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ARTICLE

The use of information, awareness and communication in conflict resolution: Role of libraries in South-East Nigeria

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Eze Jacintha, U., Ijeoma, J. Ibegbulam and Umunnakwe Gertrude

Full Length Research Paper

The use of information, awareness and communication in conflict resolution: Role of libraries in South-East Nigeria

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Considering the need for peace in the world of today and the ill effects of conflicts, this study delved into the contributions of libraries towards conflict resolution of major communal conflicts in South-East Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to find out different library and information services, resources, programmes and other media provided and utilized by the libraries towards conflict resolution; the challenges they face and strategies to enhance their contributions towards conflict resolution. Public and academic libraries within the conflict zone were used for the study and 20 heads of the main libraries and their branch libraries supplied the needed data. Interview, questionnaire and observations were used as instruments for data collection while data was analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages. Major findings showed that the libraries had reasonable collections but very few on conflict resolution, the libraries had little interest in conflict resolution and did not make adequate provision towards that. The libraries faced challenges like poor funding, and infrastructural facilities and improved funding is among the strategies which could be used in enhancing their contribution to conflict resolution and peace building.

Key words: Conflict resolution, peace, library and information services, libraries, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts between different groups and communities and other related crisis have recently been the other of the day in the different parts of this country, Nigeria. Conflict could be said to be a state of disagreement, chaos and in most cases, physical combat. If any form of conflict exists in a particular area, it means that there is no peace. Librarianship has been seen as the mother of all disciplines. The library as the main custodian of information

and knowledge is in the best position to access, retrieve and disseminate information from different sources and resources and in different facets of human life. Helping an individual or groups living in a society to be well informed in matters around the society goes a long way into averting conflicts and promoting peace among communities and groups within the community. While libraries have always offered their various services

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traditionally to its patrons, the use of electronic means like computer has facilitated these services to go beyond the library walls; hence the emergence of virtual library. Gone are the days when the librarians are confined to the library buildings waiting for users to come and browse through heaps of books on the shelves. Libraries are expected to come into societal issues and change attitude of the civil society, which is a stakeholder in the peace process. Libraries – school libraries, public libraries, university libraries and national libraries can effectively bring about the attitudinal changes in the minds of the people of a nation (Maheswara, 2008). In the Nigerian context, seemingly, the libraries' and librarians' effective contribution to conflict resolution and peace building could be felt when they are giving what it takes especially in areas of library funding, librarians' training, and sensitization. Conflict resolution and peace building is an issue of concern for all in the society these days considering the fact that conflicts used to erupt at different levels in today's society.

In the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, there have been lingering communal conflicts which have been calling on the attention of many. The Ezillo-Ezza communal conflict in Ebonyi state and the Aguleri versus Umuleri communal conflict in Anambra State are notable communal conflicts which has lasted to an extent that information is required to play a vital role in the lives of these people before a lasting solution could be achieved. That is why the interest of the researchers were drawn to investigating the commitment of the libraries within these areas to conflict resolution and peace building considering the fact that libraries and librarians are regarded as the chief custodians and disseminators of information. The problem lies in what and what contributions are the Nigerian libraries making towards conflict resolution and peace especially in South-East zone of the country.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the services provided by the library.
2. To find out the special programmes organized and used by these libraries to create conflict resolution awareness.
3. To find out the different media used by the libraries for enhancing conflict resolution and peace.
4. To ascertain any possible challenges hindering these libraries' services towards conflict resolution and peace.
5. To suggest strategies for enhancing the library services towards conflict resolution and peace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict and conflict resolution

One could confidently say that no single definition of

conflict exists. Most definitions see conflict as involving a situation where there are at least two independent groups; where the groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves. There is bound to be conflict where there are opposing viewpoints, disagreement over issues and the emergent physical combat. Pruitt and Rubin (1986) defined conflict as a perceived divergence of interest or beliefs that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously; while Wilson and Hanna (1990) described it as a struggle involving ideas, values, and or limited resources. Forsyth (1990) asserted that conflict occurs when the actions or beliefs of one or more members of a group are unacceptable to and hence are resisted by one or more groups or members. Nwoli (2003) further stated that conflict is a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle. Conflict has been seen as the process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party; as a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle (Batubo and Ditemie-Batubo, 2010). It is said to be a misunderstanding that involves negotiable interest. Conflict may be caused by religious, social, political, or economic misunderstanding.

When there is conflict, it means there is no peace. Conflict resolution as the name implies, involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict. When people talk about conflict resolution, they usually use terms like negotiation, bargaining, mediation, or arbitration. Conflict resolution is a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. The term conflict resolution is sometimes used interchangeably with the term dispute resolution or alternative dispute resolution. Processes of conflict resolution generally include negotiation, mediation and diplomacy.

Conflict resolution which could also be called dispute resolution and has been seen by Oyeshola (2005) as a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. Oyeshola recognized two of the foremost Alternative Dispute Resolution processes that can be used to resolve conflicts without resulting to litigation. These are arbitration and mediation. Arbitration has been seen by Orojo and Ajomo (1999) and Oyeshola (2005) as a process whereby a dispute arising between two or more parties is settled by a tribunal chosen by them. It is a process for the settlement of disputes under which the parties agree to be bound by the decision of an arbitrator whose decision is final and legally binding on both parties. Mediation on the other hand is most commonly used and is a process whereby the parties agree on the resolution or settlement of their dispute/conflict by an independent, neutral and impartial third party assisting the parties to their solution. Mediation can be employed in resolving any type of conflict/dispute. Conflict resolution could also be seen as the process of attempting to find solution or settle dispute. This was supported by Obeji and Nyamboga (2008) who noted

that the process of conflict resolution may include struggle for resources, egocentrism, ethnocentrism, bigotry, assertion, struggle for recognition, ignorance pride and fear.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has a number of works and they are centered on the promotion of education for peace, human rights, and democracy. The notion of a "culture of peace" was first elaborated for UNESCO at the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, held at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, in 1989. The Yamoussoukro Declaration called on UNESCO to 'construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men' and to promote education and research for a this vision (*UNESCO and a Culture of Peace*, UNESCO Publishing, 1995)

Underlying all of this work in the field of peace education are the efforts of committed educators, researchers, activists, and members of global civil society. Acting in partnership with the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), educational institutions, and citizen networks have advanced education for peace by linking ideals with extensive research and practice. The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century (UN Document: Ref A/54/98), is a significant example of such work. One of the first principles of this document is the necessity of instituting systematic education for peace. According to the Agenda, their Global Campaign for Peace Education aims to "support the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World and to introduce peace and human rights education into all educational institutions, including medical and law schools."

UNESCO (nd) citing Rijsbermann (1999) discusses a structured approach to conflict management, which involves first of all an assessment of the scope, nature and stage of the conflict. A basic premise of conflict management is that the stakeholders are fully involved in the conflict resolution process. The UNESCO paper also stressed that understanding the nature and causes of a conflict is a fundamental prerequisite before any attempt is made to resolve a particular conflict. Citing many successful conflict resolution case studies like in Chumbe Island, Tanzania, White Sea, Russia, India, Uruguay, Senegal and Lagos, Nigeria, the UNESCO paper 12 advocated the use of awareness and sensitization, education, enhanced communication and dialogue – creating a forum for bringing the stakeholders in any conflict setting together in resolving conflicts.

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 (Laloo, 2002). Echezona (2007) further asserted that, for any

nation to make meaningful impact in conflict prevention, peace promotion and conflict resolution, early warning information is needed. Timely alert to potential conflicts is central to an early warning system which, in order to be meaningful, must be complemented by early political action. Library and information service is a key player in providing unhindered access to essential information resources for economic 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.

The library and librarians when prepared can contribute to all these by providing the avenue for creating awareness, using outreach programmes to sensitize especially the illiterate and semi-literate ones and above all, providing information materials.

Libraries in conflict resolution

A good number of studies have been carried out on the contributions of libraries and information services to conflict resolution. Echezona et al. (2011) cited a number of such studies. 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.

Historically, libraries and librarians have played a major role in creating, accumulating, organizing and disseminating information. Libraries according to Echezona (2007) are key players in fostering the information society. The advance in the area of computer hardware and software, as well as breakthrough in the field of communications, brought about a great revolution in the way libraries deliver their information service today. With this revolution of ICT systems such as internet, website, email, teleconferencing, and information super high way, etc, libraries can then play a role in conflict resolution.

Researches regarding conflict and peace according to Gisesa (2008) have revealed that conflicts are based on deficiency of information, that cases of misinformation, wrong information or missing information enhance disparity in opinions and social differences which may lead to as well heighten conflicts. People in the community can be given what is called peace education. In agreement with this fact, Bhatti (2010) recognized what Harris and Synott (2002) wrote that peace education has to do with empowering people with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to build, maintain and restore relationships at all levels of human interaction. The library is in a better position to educate people in the community both formally and informally towards promotion of peace. Information and knowledge as maintained by Ifidon and Ahiazu (2006), help to maintain attitudes of collaborative and cooperative intent and change the dynamics of negotiation from mistrust to trust. Through the provision of relevant information at all levels of libraries, Bhatti (2010) noted that the government, policy makers and civil society could be supported towards establishing a base for a democratic system. Information obviously promotes and empowers citizens' participation in the democratic process, enhances the maintenance of rule of law and creates a viable outlet for the injection of public opinion.

Furthermore, Bhatti (2010) took note of what Pardeck and Pardeck (1990) said about bibliotherapy as the use of books to help people solve their problems. The idea of healing through books is not new one; it can be traced far back in history from the days of first libraries in Greece.

The school and academic libraries

These libraries can reach their users through their resources, services and facilities. The users will in turn reflect what they gained from the library in their societal lives, relationships and interactions. Here, Echezona (2001) stressed that libraries equip researchers with techniques of identifying and preventing conflicts at an early stage. This could be achieved by inviting discussions and brainstorming from experts on conflict resolution in workshops, seminars and documenting the information so generated for the users to learn the art of resolving and managing conflicts and promoting peace.

Some Universities have introduced "Peace and conflict resolution" as general studies course (Okoye et al., 2010). This is in recognition of what information and knowledge can do for the students in averting conflict and promoting peace.

The public libraries and information centres

Public libraries and information centres like national archives could be said to be in the best strategic position to reach various groups of people in the community. They serve all and sundry; from much younger ones to much older people. As Bhatti (2010) put it, public libraries and archival centres can and should expand their concepts of library services to build up positive interaction within their community. These should be built with teachers, civil societies, lawyers, social workers, youth workers and peace and reconciliation officials. The libraries and information centres by providing required information resources and services, and liaising with these groups in organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and community development meetings, can prove their usefulness and contribute their own quota in maintaining peace and harmony in the society.

The library associations

Librarians through the Nigeria Library Association, can go an extra mile in touching the lives of the people by becoming advocates of peace building. This can be done by creating room for exhibitions and symposia, workshops and seminars addressing conflict resolution and peace to be part of their general meetings and conferences. As further asserted by Bhatti (2010), library associations should be committed to motivate and facilitate its professionals towards facilitating research activities influential to a growing educated society, peaceful culture and conflict resolution in the country. He had proposed for the Pakistan Library Association to establish a Research and Development Section that should support research on various real-life issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bush, Folger and Lederach's theory of conflict transformation

Theorists of conflict transformation, while referring to the interest-based and the human needs models argue solution that satisfies each country's interests and needs could be reached through these models. However, if negative attitudes developed in each country during the conflict are not addressed, these could serve to generate further conflicts some time later. Whereas conflict transformation aims at a fundamental change in attitude

and/or behavior of individuals and/or the relationship between two or more disputing parties.

This approach is very well exemplified in Bush and Folger's theory of transformative mediation and Lederach's model of conflict transformation. Lederach uses the term conflict resolution to refer to peace building. For building peace destructive or negative communication patterns need to be transformed or replaced by constructive or positive interaction patterns. Like Bush, Folger and Lederach stresses the need to transform the disputing parties by empowering them to understand their own situation and needs, as well as encouraging them to recognize the situation and needs of their opponents.

This particular study is based on this theory of conflict resolution as the use of information, awareness and communication (which can be provided and/or supported by the libraries) in conflict resolution is being advocated.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey was adopted for this study. Due to the fact that programmes towards conflict resolution and peace are to be planned and carried out by a library as a body, the population of the study comprised of 20 libraries in the conflict zone – 3 main public libraries with their 15 branches and 2 academic libraries thus - Ebonyi state - Abakaliki with its zonal library at Onueke, Ezza; Enugu state – Enugu headquarters, Nsukka, Awgu, Ibagwa, and Amuifie, Anambra state public libraries - Ihembosi, Ozubulu, Amichi, Nnewi, Ajali, Nkpologwu, Abagana, Onitsha, Adazi-nnukwu, Atani) with headquarters at Ifite-dunu; 2 academic libraries – the Ebonyi state University library and the Nnamdi Azikiwe University library. Due to the nature of the study and the data required, structured questionnaire was used in addition to oral interview as instruments for data collection. The interview was used to elicit data on research question 1 on the availability of library services for conflict resolution and peace building such as dissemination of information on the culture, on conflict resolution, security issues and peace. The questionnaire was made up of four (4) sections with 20 items/statements which followed the research questions 2-5.

Purposive sampling was used to select the academic and public libraries used for the study since they interact more with the general public. These public and academic libraries were used in the study because they are generally closer to the public through the kinds of clients they serve. The academic and public libraries interact more with the masses than the special libraries and the above named libraries and their branches were chosen because they are located within the area of study.

The oral interview was conducted and the questionnaires administered by the researchers to the librarians heading the libraries and/or their representatives. Their responses were logically documented by the researchers as was required after which they were collated for analysis. In addition to the information elicited using the above instruments, the researchers also made observations where necessary especially in the area of resources available in the libraries.

Data collected was analyzed quantitatively using frequencies and percentages while those elicited using interview were analyzed descriptively all in line with the research questions.

FINDINGS

Findings showed that no special provisions made for the

dissemination information towards conflict resolution and peace building, for networked television services (like CNN) to show conflict situation and internet services provision to that effect in these libraries. Further findings on the use of display on topical issues to help in conflict resolution and peace awareness showed that there was very poor display culture in the libraries. Most of them could only boast of newspaper displays which were not replaced as required due to the fact that librarians were not well informed about societal affairs like conflicts, their resolutions and peace building. Adewuyi (2009) advocated that the 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. Special training through workshops, seminars on conflict resolution will make a lot of changes.

Furthermore, on use of special programmes like workshops, seminars and conferences towards conflict resolution and peace building, findings showed that some of the librarians in these libraries attended general-purpose conferences usually organized by the Nigerian Library Association, NLA. Small scale programmes are organized by some of the libraries on societal issues of which conflict resolution may be a part but not specifically for conflict resolution and peace awareness. Such programmes are necessary and that is why 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 arises.

While the academic libraries utilized media like radio and television to advocate against cultism and conflict, the public libraries relied more on cooperation with community leaders, NGOs and churches. This was in line with the findings of Echezona (2007) which advocated the use of such media in tackling conflict and advocating peaceful coexistence. Different problems hinder the libraries' adequate contribution to conflict resolution through information resources and services. Inadequate fund, inadequate material and human resources, lack of librarians' awareness on conflict resolution, lack of established library policy on special information services for conflict resolution, peace building, security and other related issues are all problems. These were earlier confirmed by Okoye et al. (2010) as well as Bahtti (2010). To curb the problems, strategies like improved funding, formulating policies on services towards such social issues as conflict resolution, providing necessary infrastructure and sensitizing the librarians on their role in this regard in both the public and academic libraries will help a great deal. Studies of Okoye et al. (2010), Bhatti (2010) and Echezona (2001) have shown that although the public libraries are being seen as having more responsibility in conflict resolution and peace building, the academic and university libraries can do a lot as well through their services and programmes to their users.

Table 1. Provision of special programmes towards conflict resolution and peace awareness.

Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Organizing multicultural promotion gatherings	-	20	20
Organizing workshops	-	20	20
Organizing conferences	-	20	20
Library week	2	18	20
Seminars or talk shows	2	18	20
Attend programmes organized by NLA	10	10	20

The problem they said is mainly lack of established policy on issues like this.

DISCUSSION

Section 1: Research question on the availability of library services for conflict resolution and peace building such as dissemination of information on the culture, on conflict resolution, security issues and peace.

The results of the interview used here showed that all the libraries studied had reasonable number of book collection on culture but few materials which are mainly local newspapers and magazines contain written articles on conflict resolution and peace. The academic libraries however have more recent materials than the public libraries studied. Also, their responses showed that there are no special provisions made for the dissemination of such information except for the users to come into the library to read materials like newspapers treating issues on conflicts. No provision is made for networked television services (like CNN) to show conflict situations. On the issue of internet services provision, the 2 university libraries – Ebonyi State University library (EBSUL) and Nnadi Azikiwe University library (NAU) have Internet and online services while the public libraries Ebonyi state Library Board (ESLB) and their 5 branches had no functional Internet services. Adewuyi (2009) advocated that the 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.

On the use of display on topical issues to help in conflict resolution and peace awareness

Responses here showed that only the headquarters of these libraries and very few (zonal) branches of the public libraries used to display on their display boards in public sections of the libraries, showcasing conflicts in different areas, terrorism and issues towards their

resolution and peace. It was observed that most of their displays came from newspaper articles. The librarians were obviously not well sensitized and informed about societal affairs like conflicts, their resolutions and peace building and most importantly what they can do to help.

Research question 2 – Is there any provision of special programmes mapped out towards conflict resolution and peace awareness?

Results from Table 1 showed that none of the libraries made such provisions like organizing multicultural promotion gatherings, organizing workshops and conferences, while only two of the libraries (which were academic libraries) organized library week, seminars or talk shows where many societal issues are deliberated on including conflict resolution, peace and other related issues. Up to ten (10) of the librarians attend programmes like conferences organized by Nigerian Library Association (NLA), the parent body that holds all librarians from all the different libraries in Nigeria.

Research question 3 – The different media used by these libraries to create awareness about conflict resolution and peace

Findings in Table 2 showed that most of these main and branch libraries had little or no interest in issues concerning conflict resolution and peace awareness. Both the public and academic libraries indicated that they do not make use of media like hand bills and radio interviews or conversation in creating awareness. 2 libraries (the academic libraries) made use of radio and/or television announcements to create awareness on issues like cultism and conflicts, while only about 3 public libraries indicated liaison with community leaders, NGOs, churches.

Research question 4 – On problems hindering effective services towards conflict resolution and peace

According to Table 3, the 3 main public libraries and their

Table 2. Media used by these libraries to create awareness about conflict resolution and peace.

Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Use of handbills	0	20	20
Radio interviews/conversations	0	20	20
Radio and/or television announcements (sensitization)	2	18	20
Liaising with community leaders, NGOs and churches	3	17	20

Table 3. Problems hindering effective services towards conflict resolution and peace.

Items	Response			
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Funding	18	0	2	20
Poor infrastructure; for example, no functional internet	18	2	0	20
Inadequate resources and facilities	18	2	0	20
Poor manpower/human resources	15	2	3	20
Lack of interest in social issues amongst library staff	8	5	7	20
Lack of established policy on special information services like conflict resolution	20	0	0	20

Table 4. Strategies for enhancing library services and programmes for conflict resolution and peace.

Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Improved funding	20	0	20
Establishment of policy on services for such social issues	20	0	20
Provision of adequate infrastructure	20	0	20
Sensitizing the members of the community on security, peace and the ills of conflict	20	0	20

15 branches— ESLB, ENSLB, and ASLB had similar problems. Problem of poor funding of the libraries was indicated by 18 libraries (mainly the public libraries), and this was a general problem to all the public libraries in Nigeria. A good number of them indicated that they had the interest in penetrating the rural communities, promoting multicultural activities for peaceful coexistence but lacked the resources both financial, material and human resources to achieve these. They lacked technological infrastructure like functional Internet and other related electronic facilities needed for the dissemination of information required to create awareness. Only 2 libraries (just the academic libraries –NAU and EBSU libraries) had little problem with funding but indicated that their major problematic factor was lack of interest and awareness on conflict resolution and peace by the librarians themselves. Most of the librarians have not realized the need for the library to extend their services towards addressing contemporary social issues like conflict resolution and peace education. Responses from all the 20 libraries also showed that lack of established

library policy on special information services for conflict resolution, peace building, security and other related issues is another problem.

Research question 5 – What are the strategies for enhancing library services and programmes for conflict resolution and peace

Responses from the public libraries – ESLB, ENSLB, and ASLB and their branch libraries showed that they need improved funding from the establishing authorities (state governments) to be able to provide necessary services and special programmes for conflict resolution (Table 4). Even the academic libraries indicated that the more adequate that special funds are made available, the higher the chances of addressing such social issues like conflict resolution and peace building. With adequate funding, they can acquire the required resources and facilities to carry on such information services and programmes. Establishment of policy framework on the

Table 4. Strategies for enhancing library services and programmes for conflict resolution and peace.

Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Improved funding	20	0	20
Establishment of policy on services for such social issues	20	0	20
Provision of adequate infrastructure	20	0	20
Sensitizing the members of the community on security, peace and the ills of conflict	20	0	20

provision of services for such social issues like conflict resolution was enumerated by all the 20 libraries (100%) as very important strategy. Provision of the required technological infrastructure in adequate quantity was also enumerated by the 20 libraries (100%). Responses also showed that sensitizing the members of the community and educating them on the implications of conflicts and for effective participation in conflict resolution and peace building will help a great deal. NAU and EBSU libraries indicated that there is need to inculcate skills and awareness in the librarians for their active participation in services and programmes for conflict resolution and peace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It has been established that libraries have strategic roles to play in peace building in the society through their services. To enable libraries to play their supposed role in promoting peace and conflict prevention and resolution campaigns, all hands should be on deck – the librarians, stakeholders and friends of libraries and the government. Since poor funding has been a major problem to most libraries especially public libraries in Nigeria that hinders their meeting up with a lot of services that they are supposed to render, the government who has the main responsibility of funding these libraries should include library funds as part of the budgetary allocations and trust funds.

Also, considering the findings of the study, there is need to provide special funds for training and sensitizing the librarians themselves to know all that the library can do in the area of conflict resolution and peace building. They need to discover their own positions before they can carry others along. Library services should be seen as the bedrock of education system that can penetrate even to the semi and non-literates in the society through other enlightenment programmes. The librarians should also be sensitized on the need to promote the extension of library services to strategic issues in the community. In their own studies, Echezona (2001) and Bhatti (2010) in Nigeria and Pakistan respectively amongst others recommended adequate funding for the libraries to be able to cope with providing sound information services and programmes both within and outside the library. The libraries especially the public and academic libraries

should incorporate programmes and outreach services geared towards enlightening their users and members of the community on peace building, peaceful coexistence and conflict prevention and resolution. The libraries when given the needed support should acquire the necessary facilities like information and communication technological facilities that will facilitate the provision of such programmes in a way that will draw even the non-literates to them. but in the Nigerian context, this awareness must be created by library managements and other stakeholders by providing adequate training for the librarians of their individual libraries who together make up the Library Association Sponsoring workshops, conferences and seminars within and outside the library all require sufficient funding. When the awareness and training are carried up to the national level, libraries will definitely play more strategic roles in societal issues like conflict resolution and peace building.

For instance, in the Ezza – Ezillo area where there has been lingering conflict, in spite of the “education for all” initiative that has been introduced and propagated by the Ebonyi State government for a good number of years now, most of the youths and adults of these communities are not well educated. They lack information and enlightenment on various contemporary issues and are dominated by farm settlers. The government in a bid to resolve the crisis should map out special educational programmes like adult and continuous education programmes coupled with sound library and information services.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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