Issues of Conflict, Political Violence/Crisis and Insurgency in Nigeria: the Role of Library and Information Centers as a Tool for Solution

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Abstract – *The paper was on issues of conflict, political crisis and insurgency in Nigeria: the role of library and information centers as a tool for solution. Problems of daily killing, corruption, unemployment, conflict in political parties, poverty among people in African was the reasons the researchers wrote this paper. The study adopted a descriptive survey research method and data were generated through a questionnaire, randomly selected staff. The target population was 20, drawn from Madonna University Library Okija and Taraba State University Library janigo the entire population of 20 staff drawn from the surveyed libraries was used. Findings shows that abject poverty, idleness, unemployment; Governments' greed and biased approach to the distribution of scarce resources and other patronages and when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status/identity as well as when people are engaged in a struggle for power and among other things are the causes of conflict in Nigeria. Other findings revealed that the nature of services that could promote conflict resolution in Nigeria. This list might not be exhaustive but it is enough to give the serious-minded library personnel some food for thought.*

Key words: Conflict, crisis, Political, Library, insurgency and Information

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1. Background

The issues of insurgency, political violence/crisis, and conflict among communities and Niger-delta militants in Nigeria are no longer news. Nigeria which was once a peaceful country in Africa is now known as one of the crisis nation that attracts international talks. Killing of innocent souls by boko-haram, political tougs, and militants in riverine areas is now a daily meal; blood sharing of common people in churches, mosques, schools, police stations and government, private and public owned facilities with a kind of guerilla warfare tactics. The most painful thing we read in Nigeria newspapers everyday by past president and present one are "condemn every attack of bombing of all kinds, killing, and crises" but no solution. According to Adetiloye, (2014) Boko Haram (B-H) is predominant in the North Eastern part of Nigeria in states like Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. They have in the last half a decade or so, become the most dangerous insurgent group that Nigerians have witnessed. There fundamental ideology is *"Western education is forbidden"*. They are known to destructively attack churches, mosques,

schools, police stations and government, private and public owned facilities with a kind of guerilla warfare tactics.

If one real study the destructive activities of Boko-Haram recently, you we agreed with the researchers that they are not fighting because of *western education*, but making Nigeria an *"Islamic Nation".* Furthermore, south-east are fighting for *biafran nation* while Niger-Delta are fighting for *natural resources revenue and underdevelopment in various communities because they are sources of Nigeria economy. But their internal intension is to declare Niger -Delta Republic.* Based on this, the researchers want to explore issues of conflict, political violence/crisis and insurgency in Nigeria: the role of librarians, information manager/information scientist and people that work in libraries and information centres to provide solution through any information bearing materials, awareness and other means for conflict or crisis resolution in Nigeria.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to find out conflict, political violence and Insurgency in Nigeria: the role of library and information as a tool for conflict resolution. Specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the causes of conflict in Nigeria
2. To find out causes of political violence/ crisis and insurgency in Nigeria
3. To know the role of library and Information as a tool for conflict resolution in Nigeria.

2. Methodology

The paper adopted a descriptive survey research method and data were generated through a questionnaire, randomly selected staff. The target population was 20, drawn from Madonna University Library Okija and Taraba State University Library Janigo. The entire population of 20 staff drawn from the surveyed libraries was used as it was considered not too large to manage purposive sampling.

3. Data Presentation and Findings

Table 1: Population and Sample.

Ranks of Library Staff

Rank	Response	Percentage (%)
University Librarians	2	10
Senior Librarians	2	10
Librarian II	3	15
Librarian I	2	10

Chief/Senior library officers	3	15
Supporting Staff	9	45
Total	20	100

The table shows that supporting staff 9(45%), Chief/Senior library officers 3915%), Librarians II 3(15%), Librarians I 2(10%), senior Librarians 1(5%) and University librarians 2 (10%).

Table 2: Conflicts in Nigeria

Causes	Yes	No
When two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status/identity	20(100%)	-
When people are engaged in a struggle for power	20(100%)	-
Struggle over access or distribution of resources	20(100%)	-
When a party perceives that one or more means of achieving a goal or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties	20(100%)	-
The result of interaction and contact among people	5(25%)	15(75%)
An unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions	16(80%)	4(20%)
An expression of the basic fact of human Interdependence	15(75%)	5(25%)
Frustration in a relationship or interaction	20(100%)	-

Continuous economic decline	20(100%)	-
Lack of adequate information on little disagreement or misunderstanding	15(75%)	5(25%)
Government policies	16(80%)	4(20%)
Nigeria states are characterized as corrupt, repressive and irresponsible to the needs of the people	20(100%)	-
Governments' greed and biased approach to the distribution of scarce resources and other patronages	20(100%)	-
Abject poverty, idleness, unemployment, etc.	20(100%)	

Table shows that abject poverty, idleness, unemployment; Governments' greed and biased approach to the distribution of scarce resources and other patronages and when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status/identity as well as when people are engaged in a struggle for power and among other things are the causes of conflict in Nigeria.

Table 3: Conflict Resolution through library services

Library services in conflict resolution	Yes	No
Current Awareness Service (CAS)	20(100%)	-
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	20(100%)	-
Indexing and abstracting	20(100%)	-
Referral services	20(100%)	-
Conducting Literature Searches	20(100%)	-
Alert of Current Contents	20(100%)	-
Organising Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Symposia	20(100%)	-

Exhibition of information resources on conflicts	20(100%)	-
Collaborating with mass media, NGOs on conflict resolution	20(100%)	-
Translations	20(100%)	-
Resource sharing	20(100%)	-
Current Awareness Service (CAS)	20(100%)	

Table 3 provides in varying degrees, the nature of services that could promote conflict resolution in Nigeria. This list might not be exhaustive but it is enough to give the serious-minded library personnel some food for thought. Having identified some of the major causes of conflicts and the role of libraries in information provision.

4. Conflict in Nigeria

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, is the resort to the use of force and armed violence in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals. The researcher simply defines conflict as a clash or disagreement, often violent between two opposing groups or individuals. Just as peace is a by-product of justice; likewise is conflict a by-product of injustice, perceived or real. Violence and conflict are inextricably linked. Violence is a form of expression of conflict, and it can be direct or structural, unattended crises lead to conflict. Conflict is a disagreement, dispute or controversy between different parties, and it has always been regarded as part of human condition.

Sani (2007) defined conflict as "a social condition which arises where two or more parties pursue goals which are incompatible". The parties may be individual, small or large groups and communities. Sani further submitted that conflict is "often associated with anything bad and negative which needs to be avoided. It is seen as the opposite of peace". Tracing the roots of conflicts in Nigeria, Sani recorded that whether social, political or religious, bedeviling the Nigerian nation and even its states and communities can be traced to the forcefuly amalgamation of ethnic groups into one entity now called Nigeria by the British colonialists. Characteristics of conflict, according to Omoluabi (1995) cited by Oyeshola (2005) include the following: Conflict is a complex multidimensional construct encompassing different aspects of individual and group behaviours. There must be at least two issues or views or motives or individuals or groups or parties to conflict to have meaning. A conflict can be resolved partially or totally.

From the above definitions conflict can be generating from political party, misunderstand between two persons or group of people. In Nigeria conflict between political

parties are daily issues that eat deep to bone marrow of Politician's which causes political violence in the society. However, conflict resolution simply means a sub-field of peace research. The current conflict in the Niger Delta arose in the early 1990s over tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who feel they are being exploited, particularly the Ogoni and the Ijaw. Ethnic and political unrest has continued throughout the 1990s and persists as of 2013 despite the conversion to democracy and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999. Competition for oil wealth has fueled violence between many ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups as well as Nigerian military and police forces (notably the Nigerian Mobile Police). Victims of crimes are fearful of seeking justice for crimes committed against them because of a failure to prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_in_the_Niger_Delta)

4.1. Political violence in Nigeria

Political violence is the use of lethal force or other debilitating means by a person or persons against others. In Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, political violence has often occurred in anticipation of, during or sometime after an election campaign. It has been a feature of Nigerian electoral history recorded as early as the pre-independence elections in the 1950s. It is usually intended to eliminate, intimidate, or otherwise subdue political opponents so as to obtain an advantage in the political process. It may have attained its zenith in the early 1960s in the old Western regional elections. The violence in response to the 2011 federal elections, particularly in the northern states, may well be an indication of a resurgence of violence related to the political process in Nigeria. Some Nigerians have described the recent Boko Haram insurgency as primarily politically motivated, though with a religious and ideological colour.

Political violence has never contributed to the stability of the state or government. In fact, it is said to have contributed substantially to the failure of Nigerian's First Republic and the emergence of military politics in the country in 1966. For obvious reasons, it abated significantly during military governance but re-emerged with the inception of partisan politics in 1978. It died down again between 1984 and 1998, although there were allegations of political violence during the latter part of military rule from 1994 to 1998. There has been a visible resurgence since 1999, when the country began its current attempt to move toward democracy. What Chief Justice Musdapher references regarding the current spate of political violence is the fact that, in all estimations, the intensity and frequency of the violence since 1999 - including murder, kidnapping, extortion and communal violence - has reached alarming proportions requiring urgent attention.

The history of political development in Nigeria has recorded the growth of multidimensional forms of violence as a major political behaviour in the quest by political-minded individuals and groups to attain state power and keep it. In recent times, Human Rights Watch revealed that over 2000 Nigerians lost their life in post- election violence in the country. As the campaigns for the 2015 general election was rounding off, the governor of the state of Osun, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola had his convoy attacked in Ilase, Obokun Local government of the State. That was on Friday the 13th of March, 2015. The attack, though

initiated by stalwarts of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party [PDP], was allegedly led by one Sunday Akinyemi, alias "Yellow". It left at least one person dead, many injured and properties worth millions of Naira destroyed. This is a sad footnote on our quest for a true democratic process, because it illustrates happenings in almost all states of the federation (Falana, 2015).

Example of man killed as a result of Political violence in Delta State Nigeria

The historical trajectory of electoral process in the post-colonial Nigeria is characterised by violence. In fact, recent manifestations of electoral violence, most importantly since the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999 have assumed an unprecedented magnitude and changing form, resulting in instability in democratic consolidation as well as the loss and displacement of many innocent lives. I wish to historicize electoral violence and its implications on the survival of democracy in Nigeria with major emphasis on this Fourth Republic (1999-2015). The high incidence of electoral violence (pre and post) in the Fourth Republic in particular is closely associated with neo-patrimonial character of the Nigerian state, the nature and kind of party politics being played, the weak institutionalisation of democratic architectures and inefficient electoral management body among others. These were among the factors that led to the fall or collapse of the First, Second and Third Republics. I dare say that the survival of democracy in

this Fourth Republic involves adherence to the ideals and principles of electoral process as practised in ideal democratic societies.

Nigeria, having survived decades of military dictatorship which was characterized by despotism, violation of fundamental human rights, financial profligacy among others, eventually returned to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 which culminated in the birth of the Fourth Republic. The republic which started amidst great hope and expectations is yet to significantly convince the generality of the Nigerian populace its democratic success especially with respect to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections devoid of election violence (pre and post). The block votes for failed formal President Jonathan recorded from the south east and south-south in the just concluded 2015 election leaves a sour grape in the mouth regarding incessant geo-ethnic loyalty in voting patterns. This has however put the zones in a disadvantage position in the unfolding power sharing and political relevance. The threat of violence by militant leaders (especially by Asari Dokubo) in the zone is a sad commentary that must not be allowed to endure.

In Majekodunmi, and Adejuwon, (2012), cited by Falana(2015) electoral violence is defined thus: any spontaneous or organized act by candidates, party supporters, election authorities, voters, or any other actor that occurs during an electoral process, from the date of voter registration to the date of inauguration of a new government, that uses physical harm, intimidation, blackmail, verbal abuse, violent demonstrations, psychological manipulation, or other coercive tactics aimed at exploiting, disrupting, determining, hastening, delaying, reversing, or otherwise influencing an electoral process and its outcome. Also, Igbuzor (2010) sees electoral violence as: any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes.

International Foundation for Election Systems (2011) defines electoral violence as "any violence (harm) or threat of violence (harm), like that of Asari-Dokubo, that is aimed at any person or property involved in the election process, or at disrupting any part of the electoral or political process during the election period." These above definitions of electoral violence typically captured the deeper nature and stages of electoral violence in Nigeria especially since the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999.

4.2. Potential role of library and information centres in resolving conflicts

Though information officers and librarians may not be military people, because of their professional background, they are usually equipped to provide technical information services to experts in other fields using the language they understand most since language is a synergy. In providing information services, librarians may need to adopt campaigning or mobile libraries to bring library services to the doorsteps of citizens to educate them on national security. Nwalo (2003) observed that the compilations made by mobile libraries reflect perceived needs of local communities. This will help to provide security services to communities and help citizens and patrons of the library attain maximum information services, in spite of their

vocations. Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2006) observed defined information as "structured data that causes a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of real world and contribute to a reduction in the uncertainty of the state of the system". Since information is a transformation agent, a shaper of perspectives and philosophies of life, the onus lies on libraries as information centers and librarians as information managers to ensure that Nigerians have access to information that will direct their actions. Some Nigerian who participated in protests across the country are uninformed as seen in the fuel subsidy protest of 9th – 15th January 2012 (NTA News Bulletin, 13th January, 2012). Information therefore is a sine qua non for individual and collective freedom and attainment of national security. Anasi (2010) citing Sokari (2006) agrees that "information is necessary for people to be liberated from the shackles of ignorance, misconceptions, economic stagnation, social unrest, and political instability. Social cohesion cannot be achieved without timely, accurate, and relevant information." This is because information is fresh ideas or fact taken out of a person's surrounding for use with the objective of transforming behaviour in all areas of human life (Ajegbomogun, 2008). Information helps create enlightened and responsible citizens. The library is the gateway to information. It is a place where information is acquired, processed, repackaged, preserved, and disseminated (Anasi, 2010). urrently, electronic media is one of the most effective and powerful means of mass mobilization.

A nation not mobilized enough to withstand terrorism cannot aspire to preserve its freedom, faith and ideology for long. On the other hand, strongly mobilized people cannot be forced to abandon their security in the face of terrorism. It is in this regard that libraries and librarians can ginger up the electronic media to promote and expand security awareness among the people at large. The library through the media has been waging war of its own to counter the hostile propaganda from insurgents and terrorists in Nigeria. Like their names suggests propaganda: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram (Western Education is nonsense), the government through the library can fund effective counter propaganda campaigns that will sensitize the citizens to the ills of terrorism and win over their   sympathizers. One of the most effective means of maintaining national security is through propaganda and the primary tool of propaganda is the media. Some of the techniques adopted in a conflict to gain the desired results are repeating the lies of the terrorists, attacking personal opinions disguised as fact, headlining propaganda, selective control of information and the yellow journalism (Gamble and Kwerliambli, 1990).

Thus, the role played by the library and librarians is a morale-boosting role. "In the military parlance, morale is the will to fight for the national cause to the last" (Hussain, 2008). Thus, in the war on terror, psychological operation is not the only function which the library can perform in the context of national security; it can act as a bridge between the armed forces and the people (Hali, 2003).The library provides not only information resources and guidance, but it is also a judgment-free zone in which acitizen can investigate interests of the terrorists without worry of embarrassment or exposure. A greater understanding of the differences and similarities between peoples of the world can potentially initiate and expand feelings of tolerance and empathy for cultures, religions and traditions outside of one's immediate sphere. This the library can provide. cited by Ossaugbah,(2013) cited Omotayo (2005) noted that: "in

war situations in enlightened societies, use of libraries increases as users flock to libraries to find information to guide them. Information that can promote peace, unity, progress, peaceful co-existence, and harmonious relationship among all the communities must therefore be available in libraries. Librarians, therefore, in promoting access to this information, act as agents of the promotion of communal peace and reconciliation." The importance of libraries to the Nigerian society can be seen through the statistics of people who use the library to gain access to print media. The majority of people who use libraries usually do so through the public or university library system in their communities. People throughout the country rely on public or university libraries as a provider of access to print and electronic information, access to email, assistance with information gathering and leisure reading (Becker, 2003). Some people choose to only engage the world through information sources that reinforce their views and reassure them that the world is exactly as they perceive it to be. Others are overly curious and want to know everything they can about everything no matter the barriers they face. It is the people who fall in the middle that are truly helped by the library and librarians. An individual may at some point have questions about current events, people or cultures outside of their own immediate experience, religion or ethnicity. Their desire for information might be driven by a school project, a story on the news or by simple curiosity. Curiosity and the desire to learn about the world can be protected and nurtured by the library. The freedom to explore and read about other cultures is vital to national security, especially as a tool to mitigate and prevent radicalization. The library and librarians indeed have a role to play in national security.

According Adewuyi(2009) cited by Ossaugbah,(2013) opined that whatever the library does and in whatever way it does it, the ultimate purpose is to provide information as at when requested for by the public. The medical personnel, lawyers, judges, industrialists, and people from other walks of life constantly need information in the course of discharging their social responsibilities to the public. Thus, it may be correct to say that librarianship is the father of all professions because man cannot act without information. In fact, it is information that has created social inequality between the developed countries and the developing countries. This is because the former cherish and guide every bit of information either for immediate use or for future use, unlike the latter which are rather dominated by oral tradition (Ifidon & Ahiazu, 2006) cited by Ossaugbah,2013**.**

As stressed earlier, the library performs the social function of providing information to the public through its varieties of information resources which may be in the form of printed materials or electronic materials. The role of the library in conflict resolution comes in when litigation is involved in resolving a problem although there are a few issues that can be resolved by the library before it gets to this stage. Any item of evidence at the court of law must come from recognized institutions; most notably in this category is the library. The Nigerian government is in the process of handing over the controversial Bakassi Peninsula to its neighboring country, Cameroon, as a result of the judgment of the International Court of Justice that the place belongs to Cameroon, mainly because the Nigerian government perhaps failed to make use of librarians and documentalists. Also, most of the boundary disputes can be well resolved in the court of law through the provision of evidence from recognized institutions such as library. The evidence may be in the form of printed items, or audio-visual items such as oral

testimonies, etc(Adewuyi,2009).

We should also take the establishment, proper funding and management of the public libraries more seriously, knowing fully well that the public libraries are the only libraries that accommodate all, unlike other types of libraries. Thus, the public libraries can be regarded as a "community university" where the public are educated, informed and erased misinformation, through the acquisition of relevant information materials. Therefore, public libraries can play prominent roles in conflicts resolution.

4.3. Conflict Resolution by the Library
(Adewuyi, 2009) Further list followings as ways library can be used in conflicts resolution:
- Acquisition of government publications (such as gazettes, constitution, government bulletins, etc);
- Acquisition of audio-visual items (such as oral testimonies, recorded speeches, etc);
- Acquisition of materials of cultural heritages such as antiquities;
- Acquisition of proceedings of court cases by libraries such as special libraries that is attached to the law court, and other relevant agencies;
- Acquisition of two sets of Nigerian daily newspapers; one for newspaper clippings (to facilitate library research), and the second one to be kept whole for future usage such as litigation, when the need arises;
- Acquisition of Nigerian magazines such as Daily Times, Sun newspaper, Tell, Newswatch; and
- Establishment and proper management of public libraries.

5. Conclusion
The paper was on conflict and political violence and insurgency in Nigeria: the role of library and information centres as a tool to conflict resolution. Conflict had defined by scholars differently. The above historical analysis of the electoral violence in the post-colonial Nigeria in particular contributed immensely to reasons why democracy in the first two major republics (first and second) could not only be consolidated but also be sustained. However, it is argued that conflict resolution cannot be achieved through the establishment of operations and peacekeepers in Nigeria but through adequate provision of identified services which encompass effective information provision and dissemination.

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