



Accessibility, Management and Use of Indigenous Knowledge in a Rural Community: The Case of Unwana Community, Afikpo North Lga, Ebonyi State

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Abstract

This study examines the accessibility, management, and use of indigenous knowledge in a rural community, Unwana, Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. With six research questions, it reviewed empirical and non-empirical literature, and adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a purposive sample size of 240 prospective respondents from the four autonomous communities of Unwana (Amegwu, Amagu, Umuetiti, and Ndemiyi). Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. 232 respondents were successfully assessed. With 96.66% response rate, the data collected was analysed using frequency-percentage and descriptive statistics methods. The findings show that the rural dwellers obtain their indigenous knowledge from guardians and grandparents' oral tradition, cultural values, and communal expressions. The accessible indigenous knowledge include health and medical knowledge, agricultural/farming knowledge, culinary knowledge, artisanal knowledge, trading knowledge, religious and cultural knowledge. The methods of managing indigenous knowledge include oral transfer to younger generation, and incorporation into traditional/ritual activities. The advantages of indigenous knowledge in the community include its ease of understanding, easy accessibility, sustainability, local and cheap availability, social acceptability, ease of use. The challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge in Unwana community include inadequate sources, unorganised method of managing indigenous knowledge, absence of documentation techniques and storage facilities/equipment and tools, among others. The study recommends the establishment of community libraries, documentation, archives, museums and information centre, employment of indigenous knowledge managers, sensitisation of community members on indigenous knowledge and inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the National Policy on Education to address the challenges.

Keywords

*Indigenous knowledge,
accessibility, management,
utilisation, use, community*

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Introduction

Knowledge has always occupied a central place in human society.

However, until recently, before the turn of the century, human development was said to be hinged basically upon access to, and use of

material resources by man. This birthed the agricultural and industrial revolution periods. Currently, the global community is witnessing a massive and radical shift from physical resources dependence to a knowledge-based

and knowledge-driven economy. Knowledge is increasingly being acknowledged as the major factor that drives socio-economic transformation and development. Rusli (as cited in Alhalhouli, Hassan & Der, 2015) defines knowledge as

information that is contextual, relevant, and applicable, or information that can be used. It is a valuable resource that deserves to be—and can be—consciously managed. It is considered a critical organizational resource that provides a sustainable competitive advantage about activities, services, customers/users, and an increasingly valuable resource that needs to be shared broadly throughout an organization (Islam & Tsuji, 2016).

Knowledge extends beyond data and information. It also includes the judgment and experience needed to take action—to run a clinic, design a behaviour change campaign, or serve a client. While some knowledge is written down, most consists of the practical know-how and intuition stored in people's brains. Like written knowledge, this "tacit" knowledge, too, can be managed to increase organizational performance (Kols, 2016). The ability of all the members of the society to make informed decision on individual and collective matters depends largely on the knowledge available at their disposal. Therefore, it is expected that all sources of knowledge and type of knowledge are given adequate attention.

Rural communities form an integral aspect of developing societies. With an estimated population of 200 million people, 47.75% reside in the rural areas while 52.3% reside in

urban areas in Nigeria (Kemp, 2021). This means just a little less than half of the population of Nigeria dwell in rural dwellers. The deprivation from basic social amenities and infrastructural facilities already place the members of rural communities at a disadvantage. Utor and Utor (2006) explain that the characteristics of rural/grass roots dwellers include low level of literacy or high level of illiteracy; limited educational and economic (including jobs opportunities); strong cultural, tribal and religious adherence; absence of large business and commercial institutions; and limited social facilities e.g. electricity supply, educational institutions and communication system among others.

Rural dwellers are often indigenous people to their immediate community. They are usually an agrarian and artisanal populace with little access to the modern sophisticated facilities to carry out their daily socio-economic activities. As such, they rely on indigenous practices rather than modern technologies and practices. These practices rely on the possession of indigenous knowledge for proper execution. Sarkhel (2016) states that indigenous knowledge is unique to a particular culture or society. It is explained to be the knowledge a community possesses, and experiences generated over a long period of time by people living in

that community or communities, and is usually passed on from generation to generation, through word of mouth. It is applied in many areas including agriculture, health, education, home management, etc. It is also known as tradition-based literary, artistic or scientific works; performances; inventions; scientific discoveries; designs; marks, names and symbols; undisclosed information; and all other tradition-based innovations and creations resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields (WIPO, as cited in Payyappallimana, 2016).

Unwana Community, Afikpo North Local Government Area, Ebonyi State is one of the communities in the categories of rural communities in Nigeria. With an estimated population of one hundred and twenty thousand people, the community grapples with poor power supply and inadequate socio-economic facilities like libraries, hospitals, and government offices, yet it is home to a federal academic institution, the Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana. How then can the dwellers of such an apparently deprived community gain access to, manage and use indigenous knowledge to meet up with their individual and communal activities? This is the question that motivated the need to embark on a study that seeks to identify the challenges associated with indigenous knowledge management and use in the community.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the potentials of indigenous knowledge, as noted by Hangshing and Laloo (2021), many academics and development professionals are yet to appreciate the value of indigenous knowledge as a valid

mode of learning, research and application for sustainable development and socio-economic transformation of the rural community and society at large. This, according to researchers, is not surprising because until lately, indigenous knowledge was yet to be given recognition in the academic curriculum of universities, research institutions and private firms relying heavily on formal scientific methods (Bisong & Andrew-Essien, 2010). Indigenous knowledge has in the past been suppressed, or at best been ignored or neglected by mainstream western science (Sarkhel, 2016), yet it is an integral aspect of the survival mechanisms that have kept indigenous rural societies oiled for centuries, even as most of them are grappling with infrastructural deficiencies necessary to navigate and fit into the modern world. It is based on these observed negative trends well-reported in empirical literature that this study seeks to identify the accessibility, management and use of indigenous knowledge in a rural community, using Unwana community, Afikpo North Local Government Area, Ebonyi State as a case.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide this study:

- i. What are the sources of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?
- ii. What is the extent of accessibility of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?
- iii. What are the tools and methods used in the

management of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

- iv. What are the socio-economic activities indigenous knowledge is used for in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?
- v. What are the advantages of using of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?
- vi. What are the challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

Literature Review

Since indigenous knowledge is stored in people's memories and activities, its dissemination is mainly through individual or communal expressions, for example, in stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local languages, agricultural practices, equipment, materials, plant species and animal breeds (Swaminathan, 2008). Indigenous knowledge is preserved and shared using oral transfer from one person to the other using songs, folklore, and proverbs (Mosissa, Jimma, & Bekele, 2017). It is often orally transmitted heart to heart, from one generation to the next (Safakish, 2015).

The existence of indigenous knowledge and its availability do not indicate its value unless it is accessible for use. Okore, et al (as cited in Hangshing, & Laloo, 2021) observe that libraries can promote access to indigenous knowledge by creating an environment which permits face-to-face forums and network formation to discuss and

debate on issues that might be useful to members of the communities. It is further explained that in rural areas, libraries can organise talk shows involving traditional rulers, elderly people and professionals to gather and record information on various local vocations from different subject areas ranging from agriculture, ecosystem, medical care, and conflict resolution.

Zimu-Biyela (2016) notes that the major strategies for acquisition of indigenous knowledge are communities of practice, oral transmission, demonstration, observation and imitation. It was also revealed that video and audio recordings were significant sources of preserving indigenous knowledge in public libraries. Also, Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell (2010) observe that indigenous knowledge is hard to manage because it is mainly tacit in nature or embedded in practices and experiences that are highly personal and difficult to codify and diffuse. Researchers have shown that there is paucity of documented empirical evidences on the management of indigenous knowledge and the rate at which this class of knowledge are managed by public libraries (Ejedafiru, 2019).

Lazarus, Unegbu, Opeke, Wusu (2019) argue that libraries have concentrated more on promoting a reading culture than documenting indigenous knowledge. Librarians usually provide mainly passive access to materials and resources and they have service priorities and resource strategies which work in favour of formal education to the exclusion of information on indigenous knowledge.

The provision of access is important because indigenous knowledge is used to sustain the community and its culture. Placing value on indigenous knowledge could strengthen cultural identity, and also to achieve social and development goals such as sustainable agriculture, affordable and appropriate public health (Kohode, 2016). Indigenous knowledge is a political resource which may be used to “redress discrimination and expropriation of indigenous people’s property and their institutions” (Lwoga, Ngulube, & Stilwell, 2010).

In many geographical areas particularly the rural areas, indigenous knowledge (IK) has gained momentum due to its importance as a strategic resource for development in the lives of the majority of the world’s population because it is said to play a significant role in various aspects of life like poverty alleviation, medicinal treatment, conservation of natural resources and it is also helpful in decision-making and problem-solving at local, national and international levels (Zimu-Biyela, 2016). Fifty per cent of the world’s population relies on indigenous knowledge for crops and food supply, and 80 per cent depend on it for their health needs (Moos, Struwig, & Roberts, as cited in Lwoga, Ngulube, & Stilwell, 2017). Benguela Current Commission (as cited in Okello-Obura, 2018) notes that interest and awareness of the value of indigenous knowledge, particularly its potential contribution to sustainable development, is increasing at a time when such knowledge is being threatened as never before. This local knowledge is very crucial for sustainable agriculture and food security.

Indigenous knowledge has made, and can still make, significant contributions to resolve local problems. In recent years there has been a growing flow of information from developing countries about the role that indigenous knowledge is playing in a range of sectors: agriculture (intercropping techniques, animal production, pest control, crop diversity, animal healthcare, seed varieties), biology (botany, fish breeding techniques), human healthcare (through traditional medicine), the use and management of natural resources (soil conservation, irrigation and other forms of water management), education (oral traditions, local languages), and poverty alleviation in general (Warren, et al, as cited in Nwokoma, 2016).

According to Safakish (2015), local knowledge of any people has made the aboriginals able to provide their requirements from natural resources without undermining those resources. Therefore, the collection of world's indigenous knowledge is a valuable treasure trove of time-tested methods and tools that will be used in the development of sustainable communities. Indigenous knowledge has shown itself to be an important and effective resource in the life of rural Africa community, not only in the area of science, agriculture and medicine but also in the other areas, such as education, cultural affair e.t.c (Ugboma, 2014).

In spite of all the critical roles of indigenous knowledge in community development, there are a lot of challenges limiting its utilization. Public libraries generally have not done much in the management of indigenous knowledge (IK). Though they are aware of the importance of IK in the development of the society,

but have failed to map out strategies for the collection, promotion, preservation and management of IK (Ejedafiru, 2019). Wall (as cited in Haumba & Kadu, 2018) observes that agricultural indigenous knowledge is gradually disappearing in most African countries including Tanzania without any tangible efforts to recognise or manage it. Transfer of agricultural indigenous knowledge from generation to generation is mostly done through oral tradition or by demonstration. In a related study by Ejedafiru (2016), it was concluded that poor funding, poor management, negative impact of globalization, uneven distribution of Indigenous Knowledge Management, dearth of respect and appreciation for Indigenous Knowledge Management and Implicit nature of Indigenous Knowledge Management are the major problems of management of knowledge indigenous in Delta state library board. It was concluded that the passive response of public library and information professionals in general posed a serious challenge to the management of indigenous knowledge in Delta state public libraries and Nigeria in general.

In some cases, an outright absence of libraries is responsible for the problem of indigenous knowledge management. So many indigenous areas lack access to libraries. According to Uzuegbu and Uzuegbu (as cited in Emezie, & Igwe, 2017) one of the forms of libraries, known as community information centres, that would have been a change agent for transformation and development of rural communities via the provision of essential community-based information services for addressing rural information needs appear non-

existing in the rural communities in our society, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Since the population of the study is very large (over 120,000 residents of Unwana), and technically considered infinite in the context of this research, the study adopted a purposive sample size of 240 respondents, randomly selected, but evenly distributed among the four autonomous communities in Unwana. The communities are:

- i. Amaekwu (60 prospective respondents)
- ii. Amagu (60 prospective respondents)
- iii. Uhuetiti (60 prospective respondents)
- iv. Ndemiyi (60 prospective respondents)

Open-ended questionnaire was used for data collection for this study where respondents were able to include their own suggestions and recommendations in comments after the options provided.

The respondents were approached at their various locations with the assistance of friends, students, and colleagues who were identified as either residents and indigenes of the communities where the prospective respondents were identified. The colleagues and students acted as research assistants and helped interpret the contents of the open-ended questionnaire (divided into two parts; A for bio data and B, for research questions and options) in local dialects and also helped in ticking and interpreting their responses.

The data obtained is analysed using simple frequency and percentage and descriptive statistics method in

just a single table with rating scales. From the 240 copies of questionnaire prepared for the prospective 240 respondents, a total of 232 were successfully conducted for the study. The remaining questionnaire copies were affected

by inability to meet the respondents due to unforeseen circumstances before the time scheduled for data analysis. This means a 96.66% response was recorded for target sample size of the study.

Demographic Distribution

Table 1: Gender distribution

SN	Gender	Frequency	Percentage%
A	Male	126	54.31
B	Female	106	45.69
	Total	232	100

Table 2: Educational Qualification

SN	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage%
A	FSLC/Primary School	49	21.12
B	SSCE/O'Level	85	36.63
C	Diploma	52	22.41
D	HND/BSc	40	17.24
E	MSc	6	2.58
F	PhD	-	-
	Total	232	100

Table 3: Location/Locality

S N	Locality	Frequency	Percentage%
A	Amaekwu	56	24.13
B	Amagu	58	25
C	Uhuetiti	59	25.43
D	Ndemiyi	59	25.43
	Total	232	100

Table 1 above indicates that 126 (54.31%) of the respondents are male while 106 (45.69%) of the respondents are female. This is an indication that there is no wide gap in the number of male and female users of indigenous knowledge in Unwana community.

Table 3 above shows that 49 (21.12%) of the respondents are First School Leaving Certificate holders, 85(36.63%) are O'Level certificate/ secondary school graduates, 52(22.41%) are Diploma holders, 40(17.24%) are HND/BSc

(first degree graduates), while 6(2.58%) possess Master's Degrees. This indicates that a majority of the indigenous knowledge users possess at least, basic level/primary education, although less than 50% of them have tertiary education degrees.

Table 3 shows that 56 (24.13 %) of the respondents were from Amaekwu autonomous community, 58 (25%) were from Amagu, 59(25.43%) were from Uhuetiti, while 59(25.43%) were also from Ndemiyi autonomous community.

Table 4: Research Question 1: What are the sources of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

S N	Sources of indigenous knowledge available in Unwana community	Frequen cy	Percentag e%
A	Parent/Guardians and Grandparents' oral tradition	232	100
B	Legends, Folklore and Lyrics	218	93.96
C	Contents of local museums e.g artefacts and realia	92	39.65
D	Patents of local inventions	32	13.79
E	Local proverbs	198	85.34
F	Beliefs and cultural values/practices	232	100
G	Communal expressions	232	100
H	Dance and songs e.g moonlight songs	232	100

Table 5: Research Question 2: What is the extent of accessibility of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State? HA: Highly Accessible; Partially Accessible; RA: Rarely Accessible; NA: Never Accessible.

Accessible, Partially Accessible, NA: Rarely Accessible, N/A: Never Accessible.

SN	Extent of indigenous knowledge Unwana Community	accessibility of	HA	PA	RA	NA	Tot al	Mea n	Decisio n
A	Indigenous health and medical knowledge	81	65	45	41	232	2.80	Accepted	
B	Indigenous agricultural/farming knowledge	76	79	32	45	232	2.80	Accepted	
C	Indigenous environmental protection knowledge	39	48	90	55	232	2.30	Rejected	
D	Indigenous cuisine and culinary knowledge	88	67	32	45	232	2.85	Accepted	
E	Indigenous artisanal knowledge	89	90	42	11	232	3.10	Accepted	
F	Indigenous political administration knowledge	32	27	97	76	232	2.05	Rejected	
G	Indigenous Trading and Business Knowledge	99	82	12	39	232	3.30	Accepted	
H	Indigenous religious and cultural knowledge	95	91	32	14	232	3.15	Accepted	

Table 4 above indicates that 232 (100%) of the respondents obtain their indigenous knowledge from guardians and grandparents' oral tradition, 218 (93.96%) obtain theirs from legends, folklore and lyrics, 92 (39.65%) obtain their indigenous knowledge from contents of local museums e.g artefacts and realia, 32 (13.79%) obtain their indigenous knowledge from patents of local inventions, 198(85.34%) get their indigenous knowledge from local proverbs, 232 (100%) get their

indigenous knowledge from beliefs and cultural values/practices, 232 (100%) get theirs from communal expressions while 232 (100%) also obtain theirs from dance and songs e.g moonlight songs.

Table 5 above shows the extent of accessibility of indigenous knowledge to the members of the rural public in Unwana. The accessible indigenous knowledge in Unwana community include indigenous health and medical knowledge (2.8), indigenous

agricultural/farming knowledge (2.8), indigenous cuisine and culinary knowledge (2.8), indigenous artisanal knowledge (3.1), indigenous Trading and Business Knowledge (3.3), and indigenous religious and cultural knowledge (3.15). The inaccessible indigenous knowledge according to the data presented include indigenous environmental protection knowledge (2.3), and Indigenous political administration knowledge (2.05).

Table 6: Research Question 3: What are the tools and methods used in the management of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

SN	Tools and Methods of managing indigenous knowledge	Frequency	Percentage %
A	Oral transfer to younger generation	232	100
B	Incorporation into traditional/ritual activities	232	100
C	Storage of indigenous objects and equipment in local exhibitions centres	99	42.67
D	Storage of artefacts in shrines and family houses	88	37.93
E	Keeping indigenous texts and audio visual resources in libraries and documentation centres	43	18.53
F	Preparation and keeping indigenous artefacts and realia in museums	27	11.63
G	Keeping records of indigenous knowledge in archives	55	23.70
H	Others	6	

Table 6 on the tools and methods of managing indigenous knowledge indicates that 232 (100%) of the respondents opted for Oral transfer to younger generation, 232 (100%) opted for incorporation into traditional/ritual activities, 99 (42.67) opted for storage of indigenous objects and equipment in local exhibition centres, 91 (37.91%) opted for storage of indigenous objects and equipment in local exhibition centres, 88 (37.93%) opted for storage in shrines and family houses, 43 (18.53%) opted for keeping indigenous texts and audio visual resources in libraries and documentation centres, 27 (11.63%) opted for preparation and keeping indigenous artefacts and realia in museums, 55 (23.70%) opted for keeping records of indigenous knowledge in archives. Meanwhile 6(2.58) other respondents explained that indigenous knowledge is preserved by being incorporated

into their folklore, tales, myths and traditional songs and stories.

The implication of the data presented above is that only oral transfer to younger generation and incorporation into traditional rituals and activities are the adopted means, tools and methods of managing indigenous knowledge, because only those two options record well above 50% affirmative response rates.

Some of the respondents interacted with indicated that some indigenous activities, especially rituals and initiations are forbidden from the sights of cameras and recording gadgets in order to preserve the secrecy and "dignity and identity" of the initiates. Observations and inquiries also indicate that there are no such things as exhibitions and museums around the community for such purposes as management of indigenous knowledge.

Table 7: Research Question 4: What are the socio-economic activities indigenous knowledge is used for in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

S	Socio-economic activities	Frequency	Percentage
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N	knowledge is used for in Unwana y	%	
	Community		
A	Trading and commerce	232	100
B	Farming	232	100
C	Entertainment and recreation	232	100
D	Health and medicine	201	86.63
E	Environmental protection	199	85.77
F	Craftsmanship	227	97.84
G	Religious and cultural activities	230	99.13
H	Family matters e.g marriage and child upbringing	232	100
I	Others	12	5.17

Table 7 indicates that 232 (100%) of the respondents use indigenous knowledge for trading and commerce, 232 (100%) use it for farming, 232(100%) use it for entertainment and recreation, 201(86.63%) use it for health and medicine, 199(85.77%) use it for environmental protection, 227(97.84%) use it for

craftsmanship, 230(99.13%) use it for religious and cultural activities, and 232 (100%) use indigenous knowledge for family matters such as marriage and child upbringing. However, 12 (5.17%) others indicate that they use indigenous knowledge for educational and tourism purposes.

Table 8: Research Question 5: What are the advantages of using of indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

SN	Advantages of using indigenous knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
A	Ease of understanding	198	85.34
B	Easy accessibility	195	84.05
C	Sustainability	177	76.29
D	Local and cheap availability	224	96.55
E	Social acceptability	230	99.13
F	Promotion of self-esteem	192	82.75
G	Social and communal cohesion and integration	199	85.77
H	Ease of use	232	100
I	Others	-	-

Table 8 above indicates that the advantages of indigenous knowledge in the community include its ease of understanding 198(85.34%), easy accessibility 195(84.05%), sustainability

177(76.29%), local and cheap availability 224 (96.55%), promotion of self-esteem 192 (82.75%), social acceptability 230 (99.13%), and above all ease of use 232(100%).

Table 9: Research Question 6: What are the challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge in Unwana Community, Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi State?

SN	Challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
A	Inadequate sources	230	99.13
B	Unorganised method of managing indigenous knowledge	221	95.25
C	Absence of documentation techniques and storage facilities/equipment and tools	219	94.39

D	Lack of recognition of indigenous practices and practitioners	231	99.56
E	Lack of self-determination, right to resources and intellectual appropriation	201	86.63
F	Poor perception of local/indigenous knowledge compared to foreign/western knowledge	199	85.77
G	Lack of integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education/system of learning	222	95.68
H	Declining/absence of government recognition	226	97.41
I	Lack of retrieval means for knowledge	202	87.06
J	Others	5	2.51

Table 9 above indicates that the challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge in Unwana community include inadequate sources 230 (99.13%), Unorganised method of managing indigenous knowledge 221 (95.25%), Absence of documentation techniques and storage facilities/equipment and tools 219 (94.39%), lack of recognition of indigenous practices and practitioners 231 (99.56%), lack of self-determination, right to resources and intellectual appropriation 201(86.63%), poor perception of local/indigenous knowledge compared to foreign/western knowledge 199 (85.77%), lack of integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education/system of learning 222 (95.68%), declining/absence of government recognition 226 (97.41%), lack of retrieval means for knowledge 202 (87.06%).

However, 5 (2.51%) of the respondents affirm that religious affiliations often deter them from accessing, managing and utilising indigenous knowledge due to certain cultural restrictions that restrict some gender and age grade from accessing and using certain traditional means of carrying out personal tasks.

Discussion of Findings

The respondents (rural dwellers) in Unwana community obtained their

indigenous knowledge from guardians and grandparents' oral tradition, from legends, folklore and lyrics, from beliefs and cultural values/practices, from communal expressions, and from dance and songs e.g moonlight songs. This is greatly supported by the position of Safakish (2015), who notes that indigenous knowledge is often orally transmitted heart to heart, from one generation to the next.

The accessible indigenous knowledge in Unwana community include indigenous health and medical knowledge, indigenous agricultural/farming knowledge, indigenous cuisine and culinary knowledge, indigenous artisanal knowledge, indigenous Trading and Business Knowledge, and indigenous religious and cultural knowledge. The inaccessible indigenous knowledge includes indigenous environmental protection knowledge, and indigenous political administration knowledge. This inaccessibility of political administration knowledge among majority of the respondents is caused by the limitation of cultural and traditional administration to a select group of elders in certain age grade through traditional but rarely publicized initiation, as explained by some of the respondents.

The basic tools and methods of managing indigenous knowledge include oral transfer to younger

generation, and incorporation into traditional/ritual activities. The use of audio-visual devices like cameras and recording gadgets are restricted in so many indigenous activities, especially rituals in order to preserve the secrecy and “dignity and identity” of the initiates. Observations and inquiries also indicate that there are no such things as exhibitions, functional local libraries, community information centres and museums around the community for such purposes as management of indigenous knowledge.

There is therefore, some degree of conformity in this study, with the findings of Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell (2010) who observe that indigenous knowledge is hard to manage because it is mainly tacit in nature or embedded in practices and experiences that are highly personal and difficult to codify and diffuse. It also aligns with that of Lazarus, Unegbu, Opeke, Wusu (2019), who argue that libraries have concentrated more on promoting a reading culture than documenting indigenous knowledge. It also corroborates the findings of Ejedafiru (2019) who iterated that public libraries generally have not done much in the management of indigenous knowledge (indigenous knowledge). Though they are aware of the importance of IK in the development of the society, but have failed to map out strategies for the collection, promotion, preservation and management of indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous knowledge is used for trading and commerce, farming, entertainment and recreation, health and medicine, environmental protection, craftsmanship, religious and cultural activities, family matters such as marriage and child

upbringing. However, a little percentage of the respondents use indigenous knowledge for educational and tourism purposes. This is in agreement with the findings of Sarkhel (2016), who identify some of the uses of indigenous knowledge in areas such as agriculture, health, education, and home management.

The advantages of indigenous knowledge in the community include its ease of understanding, easy accessibility, sustainability, local and cheap availability, promotion of self-esteem, social acceptability, and above all ease of use. These are in agreement with the views of Payyappallimana (2013), who stated that indigenous knowledge is locally available, easily accessible and cost effective and highly relevant in primary health care in health access poor regions.

The challenges of accessing, managing and using indigenous knowledge in Unwana community include inadequate sources, unorganised method of managing indigenous knowledge, absence of documentation techniques and storage facilities/equipment and tools, lack of recognition of indigenous practices and practitioners, lack of self-determination, right to resources and intellectual appropriation, poor perception of local/indigenous knowledge compared to foreign/western knowledge, lack of integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education/system of learning, declining/absence of government recognition, lack of retrieval means for knowledge, and religious affiliations, which often deter some adherents of different faiths from accessing, managing and utilising indigenous knowledge due to certain cultural restrictions

that restrict some gender and age grade from accessing and using certain traditional means of carrying out our personal tasks. This is similar to the findings of Tabuti and Damme (2012) who opined that traditional healers loathe divulging their indigenous knowledge on healing to outsiders and to some members of their families. In some communities some healers refused to reveal their healing secrets to their daughters fearing that the latter would share the secrets with the families they marry into. In such a way, they will not be recognized for the knowledge they took years to acquire. The findings also confirm the positions of Uzuegbu and Uzuegbu (as cited in Emezue, & Igwe, 2017) that one of the forms of libraries, known as community information centres, that would have been a change agent for transformation and development of rural communities via the provision of essential community-based information services for addressing rural information needs appear non-existing in the rural communities in our society, Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The place of knowledge as a major decider for the advancement and development of individuals, institutions and the entire society is unquestionable, just as the important roles played by indigenous knowledge in the development, stability, social cohesion, and sustainability of indigenous rural communities cannot be over-emphasized. Societies are increasingly recognizing the roles of knowledge in advancing the cause of man, therefore members of rural communities, like the communities in Unwana require proper management of their indigenous

knowledge base in order to harness the potentials of their own locally produced knowledge in meeting their basic needs. The potentials of indigenous knowledge can only be realized if it is well managed, with dependable, accessible and retrieval means for the use of community members. However, in the face of challenges such as inadequate indigenous knowledge management mechanisms, poor attitude of government towards indigenous knowledge, lack of self-determination, right to resources and intellectual appropriation, poor perception of local/indigenous knowledge compared to foreign/western knowledge, lack of integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education/system of learning, declining/absence of government recognition, lack of retrieval means for knowledge, the management, access to, and use of indigenous knowledge for sustainable rural development will remain a mirage.

The following recommendations have been proffered as solutions to the challenges associated with the management, access to, and use of indigenous knowledge in Unwana community:

- i. Establishment of community libraries, rural information centres, museums and archives by government in order to acquire, preserve, organize, document, disseminate and retrieve information materials that contain indigenous knowledge. This will help prevent the loss of vital indigenous knowledge that could be lost with the death of most custodians who are often illiterate.

- ii. The Federal and State Governments should provide adequate legislation for the encouragement of documentation of indigenous knowledge in all areas of human endeavours. This will help indigenous people feel protected from exploitation and expropriation of their local knowledge without proper recognition and acknowledgement. However, the Local Government Authorities will be actively involved in the monitoring of the adherence to those legislations since they are the closest to the grass roots where indigenous knowledge often emerges from.
- iii. State Governments should employ, train and properly remunerate Indigenous Knowledge Managers to manage indigenous knowledge in the rural libraries, museums, archives and documentation centres. Professionalism is a major factor in ensuring efficient services delivery. These indigenous knowledge managers should be integrated as staff of State Library Board under the ministry of education.
- iv. Sensitization of community members and indigenous knowledge practitioners on the need to preserve indigenous knowledge for future generations. This is an avenue to curb hoarding, one of the most dangerous threats to knowledge management as a whole.
- v. Inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the National

Policy on Education in order to enhance the recognition of indigenous knowledge as a major aspect of our formal education system. This will remove the poor perception of indigenous knowledge in the formal academic set-up.

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