing threats that are more effective than external interventions in certain contexts. These mechanisms rely heavily on trust, familiarity, and shared responsibility among members of the community.

The role of community participation in the success of the indigenous security system cannot be over emphasized. Local actors, such as vigilante groups, elders, and traditional rulers, play a significant role in gathering, processing, and acting on security information. Their deep understanding of the local context allows for quicker identification of threats and tailored responses (Abubakar, 2020). According to

Mupedziswa, Rankopo & Mwansa, (2019) Community vigilance is a means of generating security information, where community members care for one another as well as members of the wider community and always watch out for any threat to the community.

Ohanyere, Umukoro and Nwagwu (2022) opined that the village square serves as a relaxation spot where big umbrella trees provide shade for people who sit on logs of wood neatly arranged for the purpose. As people relax on these locally made and improvised seats, they converse, gossip and consequently exchange a lot of information. During the pre - colonial era, most Nigerian communities had market which did not only serve as centers of trade but also as principal agents of information communication and recreation. The market days provided opportunities to meet friends and kinsmen from far and near villages during which, information and news are exchanged (Gibson and Oberiri, 2016)

It was also reported by Bello (2019) that cultural norms and traditional practices in curbing crime and fostering peace places an important role in a specific community. Practices such as public shaming, ostracism, and fines act as deterrents against criminal behavior. Additionally, traditional conflict resolution methods provide an avenue for addressing disputes before they escalate into violence.

From the above discussions, it can be deduced that indigenous systems demonstrate the deeply rooted and multifaceted ways communities organized themselves and ensured stability long before the advent of formal state institutions.

Methodology

This study adopted qualitative research methodology, using case study design. The case study design provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their context. Elderly members of the community was considered as study participants. 10

participants was used as sample for this study were selected through purposive sampling. Semi structured interview was conducted with the aid of an interview guide. Tape recorder was used to record the interview which lasted for 35 – 40 minutes. The interview was analysed using the grounded theory data analysis

Results and discussion

The following section presents the analysis of this study. It is presented in line with the research objective which is as follow

Ways of Generating Indigenous Security Information to curb Banditry by Community Members in Sabon – Gari Local Government, Kaduna State, Nigeria

This objective sought to identify the indigenous ways of generating security information by community members to curb banditry in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. From the data analysis of the collected data to answer this objective, six categories emerged from the narratives of the participants of this study namely: peer group discussion, community vigilance, secret agents, market square, place of worships and inter village cooperation. Table 1 below shows the emergent categories and sub - categories

Table1 Ways of Generating Indigenous Security information in curbing banditry by Community Members in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area

OBJECTIVES	CATEGORIES	SUB- CATEGORIES
ays of Generating indigenous Security Information in Sabon-gari Local Government Area, Kaduna State.	1. Peer group discussion	1.1 Through friends
	2.Community Vigilance	2.1 Community members
	3. Secret Agents	3.1 Securities (Dogarai)
		3.2 Members that work as secret agents
	4. Market square	4.1 Market square

5. Place of worship	5.1 Juma'ah prayers in the mosque
6. Inter-village cooperation	6.1 Village heads

Source: Interview Analysis, 2024

Discussion of Findings

This study discovered that six ways of generating indigenous security information exist in the Sabon-Gari Local Government Area. They are through peer group discussion, Community vigilance, Secret agents, the market square, Places of worship, and Inter-village cooperation.

In this study setting, through peer group discussion refers to individuals from different communities alerting their acquaintances about any potential security risks. Participants in this study stressed that peer group discussion play a crucial role in generating security information. Because of the trust and solidarity that is built among friends from other communities, whenever they are aware of any security threat to the community, they will inform their friends. Participants in this study said that in the past, friendship was built on trust and solidarity because people rely on their friends for support. Friendship is often characterized by shared activities, communication, affection, trust, responsibility, mutual commitment, and support (Minza, Nurdiyanto, Muhiddin & Pertiwi, 2021).

Friends as a means of generating indigenous security information can be related to the theory of “social network”. Social network theory examines how individuals are interconnected through relationships, such as friendships, and how information flows within these networks. In the context of this study, social network theory suggests that

friends can serve as important sources of information due to the trust and communication channels inherent in friendships. People tend to share information more freely with their friends, making friendships valuable for gathering and disseminating security-related information.

So also, community vigilance includes issues related to community members being vigilant in the community. Participants remarked that security information was generated through community members being vigilant of any suspicious activities in the community. Even the women were also conscious of what is happening in the community. If there are any suspicious activities or persons, it will be reported to the right authority. It was established that community members were instilled with a sense of empathy and concern for each other through socialization. They cared for one another as well as members of the wider community and always watch out for any threat to the community (Mupedziswa, Rankopo & Mwansa, 2019).

In relation to community vigilance, "collective efficacy theory" can be applied. This theory was developed by sociologists Robert Sampson, Stephen Raudenbush, and Felton Earls. It emphasizes the role of social cohesion, trust, and shared norms in promoting community safety and crime prevention. Collective efficacy theory highlights the importance of social cohesion and social control in promoting community safety. Communities with strong bonds among residents and shared norms are better equipped to monitor and regulate their environments, leading to lower crime rates. In such communities, residents are vigilant and observant of their surroundings, sharing security information effectively and collaborating on crime prevention efforts. Initiatives like neighbourhood watch programs capitalize on this collective vigilance, empowering residents to actively contribute to the safety and security of their communities.

This implies that watching out for possible security threat was the responsibility of all members in the society; communities need to be vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the necessary authority.

Furthermore, the agent role encompasses local securities (dogarai) that survey the community and voluntary groups. Participants in this setting remarked that local security, also known as dogarai, surveys the environment to gather information related to security. Through their indigenous knowledge, they monitor and interpret changes in the community. Participants also opined that there are voluntary groups formed by some members of the community who work as secret agents in the community; some guide the community during the day and others at night as they watch out for any security threat. Community watch keepers are designated individuals responsible for actively monitoring the community's surroundings, and looking out for any unusual activities or potential security risks. Community members have keen interest to closely observe changes occurring in the environment (Chanza & Musakwa, 2022).

This imply that just like we have the State Security Service now, there were people that acted that role in the past.

The market square involves obtaining information during market days. Participants in this setting remarked that information is generated during the market day. People from far and near villages usually converge during the market day to buy and sell, and in the process, they discuss the happenings in their villages. In the open market, information is disseminate including security information, people observe each other; learn about each other way of life, transfer opinions, ideas and even rumour (Chukwu & Anorue, 2019). One relevant theory in this context is the "public space theory," which explores the role of physical environments, such as market squares, in facilitating social interactions, information exchange, and community engagement.

Public space theory emphasizes the importance of accessible, inclusive, and well-designed public spaces as essential components of vibrant communities. Market squares, as central gathering places in many communities, serve as hubs for social interaction, economic activity, and cultural exchange. These spaces bring together diverse groups of people, including residents, visitors, merchants, and artisans, creating opportunities for informal communication and information sharing.

This implies that the market square served as a hub for generating any kind of information including that of security.

In this study setting, places of worship involve the generation of security information from places of worship. Participants revealed that during the Friday prayers, people from different communities meet to pray, and after that, they discuss different issues among themselves, including security issues. If there is security problem in a community, the attention of another community is sought so that it will be prevented. An applicable theory in this context is the "routine activity theory," as proposed by Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen in 1979, this theory suggests that crime occurs when three elements converge in space and time: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian.

In this study context, places of worship as routine activity theory imply, are locations that serve as hubs for information exchange due to the congregation's regular gatherings.

Similarly, inter-village cooperation involves one village head informing another village head about any security threat. Participants in this setting revealed that if there is any security threat, for example, cattle rustling in a community, the village head will send information to neighbouring villages so that necessary actions can be taken. This happens mostly if neighbouring villages have mutual respect and a sense of communal

well-being. Inter-village cooperation is related to "social exchange theory." This theory, developed by George Homans and Peter Blau in the 1960s, examines the dynamics of social relationships and interactions based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit. Social exchange theory suggests that villages engage in collaborative efforts because they perceive benefits from doing so, either through direct or indirect reciprocity.

From the above discussions, indigenous ways of generating security information can be viewed as an indigenous social network. In library and information science, social networks are people that are close to an individual, they constitute an individual's friends, colleagues, family members and acquaintances that have inter-subjective ties with the individual. People connect with others in the same area, families, friends, and those with the same interests. Indigenous social networks are social connections and relationships within indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are normally characterized by strong ties among their members, and their social networks play an important role in maintaining cultural practices traditions, and social cohesion (Ensign, 2023). Communities watch keeper is a crime prevention program where active participation of citizens is enlisted in cooperation with the law enforcement agent to reduce crime in their neighbourhood (Bowden, 2017; Arisukwu, Igbolekwu, Oye, Oyeyipo, Rasak & Oyekola, 2020).

This implies that indigenous community watch keepers are part of social networks responsible for actively monitoring the community's surroundings and looking out for any unusual activities or potential security risks.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the indigenous security information generation used to curb banditry is still relevant. The incorporation of peer group discussions, market square

interactions, places of worship, inter-village cooperation, community vigilance, and agent roles for generating security information adds another layer of community strength. The study concludes further that by leveraging these existing networks and relationships, communities can enhance their ability to detect and prevent potential threats, fostering a culture of shared responsibility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation was made:

Community-based security workshops and training programmes should be organized by the Government to empower residents with the skills that will help in generating security information and also foster partnerships between local communities and formal security agencies.

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