

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Public library intervention in conflict resolutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria: Librarian's perspectives

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The paper discussed public library intervention in conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria: Librarians perspectives. The design was a descriptive survey and the population comprised librarians in public and focus group discussion. The sample was made up of 198 respondents including 108 people, 12 each selected from the nine states studied and 90 accessible librarians. Questionnaire and focus group discussion was used to generate data while mean and bar chart were used to analyse the data generated. It was found that struggle for the control of the region by different factions, non provision of jobs and infrastructure are some of the causes of conflict in the region. Destruction of lives and properties and displacement from homes are some of the consequences of lack of adequate information to the people and their extent of awareness of conflict resolution strategies is low. Public libraries can make information freely available to the people, organise workshops and seminars on conflict resolution and collaborate with non governmental organisations (NGOs) to resolve conflict in the region. Cultural heritage preservation and transmission by the public library is a veritable means of unity, peace and conflict resolution among the three ethnic groups of the Niger Delta. Public libraries, information and cultural value system are interrelated and can be used as object of conflict resolution in Niger Delta communities. It was recommended that public libraries should be adequately funded and encouraged to enable them perform this intervention role in conflict resolution in the region.

**Key words:** Public libraries, conflict resolution, Niger Delta, information, librarians, cultural heritage.

## INTRODUCTION

Conflict is endemic in human society. Conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of human existence. However, violent conflict is not inevitable and so is an anomaly. For instance, Francis (2007) defines conflict as "the pursuit of incompatible interest and goals by different groups". Armed conflict, he asserts resort to the use of force and armed violence is the pursuit of incompatible and particular interest and goals. Echezona (2007) sees conflict as a situation in which two or more human being desire goal, which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both. This compact definition can be opened up and clarified by saying that there must be at least two parties, one party in mobilizing energy to

obtain a goal, a desired objective or situation and the other party perceives the other as a barrier or threat to that goal. But in a simple way, conflict in the expression of disagreement over something important to both (or all) sides a dispute. It is a struggle or context between people with opposing needs, ideas, belief, values or goals (Foundation Coalition, 2009). Types of conflict as identified by Owens-Ibie in Adewuyi (2009) are open or manifest conflict and latent conflict. Manifest conflict is characterized by clear and overt indicators and expressions of grievances. Ultimately, it may lead to full blown conflict. This is the type of conflict that is of the interest of this paper and which is prevalent in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria.

The Niger-Delta has become a beehive of manifest of conflict and the region is becoming ungovernable due to this type of conflict arising from utter negligence by the

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Federal Government in the resource allocation accruing from the oil wealth. Resource allocation is a major cause of unrest. The region according to Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2005) covers an area of 70,000 km and is comprised of the contiguous nine oil producing states, namely, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. Between 1958 when oil was discovered in the region and 1970 when the Nigerian civil war ended, tension, youth restiveness and communal clashes reared their head. Members of various communities accused the federal government of neglect in spite of the fact that the region accounted for a large chunk of the nation's wealth and foreign exchange earnings (Ifidon and Ahiauzu, 2005). The re-occurring crisis in the Niger Delta region are the product of deep sense of neglect and marginalization by the government and oil companies in supporting critical human development (Nkoro, 2005). He further explained that the people in the Niger-Delta region live below poverty line and that rate was far worse than African standard. Conflict is part of the dynamic of life that drives people into the future. But it needs to be managed constructively. When a conflict occurs, there becomes the need for resolution.

Conflict resolution, according to the association for conflict resolution (2009) refers to a wide range of processes that encourage non-violent dispute resolution outside of the traditional court system. The field of conflict resolutions also includes effort in schools and communities to reduce violence and bullying and help younger people develop communication and problems solving skills. Free flow of information in any society is also very important because absence of it brings about conflict (Laloo, 2002). Therefore, for any nation to make meaningful impact in conflict preventions, peace promotion and conflict resolution, early warning information is needed. Timely alert potential conflict is central to an early warning system which in order to be meaningful must be complemented by early political action. The public libraries are the avenue, through which information resources are made freely available to all. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) public library manifesto issued in 1949, revised in 1972 and 1994 declares: The public library is the local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its user. The services of the public library are providing the basis of equality of access for all regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason use the regular services and materials, for example, linguistic minorities' peoples with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

The same manifesto gave the key missions that would be the core of public library, some of which include; promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievement and innovations,

providing access to cultural expression of all performing arts and fostering inter cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity. To achieve this, Okerulu (2002) noted that they should embark on community information services through mobile library services. Perhaps the most important feature of a public library, according to Edeka, (2000), is that its use should be free to all residents of the community on equal terms. In order to fulfil these expectations, the public library performs specific function among which are:

- (a) To positively support the civic and cultural activities of groups and organization and;
- (b) To give the user access to information over the whole range of human activities such as agriculture, crafts, commerce and industry as well as conflict resolution.

When there is peace in the society it gives room for peoples, cultural heritage to be collected and preserved by the public libraries. The public libraries will also be able to collect and organize, for dissemination all relevant materials that will bring about peace and unity in the society. By so doing, public libraries will not only help in bringing about peaceful resolution through the collection available, but will succeed in creating a future for the younger generation. After all, it is said that history helps build so as to know about the past so that tomorrow will be better planned.

Library and information service is a key player in providing unhindered access to essential information resources for economics and cultural advancement. In doing so, they contribute effectively to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom, democratic values, peace and universal rights (IFLA, 2002). Libraries can clearly play a major role in conflict resolution through the provision and dissemination of information from the varieties of relevant materials in their holding. Historically libraries and librarians have played a major role in creating, accumulating, organizing and disseminating information. Libraries are key players in fostering the information society. Information dissemination or communication has been described as the need comparable with other basic human needs. Free flow of information is a right of the people, which enables them to participate effectively in the process of economic social and political activities in the society and enhances education, knowledge and learning. Such information dissemination is needed in order to succeed with any meaningful conflict resolution or reconciliation. According to Sawyerr (2007), false information in form of gossips and rumours, which is common in the region, is capable of whipping up sentiments and leading to misinformation and this could lead to dire consequences like communal clashes, malice and pre-mature deaths. Most times information is disseminated orally by words of mouth, through the town criers who use the village gongs to pass

information to the community. It is in the view of the foregoing that this study seeks to investigate library intervention in conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as perceived by librarian. The specific objectives are:

- (a) To find out the major or cause of conflict in the Niger Delta region.
- (b) To determine the consequences of lack of adequate information to the people in conflict resolution in the region.
- (c) To examine the extent of the people awareness of conflict resolution strategies.
- (d) To find out how public libraries can intervene in conflict resolution.

### Research questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the major causes of conflicts in the Niger Delta region?
2. What are the consequences of lack of adequate information to the people in the region?
3. What is the extent of the people's awareness of conflict resolution strategies?
4. What can the public libraries do to prevent and resolve conflicts in the region?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict is not a new phenomenon but rather it is a problem that has grown with time. Van Der Stoel (1996) and Nkoro (2005) commented on conflict and stated that conflict can never cease to exist. Today, conflict poses a multi-dimensional challenges and it is the most widespread problem in Africa (Adewuyi, 2009). Conflicts, according to Nkoro (2005) are inevitable in human society as long as there is existence. Their causes and effect are numerous and varies, their resolutions are more challenging than one could ever imagine. Conflicts manifest themselves as political, social, economic, religious, territorial conflicts or conflicts over resources or national interests. Even though they develop in a local frame work, they are often connected to regional, national and international levels. Conflict are usually complex in structure and history, they impact public interest and goods, including non-represented interests for example, future generations.

Although many observers of the South-South think primarily of youth invading oil company properties when they think of conflict there, in fact the root of South-South

conflicts lie deeper in history and in the contemporary social circumstances of the era. Contemporary history of Delta can be summarized as economic decline and broken promises. The complexity of issues and number of stakeholders involved exacerbate South-South problems. The Niger Delta in part because of its river line/swamp topography has historically been politically extremely fragmented, and subject to frequent and at times violent disputes over land and fighting rights as well as over traditional leaders political justifications. These all lead to cycles of "revenge violence". As more powerful weapons became available in the Niger Delta in the mid and late 1990s, dispute became more violent. Youth gang became more powerful who are willing and able to protect their village and elders. As democratic competitions returned in 1998-1999, some of these youths' took up a new line of activity, paid disruption of campaign events and or provided candidates protection from such unwanted attentions. Finally, traditional leaders have lost much credibility and respect as they have been corrupted by payments from military governments and oil companies. As a result of these factors, and because oil companies did and do make tempting target, many aggrieved youths in the Niger Delta resorted to direct action to extract compensation for their perceived losses. They invade oil company properties, take employees hostage and shut down facilities. Oil companies typically negotiate release of captured personnel and properties with relative ease by paying the youth modest ransoms. This oil company strategies creates a "moral hazard" the willingness of the company to pay ransoms stimulate imitators of this lucrative "business", leading to sustained disruptions, at times to competition among youths and to a general sense of anarchy in the Niger Delta. Idemudia (2009) in his thesis identifies how different phases of the Niger Delta conflict interact to impel the conflict towards escalation. Consequently, it is argued that both the marginalization-relative deprivation and the political economy of war theses have been instrumental in furthering the understanding of the conflict along different lines. However, the tendency for both perspectives to claim superiority over the other has meant that each only offers a partial truth and is therefore unable to explain the increasing intensity and longevity of the Niger Delta conflict. Indeed, it is shown how these theses feed into the discursive struggle between militants, militant entrepreneurs and the Nigerian government in ways that allow for the commoditisation of the Niger-Delta people.

Several interlocking factors have combined and contributed to making the crisis in Nigeria's Niger Delta a festering sore to both the state and the international communities (Ukaogo, 2009). The Niger Delta is awash with weapons. Professor George Frynas, a specialist in Nigeria's oil industry, told the BBC's world today programme. He says the weapon have been bought from proceeds of kidnapping oil workers, selling oil they steal

from pipelines and that some have been distributed by politicians at election time. Some of the strongest allegations of electoral fraud from the last elections came from the Niger-Delta. Local human right activist said that in some areas, armed men had turned up at polling stations and calmly made off with the ballot boxes, which they preceded to stuff. Another specialist in Nigeria, Anthony Goldman, says the scale of the attack and the vast quantities of oil being siphoned confirmed that senior Nigerian officials have protected and backed the armed militants that operate in Niger Delta. In some cases, huge oil tankers- mostly from the former Soviet Union have been used to carry away the stolen oil to foreign markets. The Niger Delta issue stands out more than others because of the scope, effect and long standing nature. Kidnaps of both expatriate and nationals, wanton destruction of both lives and property and economic losses like reduction in the production and revenue of petroleum product have characterized the issue. Indeed, many multi national companies in the volatile regions have even threatened to relocate to more peaceful domain. Conflict has an all round negative effect on development. Investors are unlikely to take interest in communities prone to violence, distrust and suspicions.

The users of public libraries in Africa look on them mainly as a service of supply of non- fictional materials of textbook type, for study and formal education, their cultural role is secondary (Matara,1998). The library's mission in the society and in any conflict is to work to promote peace in the society and enrichment of the citizenry. This is accomplished through activities that effectively disseminate knowledge and cultural information and provide the citizens with an opportunity for self development and lasting peace. The recurring crises in the Niger Delta region is the product of the deep-seated sense of neglect and marginalization by the government and oil companies in supporting critical human development (Nkoro, 2005). He further explained that the people in the Niger-Delta region live below the poverty line, that rate was far worse than African standard. Bekeo (2005) equally stated that, "the conflict in the region was facilitated by poverty, political disenfranchisement and the easy availability of firearms, armed groups fought each other over the control of illegally acquired oil (so called bunkering) and engaged in violent acts against oil companies, such as kidnapping officials. In the same vein, Asuni quoted in Nkoro (2005) opined that the long period of military rule in Nigeria contributed to bad governance and the scale of this neglect has been an important factor behind violence in the Niger Delta. As a result of this, the burden for the provision of government services fell to oil companies which were all equipped to supply water and electricity and maintain road networks. Pollution and continuous flaring of gas from oil prospecting and productions have created health hazards and render fishing and other

farming activities impossible (Iyoha and Adamu, 2002).

They further explained that exploration and exploitation of oil companies in Niger Delta and its attendant abuse on the environment has been more conspicuous and it has been argued that the oil producing areas suffer from grave damages as a result of the activities of these oil companies. Public libraries are involved in the acquisition and dissemination of indigenous knowledge through their extension service by the mobile unit. In that case, they read to illiterates in their communities, repackaged information, translate, interpret, photocopy, ask and answer questions concerning human rights, causes and consequences of war and other relevant information. United Nations has been involved in supporting peace and promoting conflict resolution through sending their publication to the depository libraries that invariable made the materials accessible to their clients all over the world (Echezona, 2007).

Studies have been carried out on the role of libraries in conflict resolution. In the course of the election in December 2007, Kenya experienced one of its biggest crises since independence. Conflict resolution became a crucial topic among the Kenyan society. The Goethe-Institute, Nairobi in conjunction with Kenyan library Association (KLA) chose conflict resolution as the theme of the annual conference of KLA organized in June 2008. The findings indicated that libraries are very significant institutions, when social conflict arise (Obachi, 2008). Maheswaran (2008) in a study of roles of libraries in conflict and peace process, Sri Lanka reported that although conflicts are threats to libraries, they can play an important role in creating ethnic harmony. Libraries are expected to change attitude of the civil society, which is a stakeholder in the peace process (Ntui et al., 2009). Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2005) studied on information and conflict prevention in Niger-Delta region of Nigeria and communities as instruments of conflict resolution, inclusion of role of community libraries in conflict resolutions were mentioned. Adewuyi (2009) carried out a study on the library as a tool for conflict resolution: The Nigerian experience the study revealed among others that acquisition of government publications (such as gazettes, constitutions, government bulletins etc), acquisition of materials of cultural heritages such as antiquities could help in conflict resolution. Haruna (2009) studied the role of academic libraries in conflict resolution in Africa. The study discovered that academic libraries could render such services like exhibition of information resources on conflict and related topics, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information and organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and symposia as ways of bringing about conflict resolution. Exhaustive search of the literature showed that no known study to the research has been conducted on any existing public library to determine its role in conflict resolution.

**Table 1.** Means responses on the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta Region.

Item	Mean	Decision
The struggle for the control of the region by different factions	3.68	Positive
Personal hostility among the political chieftains in the region	3.57	Positive
The monopoly of political control and supremacy by one ethnic group in the region	3.57	Positive
Foreign intervention in the affairs of the region because of the vested interest	3.32	Positive
Inability of the oil companies to adequately cater for the needs of their host communities	3.60	Positive
The neglect of the oil producing region in the share of revenue accruing from the oil	3.60	Positive
Non-provision of infrastructure in the region e.g. good road, drinking water and electricity	3.76	Positive
Non-provision of jobs to the teeming youth in the region by the government	3.61	Positive
Lack of adequate or balanced information provision to the people in the region	3.67	Positive
Inadequate awareness creation by the government on her policies and programmes on their activities with regards to compensation plan for the people	3.38	Positive
Lack of information on the agreement between the oil companies and the local communities in the region	3.44	Positive
Development patterns do not make for equity, fairness and justice	3.31	Positive
Income gap between the rich and the poor	3.47	Positive
Ethnic dominance	3.41	Positive
Environmental degradation caused by oil companies	3.68	Positive
Oil spillage that pollutes fishing areas	3.75	Positive
Exploitation without adequate compensation	3.67	Positive
Frustration	3.68	Positive

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was a descriptive survey. The study aims at obtaining data and describing library intervention in conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because the study covers a large population. The sample was made up of 198 respondents including 108 people. Also it includes 90 accessible librarians from the public libraries in the Niger Delta states of Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Bayelsa, Edo, Ondo, Abia and Imo. The number was purposefully selected as they fall within the focus of the study. From each of the state, twelve people were selected and constituted into a focus discussion group and ten accessible librarians were selected and used for the study. The instruments for data collection are focus group discussion schedule and a questionnaire. The focus group discussion schedule contains three major question items with other minor questions arising from the major ones. The questionnaire contains one major question item which is titled public library intervention in conflict resolution questionnaire (PLICRQ). The instruments comprised of four sections. Section A is on the causes of conflicts in the region and it has 26 items. Section B dealt on the consequence of lack of adequate information. It has 10 items while section C is on the awareness of conflict resolution strategies. It contains 8 items. Section D focused on the role of public libraries in conflict resolution. It contains 16 items. On the whole, the instrument has seventy items. The instrument was validated through expert opinion. The researchers employed the services of 9 research assistants for the purpose of administering and collection of the questionnaire and focus group discussion. Each one was chosen from each of the nine states covered by the study. They were requested to administer the questionnaire to the librarians in the public libraries in their states and to collect them back on completion. The researchers travelled to these states to discuss, give out and collect the questionnaire through the research

assistants. Data generated was analyzed using mean and bar charts.

## RESULTS

It is evident from Table 1 that all the items are causes of conflict in the region since their rating is above 2.50 which is the criterion point.

For research question 2, the bar chart referred to as Figure 1 clearly indicates that the whole items (N=90) are the consequences of lack of adequate information in the region's conflict. All the items have a mean rating above 2.50 showing that they are accepted as the consequences.

Meanwhile, according to research question 3, the bar chart (Figure 2) shows people's awareness of conflict resolution strategies is low indicating that the mean rating of all the items is below the criterion point of 2.50.

It should be noted from Table 2 that all the items are important roles the public libraries could play in conflict resolution in the region.

The whole items have a mean rating above 2.50, which is the criterion mean.

## DISCUSSION

The study revealed that there are numbers of causes of conflict in the Niger Delta region, some of which include

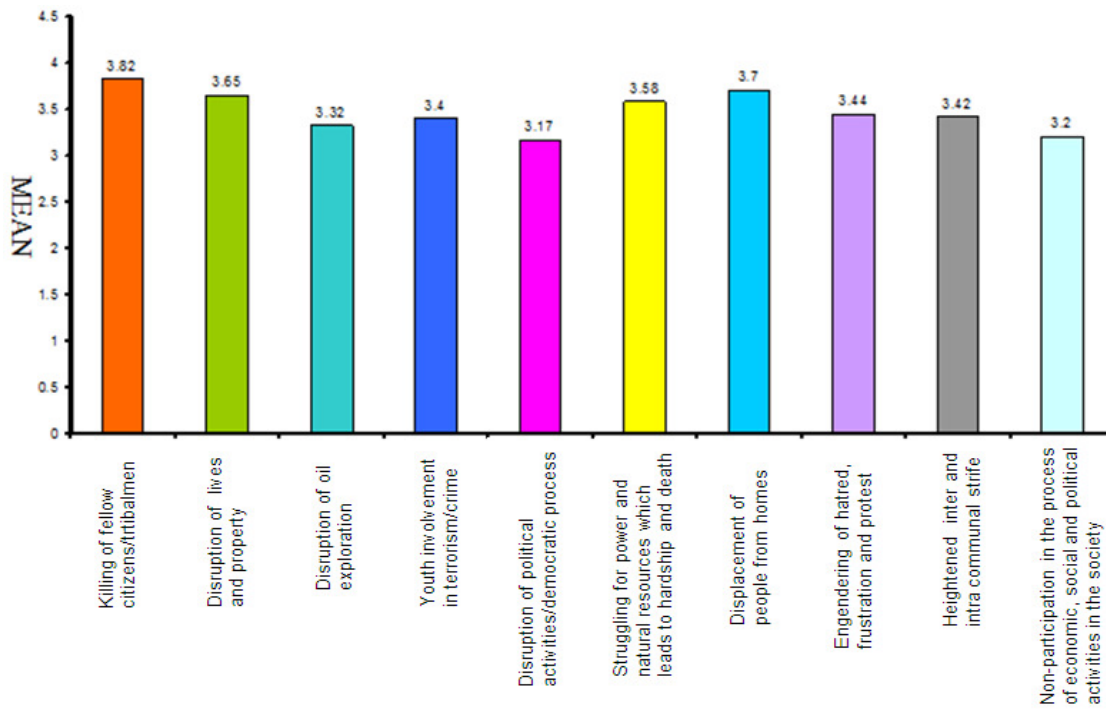


Figure 1. Mean responses on the consequences of lack of adequate information in the region's conflict (N=90).

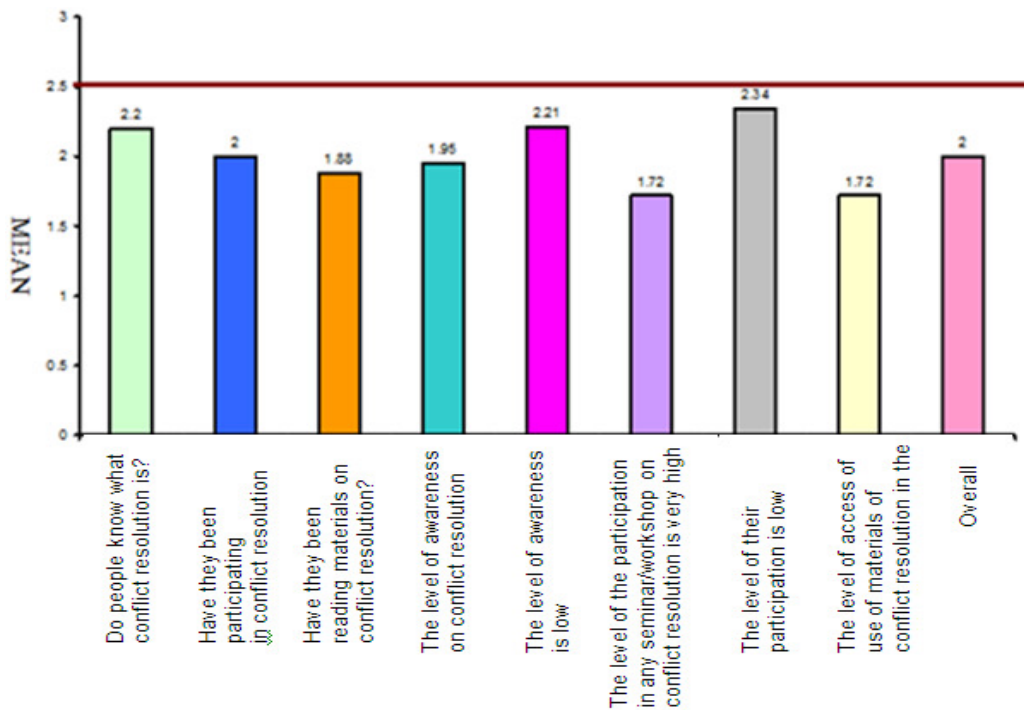


Figure 2. Mean responses on the extent of the people's awareness of conflict resolution strategies.

non provision of infrastructure in the region like good roads, pipe borne water and electricity, the struggle for

the control of the region by different factions, lack of adequate information to the people, inability of the oil

**Table 2.** Mean responses on the role of public libraries in conflict resolution in the region (N=90).

Item	Mean	Decision
Public libraries can organise workshops and seminars on conflict resolution.	3.67	Positive
Provision of extension services.	3.67	Positive
Collaboration with NGOs (and backing them up with information resources on conflict).	3.62	Positive
Provision of conflict resolution information in different media such as radio, TV, cinema.	3.38	Positive
Repackaging information in the way rural communities will understand the message.	3.60	Positive
Provision of information literacy.	3.62	Positive
Making information freely available to the people to enable them become aware of government programmes for them and the activities of oil companies.	3.77	Positive
Provision of information on the employment opportunities.	3.57	Positive
Public libraries can provide information on conflict resolution.	3.54	Positive
Public libraries can provide life long learning on conflict resolution	3.52	Positive
Overall.	3.58	Positive

companies to adequately cater for the needs of their host communities. Others are foreign intervention in the affairs of the regions due to vested interest and environmental degradation caused by oil exploration. The study also revealed that the oil endowment has attracted many interest groups and stakeholders with vested interest to outdo others in the area. This has led to indirect fuelling of conflict by foreign intervention and international arms merchant. All these findings are in line with Oliomogbe (2003) who said that poverty and underdevelopment were the major causes of conflict in the Niger Delta region. In addition, he pointed out that international pirate's traffic in stolen crude oil in exchange for arms and ammunitions which they supply to Warri youths thereby contributing to a great extent to the region's conflict. The activities of oil companies in the course of exploration and exploitation leads to oil spillage, gas flaring, all of which causes deplorable environment of aquatic and terrestrial habitation. Farm lands and waters are rendered unproductive with a low yield. Farming and fishing the main professions of the area have been obstructed by these oil companies. The Knowledge of this situation without adequate compensation by the government and the oil companies causes the youth and the entire community to be at a log-head with the government and the oil companies. Knowing that Niger Delta is their land and that they have no other place to go, they then try to resist their overriding interest of oil exploitation to their natural farming and fishing profession. Misinformation and communication gap between the communities and oil companies with regards to their welfare, lack of proper awareness on government policies and programmers concerning their socio-economic development and the negative role of the mass media were found also to be encouraging crises in the Niger

Delta. Oliomogbe (2003) quoting one time Minister for Police Affairs Broderick Bozimo noted that, propaganda and misinformation were two major tools which the oil bunkers use with clinical efficiency to stroke the fires of hatred was also revealed that lack of adequate information in the region's conflict has a number of consequences such as destruction of lives and properties of fellow citizens and other tribal men, displacement of people from their homes, struggling for power and resources which leads to hardship. It also revealed that lack of information or misinformation engenders conflict. Conflict in the Niger Delta has developed into fratricidal violence as a result of misinformation by some unscrupulous elements serving as community leaders and other interest groups in oil business. The findings of the study equally revealed the extent of the people's awareness of conflict resolution strategies. From all indications, the people's extent of awareness is still low as indicated in their responses. The reasons for this lack of awareness are not far fetched since the region lacked basic infrastructure it will be difficult for them to be abreast with the awareness on conflict resolution strategies. Educational enlightenment as well as other information sources like radio, television, newspapers, and magazines is unfortunately not readily available and accessible to them. It portrays the level of educational development in the area, the state of electronic communication availability in the communities, the poverty level and the general development of the area. Ogboru (2003) noted that these three ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region cannot perpetually live with each other unless there is an attitude change, which calls for educational enlightenment and direction of their thought processes in sheathing their swords and turning them into ploughed shears. This is very important in this

information society where you are required to access information and use them for problem solving and function effectively as a member of the society.

It was equally revealed that public libraries have a number of roles to play in conflict resolution in the region. Among them include making information freely available to the people to enable them become aware of government programmes for them and the activities of oil companies, organising workshops and seminars on conflict resolution, provision of extension services and collaboration with NGOs on information provision. Public libraries operate in rural communities through rural community information centres for the dissemination of indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. Banjo (1998) described rural community information centre as a multipurpose, multidisciplinary centre where information is presented in a variety of media to meet the needs of users. It is involved in identification, collection, and storage and repackaging of oral tradition from rapidly diminishing pool of traditional intellectuals – elders, clan heads, priests, historians and story tellers. In the words of Ibori (2003) one time governor of Delta State, theories to be found in books cannot be substitute to the indigenous wisdom, resourcefulness and creativity in conflict resolution. He went further to state that in history and in their traditional heritage lays their solution to the Niger Delta conflict. These legacies he continued must be preserved and passed on from generation to generation. This clearly spelt out the indispensable role of public library in conflict resolution as it is a social agent for cultural preservation and transmission for posterity. Culture as an embodiment of unity, with proper inculcation will serve as a galvanizing tool of unity and peace in the Niger Delta region.

The traditional role of public libraries is to preserve the cultural heritage of communities. Culture is the people's way of life over a period of time. Ibori (2003) stated that history has shown that there has been cultural exchange among the three ethnic groups of the Niger Delta. This is manifested in the cosmopolitan language of Pidgin English, socio-cultural institution, diplomatic decorum, cuisines, exquisite fashion and tastes. He maintained that these legacies remained their pride and must be preserved and passed from generation to generation. Its lack basic information of unity in diversity that has heightened inter and intra strife in the region. It serves as an identity and source of unity among a group of people. By identification, collection, storage and repackaging of cultural identity as object of unity, the public library fulfils its role as an intervention agent in conflict resolution. The knowledge of this unity will restrain these communities from being antagonistic to one another irrespective of other trivial differences. Public libraries through their extension services can reach out to these rural communities and feed them with the right kind of information that will bring about lasting peace and unity in

the region.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has indeed taken unimaginable dimension as a result of the factors identified by this study. Lack of proper information or misinformation through rumours, gossip and town criers have lead to untold hardships and loss of lives and property in the region. This is more so because their level of information or awareness on some conflict resolution strategies is still low. Public libraries however are capable of bringing about conflict resolution in the region through the provision of the right kind of information to the people through workshops, seminars, extension services and collaboration with non-governmental organisations. It is therefore being recommended that the public libraries in the states within the region should be well funded by the state government in the region so that they can procure all the necessary materials that will enable them realize the objective of resolving conflict in the region. By so doing the much needed peace and harmony will be restored to the conflict-torn region. The management of public libraries in the region should pay special attention to video documentation and preservation of cultural heritage of the area through their Audio Visual unit with subsequent dissemination and awareness to the rural communities. This will no doubt forestall peace in the conflict sensitive zone.

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