COMMUNICATION FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF OIL SPILLAGE CONFLICTS IN BAYELSA STATE

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DISSERTAION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION.

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS,

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AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA

MARCH, 2017

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis entitled "Communication for the Effective management of Oil Spillage in Bayelsa State" has been written by me in the Centre of Excellence on Development Communication, Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmad Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of Professor Steve Abah and Professor Emmy Idegu. The information derived from the sources of this study has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any university.

NWABUEZE, EKWEM ---------- ----------

Signature **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "Communication for the Effective management of Oil Spillage in Bayelsa State" by **NWABUEZE EKWEM** meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts (Development Communication), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty for giving me the Grace to complete it.

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With the sincere delight of a man who has welcomed and accepted God to live his live in his life, I give thanks to God for showing me mercy in my years of ignorance. It is not by my strength that I was able to complete this laborious research but the deep input and sagacity of my teachers were relevant to the completion of this work. It digs deep into my heart to say 'Thank you' for the very impactful process they took me through during the course work and practical sessions of completing this study. I must document my boundless gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Steve Abah, Professor Emmy Idegu and Dr. Lagwampa for their deep-seated contribution and dedications to making this work a success. Through their efforts, I have discovered that real education lies in the PROCESS of writing a research than its completion. Thank you, Sirs.

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Abstract

Oil spillages and gas flaring occurring as a result of excessive exploration of crude oil and gas by multinational corporations in hosting communities in Bayelsa and other Niger Delta States have led to environmental damages which have affected both the health and means to livelihood of members of hosting communities. These spillages have resulted into several conflicts between the indigenes of Bayelsa State and multinationals as most of the efforts which have been put have not been able to address successfully the totality of the problems because of the communication model adapted to tackling these issues. Against this backdrop, the imperative is to interrogate the communication approaches adopted in addressing conflict resolution and management in Bayelsa State in particular and Niger Delta in general. The Environment Communication Theory was used as the theoretical framework for this research. The study made use of the quantitative survey research by purposively using a population of one hundred and fourteen (114) respondents systematically administered copies of the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. From the results of the data gathered and analysed so far, it was discovered that the use of communication process such advocacy visits, and town hall meetings as a conflict communication approach could be strengthened with the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders to discuss the cause, effect and ways of resolving conflict in the areas. Based on this finding, the research concludes that conventional methods of dealing with contradictions in the Niger Delta cannot be said to have broker peace in the region hence the adoption of the alternative participatory communication perspectives which allows for the people's involvement in negotiations, dialogues and the charting of sustainable conflict resolution process and development interventions by the oil and gas companies and the Federal Government. Therefore, it recommended that a wide raging development interventions aimed at the remediation's of degraded and polluted environments, provisions of public infrastructures and youth employments by the Federal, State and Multinational oil and gas companies would bring about sustainable armistice in the Niger Delta Region.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The Niger Delta Region, henceforth to be referred to as NDR, is one of the most talked about regions in the world next to the Middle East" (Bassey 2011:5). The region is believed to be one of the most blessed regions in the world both in human and natural resources. Suffice to say that the unfavourable manner in which these resources have been harnessed over time has been the bane of the region's predicament. This has exposed the people of the region to divergent numbers of health and socio-economic hazards which for a long time has made the region volatile and slippery. Youth restiveness, kidnapping, oil bunkering and intercommunity-cum-multinational conflicts between youths and community leaders, youths and government agencies, youths and multinational companies are the major areas of conflict and stakeholders in the region in general. Efforts by government and multinational companies (operating in the area) to address the scenario of wanton destruction of lives and property as well as impingement on the exploration process of crude oil, refining and distribution of petroleum products have not yielded the desired result.

The issuance of press statement by multinational corporations, donors and government agencies, stating the number of developmental project to host communities, (where oil minerals are being tapped) could drive home the disposition that these corporations and agencies are doing a lot to address development challenges and needs of the region, however, what is on ground is indeed a far-cry from what is actually needed to ameliorate the plight of the people. Considering the amount of deprivation and damage the activities of the multinational corporations which are into crude oil exploration has caused the people in the region several levels of environmental degradation which has led to low agricultural yield,

destruction of aquatic life, home displacement and migration. Though the extant multinational companies operating in the area has done enough to manage the environment, their efforts have not been transformed into improving the environment or the lives the people (Nkoro 2005).

Another factor that many observers have noted that may have fuelled the tension in the region is the failure of the multinational corporations to meet with their promises to the host communities. Some community representatives – community heads and youth leaders – who negotiate deals with the companies on behalf of their respective communities, are altruistic. They are more interested in selfish gains than to the common good of their respective communities (Nkoro 2005). Presently, some of the problems confronting the various communities in the NDR include: environmental degradation, poor health facilities, inadequate, and in some cases lack of transportation facilities, land and poor housing, polluted soil as a result of crude oil exploitation, insecurity, poor educational facilities, epileptic electricity supply where it exists, lack of portable drinkable water, lack of access to credit facilities, unemployment and corrupt practices.

The amount of abandoned buildings in most of the rural communities in the region today is a testament that people are moving from the rural communities to urban centres for better living. This is due to government policies that are urban biased in terms of provision of social amenities. In addition to these, the people are faced with declining food crop yields from their farms, lack of accessible roads and facilities for the transportation of farm produce. This trend is also observed to be worsening the situation in the few urban centres where there is little or no economic fortune.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Niger-Delta according to Osah (2013) is made up of States covered by delta basins of the Niger River in Nigeria. It is a region sometimes called the *Oil Rivers* because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The area was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893, when it was expanded and became the Niger Coast Protectorate. The Niger Delta is located in Atlantic Coast of southern Nigeria where River Niger divides into numerous tributaries. It is the second largest delta in the world with a coastline spanning about 450 kilometres terminating at the Imo River entrance (Awosika, 1995). The region spans over 20,000 square kilometres and it has been described as the largest wetland in Africa and among the three largest in the world (CLO, 2002). About 2,370 square kilometres of the Niger Delta area consist of rivers, creeks and estuaries and while stagnant swamp covers about 8600 square kilometres. The delta, with mangrove swamps spanning about 1900 square kilometres has the largest mangrove swamps in Africa, (Awosika, 1995). The region consists of nine states in southern Nigeria and includes Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and River States.

The peoples of the Niger Delta are, like other Nigerians, highly diverse culturally. Historical differences in their political behaviour have been imposed by their peculiar riverine geography in which isolated settlements on the little available dry land, surrounded by mazes of an atomizing creeks, fostered small ancient city-states and kingdoms such as Bonny, Brass, Akassa, Kalahari, Okrika, Nembe, Ogoni, Opobo, Bassan, Andoni, Itsekiri and Urhobo, which were contemporaries to their much larger neighbouring Old Calabar, Arochukwu Trading political behaviour among the peoples of the Niger Delta, than among those Nigerians who were traditionally used to more centralized authority. Youth alienation, dissent and radicalism have bordered on open rebellion against unemployment, frustration and exclusion from the

flourishing petroleum economy of the delta. In their more confrontational attitude towards constituted authority, it is not unusual for the youths of the Niger Delta to dethrone and desecrate traditional authority whenever they suspect that their chiefs and kings have colluded with oil companies to deprive them of what they consider their legitimate benefits from petroleum.

Another backlash of youth unemployment and alienation in the Niger Delta is their atavistic recourse to organized resistance and tactics similar to that which their ancient kings employed in colonial days against the British. Just as King Jaja of Opobo (1821 - 1891) resisted British traders and missionaries, proclaimed the autonomy of Opobo, which he founded, and controlled the supply of palm oil to European merchants, through recourse to arms and African Traditional Religion, some youths in the Niger Delta have resorted to cultism in their quest for similar control of their natural resources. Ethnically, the people of the Niger Delta comprise those in Rivers and Bayelsa States (Kalahari, lkwerre, ljo, Okrika, lbani, Nembe, Ekpeye, Ogba, Engenni, Epie-Atissa); Akwalbom State (Ibibio, Anang, Oron); Delta State (Urhobo, lgbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, ljo); Ondo State (Yoruba, ljollaje); Edo State (Edo, Etsakos, Yoruba, lgbirra, Okpameri); Cross River (Efik, Ejagham, Bekwarra), and the lgbo in Abia and Imo States. These are the indigenous peoples of the oil fields of the Niger Delta. Besides, since the great-grandfathers of today's Niger Delta youths were oil merchants, there is a perceived need for continuity and participation or control in the oil business.

The Niger Delta with an estimated population of about 41.5 million people is famous in Africa due to its geographical location and remarkable oil revenue, which accounts for about 96 percent of Nigeria’s foreign earning (Agbu, 2005; Jike, 2005). The region has gained international limelight since the 15th century following the arrival of Portuguese explorers in its kingdoms, such as Bonny, Warri, and Benin in Rivers, Delta, and Edo States, respectively.

Community interaction with the explorers showed that collective action and social movements have been established in the region. The Niger Delta people were vocal in the resistance against colonialism and during the struggle for Nigeria's independence. For instance, in the affairs of the Igbo-led Eastern Region, the Ijaws challenged their marginalization and demanded for infrastructure, including roads, water, and electricity, schools, and health institutions.

Despite several demands, however, inadequate infrastructure remains a major problem in the Niger Delta. For example, the average number of health facilities and primary health centres in the Niger Delta were 296 and 271, respectively, which were far lower than the national averages of 395 and 370. Also while the average number of public primary school in the region was 956, that of the average national figure was 1,371 (National Bureau of Statistics-NBS, 2006). The logic of recurrent agitations, violence and militia movements derives from the lingering deprivation of people in the region. Major Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw youth from Kaiama, led the foremost Niger Delta attempt to secede from Nigeria in 1966 (Omoweh, 2003; Akinwumi, 2004). The secession movement was driven by renewed interests in the negotiation for the development of Nigeria Delta as provided for in various documents. During various constitutional conferences prior to 1960 when Britain officially granted Nigeria political independence, the Niger Delta was recognized as an area for special development.

The 1960 Independence and 1963 Republican Constitution provided a special right for areas with oil/gas resources and spelt out that 50% of the royalty derived from oil/gas exploration should be paid to oil/gas producing areas. Subsequently, Nigerian governments modified the constitutional provisions, discontinued royalty payments, and adopted the derivation principle for revenue allocation to oil/gas producing areas (Rilwan, 2014). The 50%

derivation principle adopted after the Nigerian civil war (1967-70) was dropped to 1.5%, 3%, until it was increased to its current rate of 13% after much debate (Dafinone, 2007). The motion for increasing the current rate of revenue allocation to the Niger Delta was a major factor that led to the abrogation of the Nigerian National Conference (Confab) of 2005. The Confab-like existing state actions failed to address the fundamental issues of nation building in Nigeria where different development agencies, such as the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) in 1961, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992, and the NDDC in 2000 have been established.

The OMPADEC was expected to mediate between the oil companies and the communities, as well as receive and administer the monthly allocation from the federation account in accordance with confirmed oil–production ratio in each state of the Niger Delta (Osuntawa and Nwilo 2005; Okonta, 2006; Sanya, 2006). The OMPADEC performed unsatisfactorily as it only provided electricity and pipe- borne water to some villages, while most of its funds were misappropriated. A major limitation of OMPADEC was corruption, which was so entrenched that in quick succession its first two sole administrators, Albert K. Horsfall and Professor Eric Opia, were removed.

The poor performance of OMPADEC could be attributed to insufficient regulatory mechanisms to monitor its activities. In the first three years of its establishment, OMPADEC commenced projects worth $500 million, but the bulk of the money was said to have been paid to contractors whose addresses could not be traced (Sanya, 2006). Other major problems that confronted the OMPADEC included the inadequate funds and its eventual politicization. The federal government reportedly withheld about N41 billion due to the commission. Politically, the federal government reorganized the commission three times and replaced its Director

(Opia from Delta State) with an Assistant Inspector General of Police, AlhajiBukar Ali (Omotola, 2007). The failure of the OMPADEC to significantly contribute towards the development of the Niger Delta served as motivation in the search for alternative institutional measures resulting in the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission-NNDC.

Similarly, some Niger Delta States established different development agencies such, as River Basin Development Authorities, Ondo State Oil-Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC), and Delta State Oil-Producing Development Commission (DESOPADEC). Some Nigerian governments provided substantial financial resources for various development agencies to tackle underdevelopment in the Niger Delta (Frynas, 2001; Agbu, 2005) but many of the agencies became moribund and socio-economic situations in the Niger Delta remain deplorable. The state of the Niger Delta infrastructure (roads, pipe-borne water, and health facilities) remains poor (Agbu, 2005; Jike, 2005). This situation depicts flaws in extant responses towards the development of the Niger Delta and provides justification for the rising spate of agitations for resource control.

The famous Ogoni uprising, spearheaded by Ken Saro- Wiwa's Movement for the Survival of Ogoni (MOSOP) people remains legendary. Agitations have become popular strategies in negotiating for state social welfare in the Niger Delta. Following the recommendations of key leaders from the Niger Delta, the former Nigerian President (Chief Olusegun Obasanjo) presented a Bill to the National Assembly for the establishment of NDDC to ensure peace and stability. The NDDC commenced operations from the offices of the defunct OMPADEC and launched a new master plan for the development of the Niger Delta. The master plan has been applauded yet it has not been achieved due to the mundane approaches of the NDDC. The NDDC attracts funds from various sources, such as the Federal Government account, grants-in-aid from international agencies and statutory contributions

from MOC and the Niger Delta states. However, some state governments and MOC have been reluctant to contribute towards meeting the level of funding needed for NDDC projects.

Though the NDDC had mapped out development projects and constructed new roads to remote communities, it has not been able to transform the region. Furthermore, the continuing uneven distribution of development interventions and projects, high headed of multinational corporations, the decision of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari to end the amnesty programme granted the militants in the region by Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as well as military operations in the area has led to new wave of militancy by Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) splinter groups. These splinter groups are Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force; the Niger Delta Liberation Front; Niger Delta Avengers; Biafra Avengers; Red Egbesu Water Lions; Asawana Deadly Force of the Niger Delta, the Adaka Boro Marine Commandos; the Utorogon Liberation Movement; Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force; and the Joint Revolutionary Council of the Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force. Also, the Red Scorpion; the Ultimate Warriors of the Niger Delta; the Niger Delta Red Squad; Niger Delta Vigilante; the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate; the Ijaw/Oduduwa Militant Movement (in Ogun and Lagos States) (Mayah, 2016)

A Brief History of Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State was created on October 1, 1996 out of the old Rivers State. The name, Bayelsa, is an acronym of three former Local Government areas – Brass,Yenagoa and Sagbama in the then Rivers State, which had earlier on comprised the entire area now constituting Bayelsa State. The then Brass LGA is what makes up the present Nembe, Brass and Ogbia Local Government Areas; the then Yenagoa LGA consist of the present Yenagoa, Kolokuma/Opokuma and Southern Ijaw Local Government Areas and the then Sagbama LGA

is what makes up the present Sagbama and Ekeremor Local Government Areas (Bayelsa State Government, 2016).

The tradition in the old Rivers State, which is still the norm in Bayelsa State now, is the use of acronyms for local government areas. People referred to Brass Local Government Area as BALGA, for short; Yenagoa was simply YELGA, while Sagbama was SALGA. Since personalities from BALGA, YELGA, and SALGA made up the State Creation Movement prior to the 1996 exercise, the proposed name agreed upon was BAYELSA.

According to Clever (2009), Bayelsa State is geographically located within Latitude 04o 15' North, 05 o 23' South and longitude 05 o 22' West and 06 o 45' East. It shares boundaries with Delta State on the North, Rivers State on the East and the Atlantic Ocean on the West and South. Bayelsa State is a picturesque tropical rain forest, with an area of about 21,110 square kilometres. More than three quarters of this area is covered by water, with a moderately low land stretching from Ekeremor to Nembe. The area lies almost entirely below sea level with a maze of meandering creeks and mangrove swamps. The network of several creeks and rivers in the South, all flow into the Atlantic Ocean via the major rivers such as San Bartholomew, Brass, Nun, Ramos, Santa Barbara, St. Nicholas, Sangana, Fishtown, Ikebiri Creek, Middleton, Digatoro Creek, Pennington and Dobo. The vegetation here is characterized by the mangrove forest. In the North, it has a thick forest with arable lands for cultivation of various food and cash crops ((Bayelsa State Government, 2016).

There are four main languages in Bayelsa State, which are Izon, Nembe, Ogbia and Epie-Atissa. The predominant religions in the State are Christianity and Traditional worship. Bayelsa State has 24 first class traditional rulers (and many second and third class traditional rulers) recognized by the State Government. The major occupations in the State are fishing, farming, palm oil milling, lumbering, palm wine tapping, and local gin making, trading,

carving and weaving. Bayelsa State is a major oil and gas producing state and it contributes over 30% of Nigeria's oil production. These are hundreds of oil wells and flow stations across the state. Oloibiri in Ogbia Local Government Area of the state is where oil was first struck in Nigeria in commercial quantities in 1956.

Gas production activities are currently being intensified in the State. The LNG Gas Supply Plant that supplies 53% of the gas feedstock to the LNG plant in Bonny is located in Oluasiri in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. There is a proposed network of associated gas gathering pipelines from the Nembe Creek oilfields to the LNG plant. The major oil exploration and production companies operating in the State are Shell, Agip and ChevronTexaco. The Kolo Creek Gas Turbine Project owned by the Bayelsa State Government supplies electricity to Yenagoa, the State Capital, and surrounding towns and villages. In addition to oil and gas, the State has large reserves of clay, sand and gravel's of importance to the industrial sector. With all these resources', the state is faced with environmental problems (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2014).

The State has contributed immensely to the development of the Country by virtue of the mineral resources tapped from the State by the companies based on licenses granted by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The State has very large deposits of crude oil and natural gas, amongst others. It is worthy of note that crude oil was first produced in commercial quantities in Nigeria at Oloibiri in the present day Bayelsa State almost sixty years ago. Crude oil and gas are being exploited in several other locations in Bayelsa State for several decades now. The major Oil Companies operating in Bayelsa State are The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited, Chevron/Texaco Nigeria Limited and Con Oil Nigeria Limited (Wodu, 2014).

These Companies have their operational facilities dotted all over Bayelsa State from where they drill crude oil and gas. But quite regrettably none of these multinational oil companies has operational offices in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Rather they have their operational offices in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri and in other States of the Country. It is from these locations that their operations are co – ordinated and managed. Management decisions, employments and contracts are made from these operational offices. In these locations, they have very large state of the art modern office and residential complexes. Some of these estates are comparable to those available in the developed world, if not better. Some of these structures are skyscrapers and some of these estates are built on tens of hectares of land. Several thousands of persons are employed in these operational offices outside Bayelsa State (Wodu, 2014).

Several other big multi – national and indigenous oil industry service Companies are also located where the operational offices of the Oil Companies are located. This is because they must relate with these oil companies in their operational offices where the managers and Executives are, in order to secure businesses, which are dependent on the oil companies. These service companies in turn have big operational offices in these locations with several thousands of employees and residential and office premises. The plight of the people of Bayelsa State has been aggravated by the fact that it is the State and its people that bear the brunt of the oil and gas operations in the Country due to the consistent degradation of the environment by incessant crude oil spillages across the State. Our environment is in a grave state of devastation and despoliation (Wodu, 2014). The Companies do not carry out appropriate remediation of the degraded environment and neither is adequate compensation paid for the damage occasioned by the frequent spillages. The foregoing situation legally

amounts to discrimination against the people of Bayelsa State, contrary to the provisions of Section 42(1) of the Constitution (Wodu, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Since the discovery of crude oil in the 1952/53 in Nigeria, the NDR, more than any other region, has affected the socio-cultural and economic development of the region. The growth of the country's oil industry, combined with a population explosion and a lack of enforcement of environmental regulations, has led to substantial damage to NDR's environment. These damages have found expression in oil-spillages, conflicts, kidnapping, intercommunity violence, bunkering and many immodest activities which have affected both the human and environmental mind of the NDR. Worse, the identity of the NDR has been formed by the activities of crude oil exploration and extractive industries rather than the innate cultural forms of the people. One of the salient problems of the region is the fact that their existences are controlled by the activities multinational extractive companies which have emerged to be the new god. Nonetheless, conflicts in Bayelsa State did not arise directly as a result of oil spillage as many scholars believed. The poor responses of the extractive industries to oil spillage constitute the major problems.

Crises in Bayelsa state occur when oil spillages are poorly managed and the means of livelihood of the host communities are destroyed. In most of the cases, conflicts are fuelled, not because of the spillage itself but because of the poor communication strategy employed by both the government agencies and extractive industries. Gas flaring, poor health facilities, environmental degradation, mistrust between communities hosting extractive industries and ecological annihilation are some of the seen problems facing communities in Bayelsa State. However, these are only on the facade. The root problem lies on the inability of both

government agencies and extractive industries to agglutinate the needs of host communities into their communication plan. The needs of communities are usually a matter of assumptions, guesses or a-one-man speakabiltiy for all rather than a participatory sampling of the needs of the people. Efforts such as schools, pipe borne water, monetary settlements, roads, have been put in place to reduce conflicts in the state yet the conditions of the peoples have not been improved. Thus, poor communication strategy or protracted communication constitutes the major problem facing the communities in Bayelsa State.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to appraise the current strategies used by the stakeholders in the Niger Delta conflicts and suggest an alternative approach to managing the Niger-Delta conflict.

The study objectives seek to:

1. Identify the communication strategies use by the government and the multinational companies in solving the Niger Delta crises especially in Bayelsa State.
2. Find out the effectiveness of the communication strategies used Suggest an alternative communication strategy in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State.
3. Compare the current strategies being used with the new one been suggested.
4. Suggest alternative communication strategy in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the research objective, the following research questions were drawn to guide the study.

1. What are the communication strategies used in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State?
2. Are the communication strategies effective in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State?
3. Are the people benefiting from of communication strategies in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State?
4. What other communication approach could be used in resolving the Niger Delta conflict especially in Bayelsa State?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study would suggest an approach that will be beneficial to all the stakeholders involved in the Niger Delta conflict, arising from oil spillage and other environmental hazards. The study will also show the need for government, the multinational oil and gas companies to embrace development communication strategies, in resolving conflicts. The findings from this study will assist government, multinational companies, organisations, communities, corporate bodies and individuals in resolving conflicts. The research intends to contribute to the large narratives or conversation about the NDR and more so from a communication perspective. The work will also serve as a reference for other researchers on similar topic.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to appraising the use of the communication strategies adopted and used in addressing the lingering conflict in the Niger Delta. The study was further limited to Bayelsa State out of the seven states that make up the Niger Delta namely Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and River State. The study was based on the theoretical

framework of Environmental communication. The research was carried out using the quantitative with the objectives of assessing the communication strategies used in resolving the Niger Delta conflict as well as its effectiveness. The outcome of the assessment would provide the research with the opportunity to advance other alternative conflict resolution communication approaches that would bring about sustainable armistice, growth and development of the state in particular and the region in general.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Information is an indispensable factor for the development of any society. Information can make or mar a person's life depending on the source by which the information is coming. In librarianship, adequate provision is been made for the availability of relevant information and how they can be accessed and used by the users to solve their personal life activities. Information is defined as a symbol that conveys meaning to the intended audience for decision making. It is the key to innovations and self-sustaining development, it is also a driving force for the promotion of all developmental efforts at all levels of human endeavour, be it economic, social, political, religious, cultural etc. information needs to be disseminated to the academic community.

The public need to be informed on the rules and regulations of the academic community, development effort of the institution towards their achievement in the institution, information resources available for the pursuit of their academic work, facilities on ground for their research work, and the regular update of economic situation in the institution. Without proper information dissemination to this group of people in the community, they may turn to be hostile to the community which invariably leads to conflict. According to Jude-Iwuoha, Umebali and Okoro, (2014), the absence of the right information or breach of communication between two parties have been found to be common in a conflict situation, and they further stressed that cases of misinformation, wrong information or missing information enhance disparity in opinions and social differences which may heighten conflicts. Free flow of information is a right of the people which enable them to participate effectively in the process of economic, social and political activities in the society. 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 which acts as a tool for preparedness, prevention and mitigation of conflicts.

The everyday view of communication is quite different from the view of communication taken by communication scholars. In the business world, for example, a popular view is that communication is synonymous with information. Thus, the communication process is the flow of information from one person to another (Axley, 1984). Communication is viewed as simply one activity among many others, such as planning, controlling, and managing (Deetz, 1994:22). It is *what* we do in organizations. Communication, Conrad and Poole (1998:12) note, is "the process by which people interactively create, sustain, and manage meaning". As such, communication both reflects the world and simultaneously helps create it. Communication is not simply one more thing that happens in personal and professional life; it is the very means by which people produce their personal relationships and professional experiences-it is *how* people plan, control, manage, persuade, understand, lead, love, and so on. In this study, this researcher views Communication from the perspective of development. However, the best way to proceed into giving a befitting description for this study, it is important to have a cursory look into the existing models of communication.

2.1 Shannon's Model for Communication Process

Shannon's (1948) model of the communication process is, in important ways, the beginning of the modern methods of conceiving communication. It provided, for the first time, a general model of the communication process that could be treated as the common ground of such diverse disciplines as journalism, rhetoric, linguistics, speech and hearing sciences. Part

of its success is due to its structuralist reduction of communication to a set of basic constituents that not only explain how communication happens, but why communication sometimes fails. Good timing played a role as well as radio and television struggled to assert themselves on the listening and viewership of the world's population. The struggle between the two led many thinkers to see communication as divergent. However, with the emergence of Shannon, it was time to create the field of communication as a unified discipline, and Shannon's model was as good an excuse as any. It remains one of the first things most students learn about communication when they take an introductory communication class. Indeed, it is one of only a handful of theoretical statements about the communication process that can be found in introductory textbooks in both mass communication and interpersonal communication. The diagram below explicates Shannon's model.

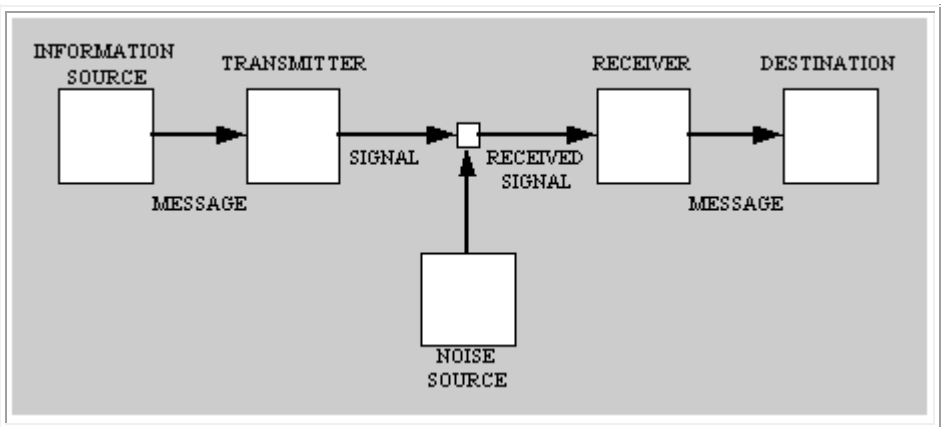


Figure 1: Shannon's (1948) Model of the communication process.

Shannon's model, as shown in Figure 1, breaks the process of communication down into eight discrete components:

1. An information **source**. Presumably a person who creates a message.
2. The **message**, which is both sent by the information source and received by the destination.

3. A **transmitter**. For Shannon's immediate purpose, a telephone instrument that captures an audio signal, converts it into an electronic signal, and amplifies it for transmission through the telephone network. Transmission is readily generalized within Shannon's information theory to encompass a wide range of transmitters. The simplest transmission system that associated with face-to-face communication has at least two layers of transmission. The first, the mouth (sound) and body (gesture) create and modulate a signal. The second layer, which might also be described as a channel, is built of the air (sound) and light (gesture) that enable the transmission of those signals from one person to another. A television broadcast would obviously include many more layers, with the addition of cameras and microphones, editing and filtering systems, a national signal distribution network (often satellite), and a local radio wave broadcast antenna.
4. The **signal**, which flows through a channel. There may be multiple parallel signals, as is the case in face-to-face interaction where sound and gesture involve different signal systems that depend on different channels and modes of transmission. There may be multiple serial signals, with sound and/or gesture turned into electronic signals, radio waves, or words and pictures in a book.
5. A carrier or **channel**, which is represented by the small unlabeled box in the middle of the model. The most commonly used channels include air, light, electricity, radio waves, paper, and postal systems. Note that there may be multiple channels associated with the multiple layers of transmission, as described above.
6. **Noise**, in the form of secondary signals that obscure or confuse the signal carried. Given Shannon's focus on telephone transmission, carriers, and reception, it should not be surprising that noise is restricted to noise that obscures or obliterates some portion

of the signal within the channel. This is a fairly restrictive notion of noise, by current standards, and a somewhat misleading one. Today we have at least some media which are so noise free that compressed signals are constructed with an absolutely minimal amount information and little likelihood of signal loss. In the process, Shannon's solution to noise, redundancy, has been largely replaced by a minimally redundant solution: error detection and correction. Today we use noise more as a metaphor for problems associated with effective listening.

7. A **receiver**. In Shannon's conception, the receiving telephone instrument. In face to face communication a set of ears (sound) and eyes (gesture). In television, several layers of receiver, including an antenna and a television set.
8. A **destination**. Presumably a person who consumes and processes the message.

Like all models, this is a minimalist abstraction of the reality it attempts to reproduce. The reality of most communication systems is more complex. Most information sources (and destinations) act as both sources and destinations. Transmitters, receivers, channels, signals, and even messages are often layered both serially and in parallel such that there are multiple signals transmitted and received, even when they are converted into a common signal stream and a common channel. Many other elaborations can be readily described. It remains, however, that Shannon's model is a useful abstraction that identifies the most important components of communication and their general relationship to one another. That value is evident in its similarity to real world pictures of the designs of new communication systems, including Bell's original sketches of the telephone, as seen in Figure 2.

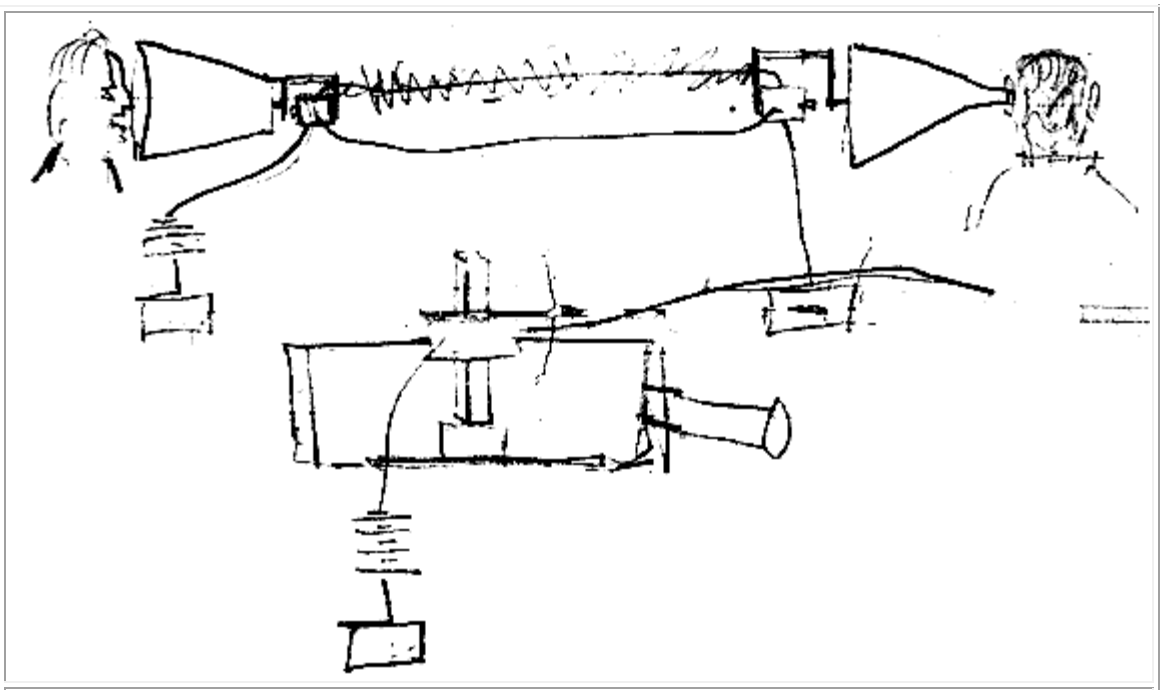


Figure 2: Bell's drawing of the workings of a telephone, from his original sketches (source: Bell Family Papers; Library of Congress; http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mcc/004/0001.jpg)

Bell's sketch visibly contains an information source and destination, transmitters and receivers, a channel, a signal, and an implied message (the information source is talking). What is new, in Shannon's model (aside from the concept of noise, which is only partially reproduced by Bell's batteries), is a formal vocabulary that is now generally used in describing such designs, a vocabulary that sets up both Shannon's mathematical theory of information and a large amount of subsequent communication theory. This correspondence between Bell's sketch and Shannon's model is rarely remarked.

Shannon's model is not really a model of communication, however. It is, instead, a model of the flow of information through a medium, and an incomplete and biased model that is far more applicable to the system it maps, a telephone or telegraph, than it is to most other media. It suggests, for instance, a "push" model in which sources of information can inflict it on destinations. In the real world of media, destinations are more typically self-selecting

"consumers" of information who have the ability to select the messages they are most interested in, turn off messages that do not interest them, focus on one message in preference to other in message rich environments, and can choose to simply not pay attention. Shannon's model depicts transmission from a transmitter to a receiver as the primary activity of a medium. In the real world of media, messages are frequently stored for elongated periods of time and/or modified in some way before they are accessed by the "destination". The model suggests that communication within a medium is frequently direct and unidirectional, but in the real world of media, communication is almost never unidirectional and is often indirect.

2.2 Derivative Model for Communication Process

This model focuses on the important role that intermediaries often play in the communication process. According to Katz (1957), the model sees communication as "the message sent, transmitted and received by people involved in a communication process". One of the shortcomings is addressed in Figure 2's intermediary model of communication (sometimes referred to as the gatekeeper model or two-step flow. Katz affirms that ideas often flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from these to the less active sections of the population.

Mass communication practice frequently specifically associate editors, who decide what stories, will fit in a newspaper or news broadcast, with this intermediary or gate-keeping role. This leads Abdulaziz (2014) to submit that "news is what the editors say news is". Even Foulger (2002a: n.pag) corroborates with this idea when he notes that "there are many intermediary roles associated with communication and many of these intermediaries have the ability to decide what messages others see, the context in which they are seen, and when they see them". He goes further to state that:

> All communication media include some variant of creator of messages. Common names associated with the creator role include writer, composer, artist, designer, journalist, and interactant. There are many media in which content is created by one person and performed by another (more on the performer role below). There are also a wide range of media in which the roles of creator, performer, and consumer are combined such that most or all participants take on all three roles. There are many possible variations in the combination of creator, performer, and consumer of messages, and different media will normally support some one of these combinations in preference to others. All performances entail some level of creation. All creations entail some level of performance. Hence while it may be desirable to separate creator characteristics from performer characteristics, it is also entirely reasonable to view them as a single cluster of related characteristics.

They often have the ability to change messages or to prevent them from reaching an audience (destination). In extreme variations, we refer to such gatekeepers as censors. Under the more normal conditions of mass media, in which publications choose some content in preference to other potential content based on an editorial policy, we refer to them as editors (most mass media), moderators (Internet discussion groups), reviewers (peer-reviewed publications), or aggregators (clipping services), among other titles . Delivery workers (a postal delivery worker, for instance) also act as intermediaries, and have the ability to act as gatekeepers, but are generally restricted from doing so as a matter of ethics and/or law.



Figure 3: Katz (1957) An Intermediary Model.

Variations of Figure 3's gatekeeper model are also used in teaching organizational communication, where gatekeepers, in the form of bridges and liaisons, have some ability to shape the organization through their selective sharing of information. These variations are generally more complex in depiction and often take the form of social network diagrams that

depict the interaction relationships of dozens of people. They network diagrams often presume, or at least allow, bi-directional arrows such that they are more consistent with the notion that communication is most often bidirectional.

The bi-directionality of communication is commonly addressed in interpersonal communication text with two elaborations of Shannon's model (which is often labelled as the action model of communication): the interactive model and the transitive model. The interactive model, a variant of which is shown below in Figure 4, elaborates Shannon's model with the cybernetic concept of feedback (Weiner, 1948, 1986). This model works without changing any other element of Shannon's model. The key concept associated with this elaboration is that destinations provide feedback on the messages they receive such that the information sources can adapt their messages, in real time.

This is an important elaboration, and as generally depicted, a radically oversimplified one. Feedback is a message (or a set of messages). The source of feedback is an information source. The consumer of feedback is a destination. Feedback is transmitted, received, and potentially disreputable via noise sources. None of this is visible in the typical depiction of the interactive model. This doesn't diminish the importance of feedback or the usefulness of elaborating Shannon's model to include it. People really do adapt their messages based on the feedback they receive. It is useful, however, to notice that the interactive model depicts feedback at a much higher level of abstraction than it does messages.

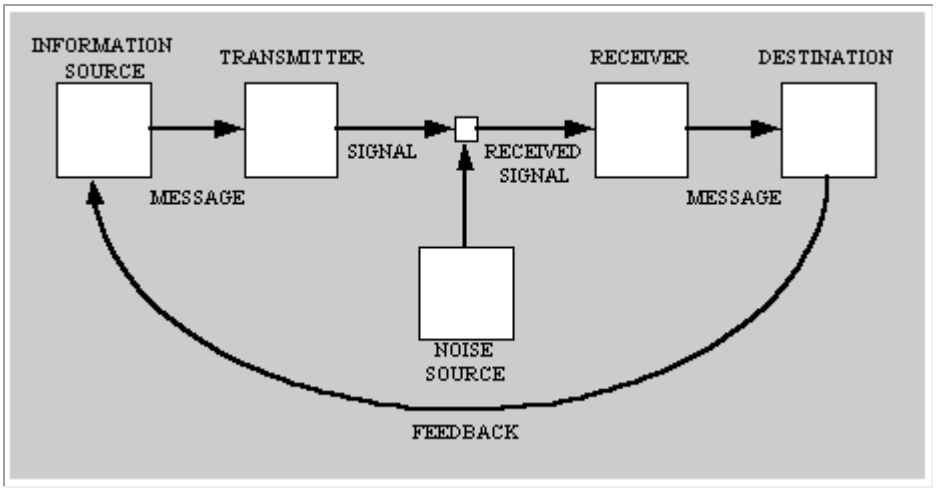


Figure 4: Weiner, (1986). An Interactive Model:

This difference in the level of abstraction is addressed in the transactional model of communication, a variant of which is shown below bin Figure 5. This model acknowledges neither creators nor consumers of messages, preferring to label the people associated with the model as communicators who both create and consume messages. The model presumes additional symmetries as well, with each participant creating messages that are received by the other communicator. This is, in many ways, an excellent model of the face-to-face interactive process which extends readily to any interactive medium that provides users with symmetrical interfaces for creation and consumption of messages, including notes, letters, C.B. Radio, electronic mail, and the radio. It is, however, a distinctly interpersonal model that implies equality between communicators that often doesn't exist, even in interpersonal contexts. The caller in most telephone conversations has the initial upper hand in setting the direction and tone of a telephone call than the receiver of the call.

According to Hopper (1992: 23), "message-extrinsic perspectives on relational communication, those treating communicative interaction as consequential to interpersonal relationship-states, cannot account for the details in the first few seconds of telephone calls."

This means that in face-to-face head-complement interactions, the boss (head) has considerably more freedom (in terms of message choice, media choice, ability to frame meaning, ability to set the rules of interaction) and power to allocate message bandwidth than does the employee (complement). The model certainly does not apply in mass media contexts.

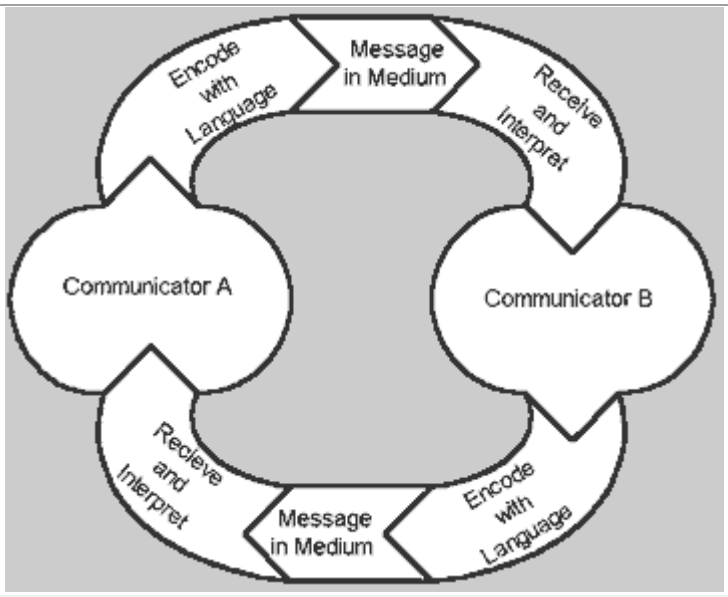


Figure 5: Hopper (1992). A Transactional Model:

Most Internet media grant everyone symmetrical creation and consumption interfaces. Anyone with Internet access can create a web site and participate as an equal partner in e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, computer conferences, collaborative composition sites, blogs, interactive games, MUDs, MOOs, and other media. It remains, however, that users have very different preferences in their message consumption and creation. Some people are very comfortable creating messages for others online. Others prefer to "lurk"; to freely browse the messages of others without adding anything of their own. Adding comments to a computer conference is rarely more difficult than sending an e-mail, but most Internet discussion groups have many more lurkers (consumers of messages that never post) than they have contributors

(people who both create and consume messages). Oddly, the lurkers sometimes feel more integrated with the community than the contributors do (Baym, 2000).

2.3 A New Model for Communication Process

The extant models of the communication process do not provide a reasonable basis for understanding the effect communication sharing can have on members of community. There are many myths that have emerged from the mechanical conception of communication. People are routinely taught that "receivers" of messages really "consume" messages. People usually have a rich menu of potential messages to choose from and they select the messages they want to hear in much the same way that diners select entrees from a restaurant menu. Scholars and students of Communication believe that most "noise" is generated within the listener and that people engage messages through "selective attention"; that one of the most important things people can do to improve communication is to learn how to listen; that mass media audiences have choices, and that need to be "literate" in our media choices, even in (and perhaps especially in) our choice of television messages. Yet all of these models suggest an "injection model" in which message reception is automatic.

The curriculum for Mass Communication spends a large portion of introductory courses teaching students about language, including written, verbal, and non-verbal languages yet language is all but ignored in these models (the use of the term in Figure 5 page 21 is not the usual practice in depictions of the transitive model). Mass communication departments spend large portions of their introductory courses teaching students about the importance of perception, attribution, and relationships to the interpretation of messages; of the importance of communication to the perceptions that others have of a group; the perceptions one has of oneself, and the creation and maintenance of the relationships people have with others. These

models say nothing about the role of perception and relationship to the way we interpret messages or our willingness to consume messages from different people.

Teachers spend large portions of introductory courses teaching students about the socially constructed aspects of languages, messages, and media use. Intercultural communication presumes both social construction and the presumption that people schooled in one set of conventions will almost certainly violate the expectations of people schooled in a different set of expectations. Discussions of the effects of media on culture presume that communication within the same medium may be very different in different cultures, but that the effects of the medium on various cultures will be more uniform. Existing general models provide little in the way of a platform from which these effects can be discussed.

When scholars use these models in teaching courses in both interpersonal and mass communication; with the exception of the Shannon model, they tend to use these models selectively in describing those media, and without any strong indication of where the medium begins or ends; without any indication of how media interrelate with languages, messages, or the people who create and consume messages. The ecological model of communication, shown in Figure 6 page 27, attempts to provide a platform on which these issues can be explored. It asserts that communication occurs in the intersection of four fundamental constructs: communication between people (creators and consumers) is mediated by messages which are created using language within media; consumed from media and interpreted using language.

This model is, in many ways, a more detailed elaboration of Lasswell's (1948) classic outline of the study of communication: “Who ... says what ... in which channel ... to whom ... with what effect”. In the ecological model, the “who” are the creators of messages, the “says what” are the messages, the “in which channel” is elaborated into languages (which are the

content of channels) and media (which channels are a component of), the "to whom" are the consumers of messages, and the effects are found in various relationships between the primitives, including relationships, perspectives, attributions, interpretations, and the continuing evolution of languages and media.

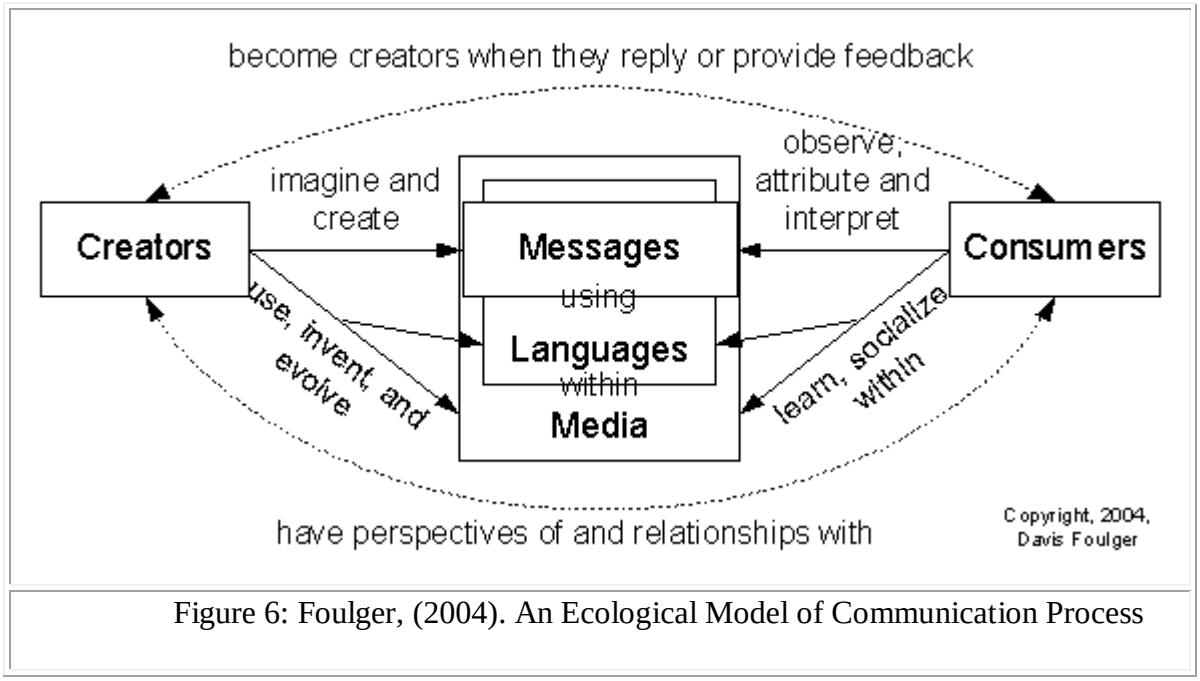


Figure 6: Foulger, (2004). An Ecological Model of Communication Process

A number of relationships are described in this model. The relationships are that:

1. Messages are created and consumed using language. Language occurs within the context of media. Messages are constructed and consumed within the context of media. The roles of consumer and creator are reflexive. People become creators when they reply or supply feedback to other people. Creators become consumers when they make use of feedback to adapt their messages to message consumers. People learn how to create messages through the act of consuming other people's messages.

2. The roles of consumer and creator are introspective. Creators of messages create messages within the context of their perspectives of and relationships with anticipated consumers of messages. Creators optimize their messages to their target audiences. Consumers of messages interpret those messages within the context of their perspectives of, and relationships with, creators of messages. Consumers make attributions of meaning based on their opinion of the message creator. People form these perspectives and relationships as a function of their communication.
3. The messages creators of messages construct are necessarily imperfect representations of the meaning they imagine. Messages are created within the expressive limitations of the medium selected and the meaning representation space provided by the language used. The message created is almost always a partial and imperfect representation of what the creator would like to say.
4. A consumer's interpretation of messages necessarily attributes meaning imperfectly. Consumers interpret messages within the limits of the languages used and the media those languages are used in. A consumer's interpretation of a message may be very different than what the creator of a message imagined.
5. People learn language by through the experience of encountering language being used within media. The languages they learn will almost always be the languages when communicating with people who already know and use those languages. That communication always occurs within a medium that enables those languages.
6. People learn media by using media. The media they learn will necessarily be the media used by the people they communicate with.
7. People invent and evolve languages. While some behaviour expressions (a baby's cry) occur naturally and some aspects of language structure may mirror the ways in which

the brain structures ideas, language does not occur naturally. People invent new language when there is no language that they can be socialized into. People evolve language when they need to communicate ideas that existing language is not sufficient to.

8. People invent and evolve media while some of the modalities and channels associated with communication are naturally occurring, the media we use to communicate are not.

A medium of communication is the product of a set of complex interactions between its primary constituents: messages, people (acting as creators of messages, consumers of messages, and in other roles), languages, and media. Three of these constituents are themselves complex systems and the subject of entire fields of study, including psychology, sociology, anthropology (all three of which study people), linguistics (language), media ecology (media), and communication (messages, language, and media). Even messages can be regarded as complex entities, but its complexities can be described entirely within the scope of languages, media, and the people who use them. This ecological model of communication is, in its most fundamental reading, a compact theory of messages and the systems that enable them. Messages are the central feature of the model and the most fundamental product of the interaction of people, language, and media. All these in several ways implicate development communication.

Development Communication prescribes several approaches to communicating sustainable development. This type of communication provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives with the aim of making the people active stakeholders in initiating their own development. Such information must be applied in some way as part of community development but it must also address basic needs which communities themselves identified. The outcome of this approach to development is to facilitate members of

communities to identify areas of needs and empowering them to provide sustainable solutions to the communities identified by members of communities.

Quebral (1975:87) describes development communication as "the art and science of human, communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country; the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic, growth that makes possible greater social equality and the fulfillment of the human potential". Yahaya (2008) goes further to affirm that the discipline of communication offers development process a number of inputs some of which are ways to survey a new environment especially by establishing consultative vehicles; ways of raising consciousness within communities on issues pertaining to a better life for all and something to aspire to; ways of promoting feedback. He goes further to note that:

> The contemporary society, especially in the developing world, has handful development challenges to tackle in its bid to create realistic and sustainable approaches that are integrated into development policies and practices of governance, inter-governmental relations, democratic ideals and human overall development. This therefore brings about imperativeness in research areas that are not only strategic to using development communication in simulating peoples' needs and policy development and implementation but also has calculated mechanisms in establishing parameters for policy impacts and sustainability.

Going further, Melkote and Steeves (2001), identify key elements to communication approach as firstly responsive; which means that it does not provide "useless' information - that which people did not want to know, but with central planners deemed as crucial. People understand their own needs better and through this approach communication become a tool in the planning and development process, not a mechanism to persuade communities once unpalatable decisions have been made.

Secondly, hinging on feedback; this means that it is not a one-way process but involves dialogue mechanisms about the information which was transferred. It is also fundamentally about consultative processes being managed at community level. Thirdly, innovation and

creativity; the message must not be dull and boring but show clearly how the information transmitted will make a difference in the life of the recipient - it must not instil doubt or disbelief, but trust and confidence (look for local adopters).

Development Communication workers should, however, balance creativity with an understanding of what communities would be prepared to accept and where consideration has been given to the norms and prevailing values of that community. Fourthly, independent validation, it is not about 'government speak'. This approach builds participatory mechanisms and functional networks involving NGOs, CBOs, and Traditional Leadership structures while also encouraging links with networks from across the country and indeed all over the world. These can either prove or disprove the validity of the information transmitted. It is about sustainability and continuity: it is not about dumping information in a community and never going back for months.

More so, it is about establishing common ground with communities who are to be the recipients of the information/message: it is not about the public servant who swoops in and out of a community in his or her GG like some 'phantom expert' to 'educate and uplift' communities. The standards, norms, values, habits of the community are paramount. It is about community participation, development programmes which plan for communities or supply information which planners feel communities need, fail to be relevant initiatives and more often than not fail to be sustainable.

A primary emphasis of this approach is to plan with communities, create structures which offer communities and developers equal power, and use communication methods which are fundamentally participatory in nature. This often requires that government planners, developers or community workers have to listen to the advice of communities and change the views they themselves hold. It is about access and visibility of government where government

is no longer a distant and unknown entity in community development experiences. This approach reverses the practice of communities having to travel long distances and at relatively great cost to access government Services and information. This is made worse when government is not clearly and properly identifiable and access is difficult because of inaccessible buildings, unfriendly and unprofessional staff etc. The development communication approach brings government employees face to face with communities so promoting accountability at local level. This is not possible when civil servants are remote and impersonal.

Furthermore, it is about the use of simple and relevant language where concepts are packaged in the experiences of communities, in their own language and where communities themselves have played a major role in the development of material for development communication programmes. Development communication has its origins in post-war international aid programs to countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa that were struggling with poverty, illiteracy, poor health and a lack of economic, political and social infrastructures. Development communication commonly refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the developing world. It is derived from theories of development and social change that identified the main problems of the post-war world in terms of a lack of development or progress equivalent to Western countries. The different strategies adopted by different international governments and organizations gave birth to development theories.

Development theories have their roots in mid-century optimism about the prospects that large parts of the post-colonial world could eventually “catch-up” with Western countries. After the last remains of European empires in Africa and Asia crumbled in the 1950s and

1960s, a dominant question in policy and academic quarters was how to address the abysmal disparities between the developed and underdeveloped worlds.

Development originally meant the process by which Third World societies could become more like Western developed societies as measured in terms of political system, economic growth, and educational levels" (Inkeles & Smith 1974). Development was synonymous with political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, high literacy rates, longer life expectancy, and the like. The implicit assumption was that there was one form of development as expressed in developed countries that underdeveloped societies needed to replicate. As a result, many development communication theories stipulated to address the process of development communication in communities. For this study we shall be looking at one that is more participatory.

Participatory theories considered necessary a redefinition of development communication. One set of definitions stated that it meant the systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations mainly at the grassroots. For others, development communication needed to be human- rather than media entered. This implied the abandonment of the persuasion bias that development communication had inherited from propaganda theories and the adoption of a different understanding of communication.

Agunga (1997) sees communication as "a means a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development rather than information transmission". Hence, communication is the articulation of social relations among people. This explicates that people should not be forced to adopt new practices no matter how beneficial they seem in the eyes of agencies and governments. Instead, people needed to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information. This understanding of communication was central

to the ideas developed by Brazilian educator Freire (1970) whose writings and experiences became an influential strand in participatory communication. Freire's work in north-eastern Brazil in the 1960s and early 1970s challenged dominant conceptions of development communication, particularly as applied to literacy training. He noted that for dialogic communication to happen, "someone or something has to articulate the process. This catalyst is typically a person, internal to the community or external, acting to facilitate the dialogue".

He argued that development programs had failed to educate small farmers because they were interested in persuading them about the benefits of adopting certain innovations. Development programs tried to domesticate foreign concepts, to feed information, to force local populations to accept Western ideas and practices without asking how such practices fit existing cultures. The underlying premise of such programs was an authoritarian conception of communication that stood against the essence of communication understood as community interaction and education.

Freire offered the concept of liberating education that conceived communication as dialogue and participation. The goal of communication should be conscientization, which Freire defined as free dialogue that prioritized cultural identity, trust and commitment. His approach has been called "dialogical pedagogy" which defined equity in distribution and active grassroots participation as central principles. Communication should provide a sense of ownership to participants through sharing and reconstructing experiences. It is through this process that community education lies.

As Freire affirm, education is not transmission of information from those "who have it" to those "who lack it," from the powerful to the powerless, but the creative discovery of the world. Freire's ideas ran against fundamental principles in the diffusion model, namely the sender-focus and behavioural bias that it inherited from persuasion models in the United

States. He diagnosed the problems in the Third World as problems of communication, not information as persuasion theories proposed. Solutions, then, needed to have an understanding of communication that was not limited to the application of Western ideas.

Freire also challenged the value judgment in early development theories that viewed agricultural and health practices in the Third World as backwards and obstacles to modernization. Freire's model and participatory models in general proposed a human cantered approach that valued the importance of interpersonal channels of communication in decision making processes at the community level. Okunna (1995) affirms that "studies in a variety of Third World rural settings found that marginal and illiterate groups preferred to communicate face-to-face rather than through mass media or other one-way sources of communication".

The recommendation was that development workers should rely more on interpersonal methods of communication rather than national media and technologies, and that they should act as facilitators of dialogue. Because media and technologies were perceived as foreign to local communities, they should be used to supplement instead of dominate interpersonal methods. The notion of "group media" drew from Freire to call the media that are means for small groups to develop a critical attitude towards the reality of self, the group, community and society through participation in group interaction. Hamelink (1990) notes that "group media has helped marginal groups to speak to one another, to articulate their thoughts and feelings in the process of community organizing".

Community-based forms of communication such as songs, theatre, radio, video, and other activities that required group intervention needed to be promoted. More than mechanisms to disseminate information, they could provide opportunities to identify common problems and solution, to reflect upon community issues, and mobilize resources. Community members, rather than "professionals", should be in charge of the decision and production

processes. This is precisely what "small" media offer: an opportunity for media access in countries where the mass media are usually controlled by governments and urban elites.

Several attempts have been made by theatre scholars to link theatre and development. Indeed the attempt to link theatre and the concept of development whether local, national or global, has a long history. Presently there exists an obsession among theatre and literary scholars to prove, outside the attempts by great philosophers like Aristotle and Plato pupil, that theatre, whether in the literary or performative form has a contribution to make to the development of the society. Obafemi (2003) avers that theatre and development has a twin existence. He states that:

> ...all the theatres which we today categories as literary theatre but which address urgently, consciously and topically from a materialist perspective our social, historical and material conditions in Africa are popular-based. We may wish to examine their dramaturgy, their language, their aesthetic, and propose ways of making them more people-oriented and more reachable to the popular masses. We may examine ways of making this theatre provide the majority of marginalized people of Africa with the creative and theatrical means of expressing their hegemony.

He observes that like development, theatre 'derives from source people, the community, playing roles and finding expressions and solutions to life threatening problems'. It is for that reason that Obafemi contends that those in search of the link should take a more cursory view of Shakespeare's famous characterization of the world as a stage. But one of the most referenced (earliest) attempt at linking theatre and development is the explanation offered by the Greek Philosopher Plato who Onukaba-Ojo (2003) note argued that the "disposition of citizens has a great impact on the social, political, economic and even technological advancement of any society.

Plato as well as the political philosopher, Machiavelli further contended that how a country is perceived in terms of its level of development is a function of the character of its citizens, their civic virtue such as commitment to equality, justice, freedom, honesty, trust,

stability and tolerance. Theatre which is viewed in purely instrumental or transitive terms as a passage way to something more desirable, or what Nasidi (2003) described as "something to be pulled beyond its turf to some promised land-the promised land of development", has proven to be very valuable in raising and nurturing a civic-minded populace which is necessary for development. According to Nasidi (2003), "through songs, dances, music, mimes and dramatic enactments, theatre can be deployed to help people internalize core values and beliefs that are germane to development".

In his work on "Oramedia as part of the traditional communication system", Ngwainmbi (2004) identifies the theatre as a useful media for development. Ngwainmbi contended that the theatre serves a social function by educating community members. Besides, theatre, he argued it conscientizes and mobilizes groups within a society structure. Theatre, he further asserts, also helps to depict social reality and encourages audience participation, a reason he maintained that there exist a strong relationship between theatre and development. In order to adequately evaluate the role of theatre in development, it is vital to understand the nature of the theatre and the concept of development. Cassady (1984) describes theatre as "imagination….emotions and intellects… (Which) embraces all the world cultures and perspective, answers questions, predicts our tomorrows and mirrors our today".

Beckerman (1989) offered a broader definition when he said that 'theatre occurs when one or more persons, isolated in time and or space, present themselves to another or others. For Shakespeare, 'theatre is a mirror for highlighting man's humanity and also a tool for understanding why man also finds it so easy to transgress that same humanity (Yerima 2007). Oduneye (1996) asserts that theatre is "the stepping stone through which anthropologist, sociologists, historian, and ethnographers have given identity, meaning and interpretations to

people, period/dates and societies". Oduneye further posited that theatre could be seen as the index of every civilization and cultural identity.

Theatre constitutes the heartbeats of a people or a nation. Though many descriptions for theatre abound, practitioners seem to be in unison in what constitutes the nature and very essence of the theatre. They also seem to be in agreement that theatre is a highly collaborative endeavour and that it takes the form of drama, comedy or musical theatre. It is also widely held that theatre, with its artistic content emanating from the dramatist to the producing artistes to the audience through an ever widening and deepening symbol, is essentially symbolic in nature. As an art form, theatre represents the experience of an event or experience which can be real or imagined and which is communicated to an audience through a medium.

Theatre can also be dramatic and non-dramatic. When it is dramatic, it is imagined and representational whereas when it is non- dramatic, theatre is real and presentational in form and characters.

Asomba (1986) asserts that in the dramatic form, the performer's roles are always mimetic and that is what characterizes an actor's role in a performance. So whether it is in a dramatic or non-dramatic form, what the artiste seeks, as Nasidi (2003) alludes, is to contact his audience through integrated manipulation of various forms of art such as music, mime, poetry, dance, painting and symbols which are directed either at our auditory or visual senses. This makes diversity of appeal inevitable in theatre and it is on this premise that Vincent (1980) stresses that the 'theatre has the capacity to engage and appeal to all the senses at the same time. It is the power of the theatre to engage and appeal to all the human senses and its ability to influence and affect through the effective use of images during a performance that makes it an obvious pivot in the building of communities. It is that causal relationship between

theatre and development that this study stands upon. However, it would be erroneous to proceed without explicating into the meaning of development.

2.4 Conceptualizing Conflict

Conflicts are as old as human societies themselves. Historically, individuals, social groups and societies have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities and resources - land, money, political power, and ideology. They have even fought one another and bitterly sought the elimination and/or subjugation of rivals, in order to control these resources and commodities, Wadak (2004). Marshall McLuhan in 1967, often called the media prophet, coined a phrase – medium is the message- to explain the influence of mass media on the readers and audiences.

The modern era is the age of the media. It is an age of communication technology and information revolution. At this stage of development, Mass Media is more pervasive than ever before. The Media has virtually turned the world into a global village of communication. The traditional role of mass media as defined by the media gurus' are- to inform, educate, entertain, and to persuade the people. According to Haque (2004) the media can bring change in behavior and attitude of the people by emphasizing certain issues. Meanwhile, with the revolutionary progress of mass communication, an unprecedented opportunity has been created to share and exchange information for knowledge and social change. But, the media has turned the affairs into a war of words. Actually, today's wars in the battle fields are the cumulative actions of what was designed , discussed, and persuaded through the media in molding a favorable public opinion.

The power of media has intimidated men for centuries. Now the power of live-actions video images on television has become even more intimidating. The books, newspapers, magazines, video cartoons, movie, radio, television and internet based websites are now widely used to manipulate the information, facts and believes. The instrument of mass communication in the modern world have an enormous potential for inducing newer images in shaping global politics, culture and the public believes. Mass media is both a force for integration and for dispersion and individuation in society. Certainly the question of what most wide-ranging consequences follow from the media must also raise the question of motivation and use. With the emergence of modern communication technology, the society as a whole is now a simple hostage at the hands of the media. The time has come to ask whether the people are being managed, manipulated, massaged and brainwashed by the Media. Media men with a biased mind often become propagandists of their personal opinion, using the media as their vehicle. The media is also controlled by their sponsors.

Conflict, by its very nature, holds a forceful attraction for the mass media. As Owens-Ibie (2002: 32) puts it, "the media are naturally attracted to conflict." Conflict is also hard to talk about without engaging the emotions of the discussants. This is due largely to the humanitarian implications, especially when conflict gets violent. Presenting an objective and balanced report therefore becomes a tortuous, almost impossible task. "The principles of reporting are put to sever test when your nation goes to war" (Kate Adie as cited by Allan & Zelizer, 2004: 3). Often, journalism is in a fix, caught between staying true to the principles of reporting and responding adequately to the urgent realities of conflict or war. As Allan and Zelizer (2004: 3) have aptly stated: "confronted with the often horrific realities of conflict, any belief that the journalist can remain distant, remote, or unaffected by what is happening 'tends to go out the window' in a hurry". This cannot be less true of conflict in the Niger Delta and

other part of the country as have been discovered from press coverage of the numerous conflicts that had ensued since from independence to date.

By its very constitution, proprietorship, mode of operation and sustenance, this section of the Nigerian press is akin to being a little sensational, gossipy, and manipulative in the treatment of stories, if only to stay in the market. This is evidenced by their screaming headlines, scandal and gossip stories, and in some cases, pedestrian use of language. Since it is unfashionable in the journalistic turf to report events and issues in such a manner as may be seen to be expressly biased, there is the need to develop measures by which to raise the credibility of the Press in the Niger Delta, define a mode of operation for her and position her to effectively articulate the issues inherent in the Niger Delta debacle. Among the roles of the mass media in society – surveillance, interpretation, linkage, transmission of values and entertainment (Dominick, 2002: 34), the first two are critical to conflict reporting in the Niger Delta. In its surveillance function, the press plays the role of an observer, which is "a necessary component for enforcing economic, political, cultural and even moral stability" in the polity (Mu'azu, 2002: 47).

Conflicts have been variously defined in relation to 'fights, games and debates' (Rapoport, 1960). This remains controversial. For example, some have used 'conflict' to refer both to 'consensual' conflicts over interests (disputants want the same thing) and to 'dissensual' conflicts over values (disputants do not want the same thing) (Aubert, 1963); others, however, have called the former 'disputes' that require settlement and have reserved the term 'conflict' for deeper struggles over unsatisfied human needs that require resolution (Burton, 1990a). We will not enter this discussion here, and are happy to use the term 'conflict' to refer to the widest set of circumstances in which conflict parties perceive that they

have mutually incompatible goals – although we do see a difference between conflicts, on the one hand, and sporting encounters, economic competitions and legal cases, in which the rules of contestation are not themselves called into question, on the other.

The pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. This suggests a broader span of time and a wider class of struggle than armed conflict. We intend our usage here to apply to any political conflict, whether it is pursued by peaceful means or by the use of force. Armed conflict is a narrower category denoting a conflict where parties on both sides resort to the use of force. It is notoriously difficult to define, since it can encompass a continuum of situations ranging from a military overflight or an attack on a civilian by a single soldier to an all- out war with massive casualties. The research community has identified a number of thresholds and rules for deciding what to count.

Violent conflict, or deadly conflict, is similar to armed conflict, but also includes one- sided violence such as genocides against unarmed civilians. We mean direct, physical violence. We acknowledge the strong argument in peace research for broadening the concept of violence to encompass exploitative social relations that cause unnecessary suffering, but prefer to use the now well- known term 'structural violence' for this.

2.5 Conceptualizing Development

Development is one term that has become very difficult to define. The various attempts at defining the concept have left the definers at the door step of subjectivity and/or political ideological coloration. As a concept that is broad, the term 'development' as observed by Adesiyan and Arulogun (2005) "is not a subject to be given a universal definition". As a result, most scholars seem to have been divided by the nature of the concept of development. The division comes mainly from the angle or field of study from which the concept is viewed. While some see development as a state or condition that is static, others see it as process or course of change. Economists, politicians and others freely use the term especially when discussing on the growth of any given society, place or thing. The term which is somewhat

closely bound with the evolution of capitalism and the demise of feudalism has many meanings such as there are numerous clashing perspectives, theories and deep differences of opinion about it. However, broadly speaking, development represents ideas and practices designed to bring about change in human societies.

Shackman et al (1999) say "it is a function of society's capacity to organize human energies and produce resources to respond to opportunities and challenges". The Mexican Nobel prize winner, Octavio Paz shares in this thinking when he described development as "an act of opening out that which is rolled up, to unfold, to grow freely and harmoniously". Rodney (1972) sees development as "a many-sided process in which material wellbeing is the ultimate goal at the level of individual; the achievement of which is very much tied to the state of society as a whole". Further conceptualization of development includes that of Schiavo-Campo and Singer (1970) who considers development in terms of better nutrition, low mortality rate, broad choice of consumption, capital accumulation, skilled labour formation and technological progress.

Udoakah (1998) notes that some African leaders, at the Farm House Dialogue convened by former Nigeria President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, see developments "a process concerned with people's capacity, period, to manage and induce change". This means to predict, plan, understand and monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted change. Like most economist, the African leaders at the dialogue affirmed that increases in GDP, improved health, housing, and employment opportunities as well as knowledge, information and technological creativity are keys to development. Nevertheless, this explanation is viewed from the political economy of development.

Todaro (1997) provides what could be considered a near concise description of development when he describes development as not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multi-

dimensional process involving reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social system'. Todaro offers three objectives of development and argues that development involves the process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equally important aspects. Firstly, he identifies raising peoples living levels, *viz.* incomes and consumption, level of food, medical services and education through relevant growth processes as one of the fundamental indices of development. Todaro cites creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promotes human dignity and respect as the second objective of development while the third borders on increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables. These are no doubt considerable and significant definitions of development.

But Todaro's description falls short of ownership and the ability of the process to empower people to solicit for their own development. It sees development as a token to be given to people. Nonetheless, what must be appreciated in all the definitions of development is the desire for the change that will affect citizen's welfare positively and/or liberate them from poverty and inequality. But to make this experience novel, they must be done through a medium members of communities could easily relate to. The theatre is born out of this process. For effective communication to occur, the theatre using the idiolects of the community needing development converse with the people through their indigenous forms like folk music, traditional dance, dramatic enactment, storytelling, praise-singing and other existing idioms of the host communities. Through these performances, development issues are raised, questions are asked and the people are facilitated to provide enduring answers to addressing their challenges. For members of communities, this process could take a conscious or unconscious dimension depending on the lead of the facilitating group. Empowerment lies

on the knowledge when the people are facilitated to the awareness that they can resolve or initiate development without waiting or being influenced by external factors.

2.6 Development Communication

Development media theory which relates to media structures and performance in developing societies provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between theatre and development. This is because the theory encompasses what Folarin (1998) describes as a great variety of socio-cultural, economic and political condition which borders on the effective use of the media for development purpose. Specifically, the theory considers the role of the media in society as essential target at stimulating and sustaining societal development in such area as cultural, social economic, political and technological development. According to FOlarin (1998), the theory "also advocates for situation where the media (theatre as one)should accept and help in carrying out the special development task of national integration, socioeconomic modernization, promotion of illiteracy and cultural creativity. The 'Reflective-Projective' theory of broadcasting and mass communication by Leo Loevinger presents a similar position. The theory provides yet another basis for understanding the relationship of theatre and development. Leovinger's argues that the media mirrors the society and that while the media themselves reflects society as organized group, individual audience members project their own individual reflections into images presented. This is why many theatre scholars have asserted that "theatre is a creator's mirror of the whole universe" and the popular dictum that "the world is a stage where everyone plays his or her own part and leaves" finds justification. Indeed, the theatre as a media of communication constantly mirrors and reflects the society. For Yerima (2007:33), "beyond drawing its theme from the society, which varies from the historical to the present and the futuristic, it has been argued that the shape,

outlook and presentation of a country's theatre are direct reflections of the yearning of the people". It is these attributes that bestow on the theatre the role of a vanguard, a watchdog, the barometer of the society and a major factor in nation building.

The journey of the theatre as media dates back to the times of the Yoruba theatre down to the period of literary drama. However, with the rise of military adventures, the theatre became very important in communicating the thoughts through performances. One of the areas of the theatre that was birthed during this era was Popular Theatre because of its appeal to community based peoples and more, entertaining, teaching and sharing with them in language they could relate to. Several successful theatre projects emerged during this period even though there were clampdowns on most theatre arts practitioners because the military governments of the era had began to see the power which that medium of the theatre wields. On the frontline of this theatre projects was the Ahmadu Bello University's Drama Department through the workshops carried out by Michael Etherton, Salihu Bappa, Steve Abbah and many other theatre practitioners of that time. However, over time, many other practitioners emerged as a new area of the theatre began to surface. This area of theatre, known as Theatre for Development (TfD), moves away from the traditional role which popular theatre played and began to engage issues affecting people. Even though TfD operates within the nucleus of popular theatre in scope and performance, its attraction was geared towards addressing human development. Like popular theatre, its commitment lies in driving developmental change. Nevertheless, another concern arose among theatre arts practitioners on how performances can speak more directly to those most hit by problems particularly in the language they can understand. The product of these concerns was the diffusion of what is called Theatre for Development (TfD), Community Theatre (CT) or Theatre for Integrated Development (TfID) today. These terminologies, though arguably, different in scope, all

geared towards improving the lives of people and empowering them to be important stakeholders in their developments.

2.7 The Nigerian Oil Industry

Nigeria is a country with a population of over 160 million and approximately 300 ethnic groups (NPC 2011). The three dominant ethnic groups are the Hausa/Fulani in the northern region, the Yoruba in the Southwest and the Igbo in the Southeast. Production of crude oil began in the country in December 1957. Current estimates of Nigeria's oil and gas are about 27 billion barrels and 4.007 trillion cubic meters respectively (*CIA* Fact Book, 2003). Six major foreign oil companies presently dominate Nigeria's oil industry. The Nigerian government, through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) established in 1971, has traditionally held majority shareholding interests in these companies. The NNPC operates two contractual arrangements between the Nigerian Government and Oil companies. Through these arrangements, the company receives 57 percent of total crude oil, most of which is subsequently exported. Geological research shows that the Niger Delta (both onshore and offshore areas) is particularly conducive to the formation and accumulation of oil and gas (Hyne, 1995:90-98). Despite these abundant natural resources, the region is said to be poorer than the national average (Emmanuel, 2004; *Tell*, 6 September 2004; Gary and Karl, 2003: 50) and according to Clark (2005) has remained .the most backward and underdeveloped region in Nigeria.

Conflicts between oil companies and local communities in the Niger Delta have basically revolved around land ownership and compensation for land appropriation as well as compensation for environmental damages due to oil operations. In addition, there has been frequent disputes over the causes of oil spills and whether oil companies are eligible to pay compensation, and if so, to what extent. At the national level conflicts have centred on the

sharing of oil revenues and the allocation of public goods between various ethno regional groups, and the failure of the Nigerian government to take adequate measures to mitigate the environmental effects of oil operations on local communities or to adequately compensate for such damages. Beginning with the *Ogoni* uprising of the late 1980s to the *Kiama Declaration* by the *Ijaws* in 1998 and the emergence of militant groups such as the *Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force* (NDPVF) and the *Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta* (MEND), protests in the Niger Delta has taken on a more violent and militarized form.

As a result of this rising militancy, the number of community disruptions to oil operations in Nigeria has risen enormously over the last five to ten years. Some estimates suggest that militancy and protest cut onshore oil production by a third in 2001-2003 (UN IRIN, 2003, Gary and Karl, 2003). Apart from the loss in oil production, there have been accompanying financial losses to oil companies, a move that has prompted oil companies to begin to redirect their attention to offshore oil activities (Gary and Karl, 2003).

Since the 1990s, the scope of oil companies, development activities in the oil-producing communities has been greatly expanded. (It is claimed that oil companies even pay some individuals in oil-producing communities on a regular basis to induce peaceful behavior!). However, some pieces of evidence (Danler and Brunner, 1996:23; *Tell*, 27January 1997; *The Guardian*, Lagos, 18 January 1998; Frynas, 2000:53; *THISDAY online*, 28 July 2003.) seem to suggest that many oil companies engage in community development projects primarily for public relations purposes rather than the need to address the real life problems of local communities; sometimes advertise projects that are non-existent; and artificially inflate figures quoted to have been spent on community development in order to avoid tax payments.

The Report by the *Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility*, Port Harcourt, Nigeria (Emmanuel, 2004), shows that development assistance to local communities by oil

companies are often philanthropic, do not follow any needs assessment, have no participating rural appraisal, and as such, lack ownership and sustainability. Also, while both the oil companies and the Nigerian government have been willing to grant some financial concessions to the oil-producing communities at various times, a more frequent response to protests by communities has been the use of repressive security measures (*HRW* 1995; Frynas, 2003:54; *Reuters*, 31 December 1998; *Phone News International*, 25 January 1999; *AP*, 1 February 1999; *HRW* 1999b; *Tell*, Lagos, December 1999). Oil companies have in turn, supported the repression of community protests, and in some cases instigated the Nigerian security forces against oil communities. The Nigerian government has also failed to take any positive steps to implement the reports of the various Commissions of Enquiry set up at various times to investigate cases of large-scale human rights violations by oil companies and security agents (*IPCR*, 2003). Based on the implementation of the provision of the 1999 constitution that not less than 13 percent of oil revenue be transferred to oil-producing states on the basis of derivation, there has been significant jump in the share of oil revenues going to these states13. However as Gary and Karl (2003) rightly observe, a lack of transparency and mismanagement pervades States and Local government structures, so that it cannot be said that the massive flow of funds have largely benefited the local people.

2.8 The Niger Delta

According to the Delta State Government Report (2007) the thirty-six states of Nigeria are divided into six geopolitical zones of six states each. The South- South zone consists of the following States, moving from East to West: Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, and Edo. The term "Niger Delta" generally refers to these states but is sometimes also used to include Imo, Abia, and Ondo States as they are also oil producers, albeit minor ones. The core Niger Delta consists of Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States. The Niger Delta is home to about

140 different ethnic groups in the nine states included in a broader definition of the region. In common with other parts of Nigeria, this ethnic diversity has often led to competition for resources in the form of land, economic benefits, or political power.

Nowhere has this contest been fought with more intensity than in Warri, in Delta State, which not coincidentally happens to be the western center of the oil industry in the Delta. Of the three ethnic groups living in the region, the Urhobo, has harbored a longstanding resentment of the Itsekiris for the perceived favoritism shown toward the latter during the colonial era. The Ijaw, the largest group across the three states in this study, was traditionally less involved in this competition, but the situation radically changed when oil was discovered in the riverine region in which they predominantly live, (Imobighe, 2002).

The first significant use of arms in the Niger Delta occurred in 1966, when Isaac Adaka Boro formed an Ijaw group, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, and declared a republic. His uprising was crushed by the federal government within days, but his demands for greater autonomy for the people of the region inspired later activists such as Ken Saro Wiwa and "Mujahid" Dokubo-Asari.3 Saro Wiwa raised awareness about the environmental pollution caused by the oil industry and highlighted the lack of representation of the Niger Delta people, especially the Ogonis, Academic Associates Peace Works AAPW (2007). He helped found the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which in 1990 published an Ogoni Bill of Rights. The arrest and execution of Saro Wiwa and eight of his colleagues at the hands of the Abacha regime in 1995 caused outrage and drew international attention to the plight of the people of the Niger Delta for the first time. Over the past forty years, Warri has been a frequent flashpoint for interethnic tension, with outbreaks of warfare between the Itsekiris and the Urhobos or between the Itsekiris and the Ijaws. Yet communal violence has not been confined to Delta State, however.

A desire to control oil or gas facilities along disputed borders has been instrumental in causing conflict across the region. Further east, in Rivers State, clashes have broken out between the ethnically Ijaw Okrikans and the Elemes (who are related to the Ogonis). Bayelsa State has not been spared, either. The historic Nembe kingdom has been torn apart by resource-driven power struggles, as have some other neighboring communities. While ethnic cleavages are intense in the Niger Delta, its inhabitants are united by a sense of grievance about the exploitation and neglect of their region. The federal government virtually ignored the Niger Delta during the 1990s, leaving development in the hands of the oil companies in an era when corporate social responsibility meant little, Collier, *et al* (2004). The federal government in 1979 established the oil deposits as a national asset, taking away any local ownership or control. Indeed, from the earliest discovery of oil, the delta region has been deprived the benefits from this resource, which finances much of the federal government and the state governments of the rest of the country. For decades, moreover, the oil industry exploited the area and in the process polluted the riverine environment, wiping out the traditional livelihoods of fishing and farming, but providing few jobs in return.

Today, with a greater sense of social responsibility, and facing serous losses of production, the oil industry is finding it difficult to deal with the immensity and complexity of the situation, vacillating between supports of various development projects and taking narrower steps to protect its immediate facilities. In addition, the remoteness and inhospitable geography of the region have hampered the limited attempts to develop infrastructure. Roads in the Niger Delta cost four times more to build than those on dry land, leaving the canoe or motorboat as the primary form of transport. The difficulty of moving goods and people means that essential supplies—including petroleum products—cost more in the Niger Delta than in other parts of Nigeria.

Thus a combination of geography, ethnic tension, economic underdevelopment, and the presence of an industry that yields many disadvantages but few direct advantages to the people of the region, have created a situation ripe for conflict. While some groups, such as MOSOP, tried to address these environmental, political, social, and economic injustices through dialogue, others chose armed struggle. Oil installations and their employees was an obvious target. Attacks by armed groups occurred intermittently until about 2004, and were usually accompanied by demands for additional benefits from the oil companies.

Since that date, the frequency and ferocity of the attacks have increased, showing more signs of planning and sophistication. Kidnapping has become endemic. In many cases, the armed groups soon forgot their goal of promoting social justice and self-empowerment and focused instead on enriching themselves through criminal activity. Powerful outsiders lost little time in attaching themselves to these illicit activities. A lucrative drug trade centered on Port Harcourt, the main city in Rivers State, was later eclipsed in magnitude by the oil bunkering trade, which offered enormous profits but led to unprecedented levels of violence and an influx of sophisticated weaponry.

2.9 The Niger Delta and the Nigerian Economy

Nigeria is generously endowed with natural sources of energy resource. These include coal, crude oil, natural gas (associated and non-associated natural gas), lignite and a number of renewable energy resources such fuel wood, biomass, hydropower and solar energy. Crude oil occurs in seven prospective basins, that is, Niger Delta, Anambra basin, Chad basin, Dahomey basin, Sokoto basin and the Benue Trough, while condensates are found in the South Eastern shelf. Presently crude oil exploration and commercial activities are concentrated on the Niger Delta basin acreage and the continental shelf (Central Bank of Nigeria 2000:81). There is enough evidence that 99% of Nigeria's proven crude oil and gas reserves are situated in the

Niger Delta (Okoh, 2001:390). The Nigerian economy now revolves around the exploitation and exportation of crude oil. Nigeria's crude oil is the sweet and light type, being low in sulphur content. It is highly sought after in the international crude oil market. Currently, Nigeria's oil production accounts for 8% of the OPEC total daily production and 3% of the world's volume (Nigerian National Petroleum Company, 2000:5).

Nigeria's gas reserve is even greater than the proven crude oil reserves though it has largely remained unexploited. Nigeria's gas reserve is estimated at about 124 trillion cubic feet. In energy terms this is said to be twice as much as the nation's crude oil reserves (Okoh 2001:390). Gas is obtainable in the form of associated and non-associated or dry gas, condensate gas and natural gas liquids. It is said that 60% of the available gas is located east of the Niger and 40% west of it. The estimated on-shore component is 71% of the total, while 29% is offshore. Unfortunately about 75% of associated gas produced annually is flared. Of all the natural resources, crude oil has become the pivot of the Nigerian economic revolution. The petroleum sector accounts for approximately 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 96% of foreign exchange and about 80% of total government revenue (Nigerian National Petroleum Company, 2000: 6).

In the last four decades the Niger Delta has witnessed a high level of petroleum sector activities. Subsequent to the first successful drilling at Oloibiri-1 in 1956, the Nigerian government's legislations and concessions to various oil prospecting companies set the stage for large scale explosion in exploration and production activities from 1970 to date. The Niger Delta has nearly 200 oil fields with well over 400 oil production and storage facilities scattered within its swamps and creeks. These are operated by multinational firms such as Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Elf, Agip and Texaco, in joint ventures with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (Okoh & Egbon, 1999: 410).

As the Niger Delta became the prime basis of exploration and production of crude petroleum oil, the search for oil and gas was intensified in both deep and shallow waters as well as inland. In time the Nigerian economy became a victim of the 'Dutch disease'. This refers to a situation in which a booming export sector, that is, Nigeria's oil sector, increases the relative price of non-tradable goods and services, thus hurting the rest of the tradable sector. Approximately 90% of her foreign earnings and 70% of total revenue accrue from the petroleum sector. Government effort (particularly during the military regime) was geared towards expanding its revenue flow from the sector, to the utter neglect of the inhabitants of the area.

The oil and gas production and refining facilities such as terminals of pipelines, flow and pump stations, manifolds and refineries are scattered across the landscape of the Niger Delta. Many years of oil and gas production with frequent occurrence of crude oil and petroleum product spillage have left the people of the Niger Delta dispossessed of their land, land fertility, delta forest (mangrove), water resources and their livelihood. These losses have led to high levels of poverty and unemployment (particularly among youths), infrastructure decay, moral decadence and crime in the area. The region has become ridden by violent conflict, which caused the wanton destruction of its people and valuable properties, and left millions of dollars unrealised due to deferred production as a result of violent conflicts and work stoppages.

The crises of Ogoni (1994/95), Ijaw/Ilaje (1998-2000), Odih (1998/99), Warri (Urhobo/Itsekiri, 1952, 1981, 1987, 1997-2002), Ogbijaw/Itsekiri (between 1995 and 2004) are just a few of the violent crises which led to the death of many people, staffers of oil companies and members of the Nigerian police force, the destruction of properties, and the loss of production time and revenue, both to oil companies and to the Nigerian economy at

large. The high activity level in the Niger Delta has exposed the area to the dangers of pollution of water, land and air as well as oil spills which have endangered aquatic life as well as the entire ecosystem, topography and surface vegetation. The problem of deforestation has led to loss of bio-diversity in the mangrove swamps, and to the destruction of nurseries and feeding grounds for many commercially important species of fish and crustaceans (Okoh, 2001:391).

According to Okoh (2002:81-83), the contamination of water bodies by oil has also led to the contamination of fisheries, freshwater and brackish water swamps, and to the killing of fishes, crabs, oysters and periwinkles. This has therefore destroyed artisan fishing which is of great importance to Niger Delta economy. The 45 years of oil production in the area has brought about defoliation of mangroves and the acceleration of erosion and flooding in the coastal areas. There is also the case of contamination of rivers and inland waters, which are important sources of drinking water and food, thereby rendering such water and food unfit for human consumption. Ground water pollution is another serious impact of oil production. As it was expected, the activities of the oil industry did not spare the health of the human components of the Niger Delta environment. For instance, Ndifon (1998: 804-813) identified oil acne (a special skin eruption due to exposure to oil) among respondents. He also reports the incidence of cancer, decreased fertility, fever, cough, abdominal pain and diarrhoea, while as much as 85 percent of respondents suffered a combination of these symptoms. The difficult terrain makes road construction and maintenance an uphill task. The Niger Delta inhabitants thus suffer from poor road conditions, leading to high cost of transportation. The area has been denied the much-needed development of social and economic infrastructure such as electricity, roads and pipe borne water.

The Niger Delta states suffer from relatively high rates of both rural and urban unemployment. The neglect of the region for so long against the backdrop of so many unresolved issues seems to have resulted in the breeding of an army of miscreants. All of these have culminated in socio-economic problems such as high levels of poverty and unemployment, community and oil company conflicts, intercommunity conflict over land and compensation, decay in societal values, poor roads and transportation network, high cost of fuel, paucity of housing and infrastructure facilities, moral decadence and high crime rates. These problems have been said to be located within the revenue-sharing principles, formulae and practices of the federal government which have starved the Niger Delta of much needed funds (Okoh & Egbon 1999:407, Egbon & Okoh 2000:11- 120. Since 2000 the federal government has increased the proportion of revenue shared to the Niger Delta states, and infrastructure development has improved through the activities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), but the levels of poverty, unemployment and violent conflicts are still quite high.

2.10 The Conflict in the Niger Delta

It is essential to note that conflict is expected as societies evolve. According to Ramsbotham *et al* (2005:13), "Conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints." In his entry, Udomisor (2002:87) defines conflict as the "result of differences in opinion, attitude and behaviour; differences in the philosophical, psychological, sociological, political and economic orientation of the interactors in a given system."

As a dynamic society with a plurality of interests, conflict is expected in the Niger Delta. What is not anticipated is the extent of violence it assumes and the enormous

humanitarian effect it leaves on its trails. That is why intense scholastic effort into the causes of conflict and possible intervention by relevant stakeholders, including the mass media, is critical, especially in the Niger Delta. The agitations in the Niger Delta may be blamed on two causative factors: One is the inability of government to "provide political and economic good" (Auvinen, 1997:177). This failure on the part of government is seen by the governed as "a source of relative deprivation," a concept Auvinen (1997:177) further explains as "the discrepancy between deserved and actual enjoyment of goods and conditions of life." Put more succinctly, a situation where oil-producing communities are left without such basic amenities as portable water, electricity, good roads and quality healthcare is seen as unacceptable. The second major factor is generally seen as an apparent isolation the Niger Delta in the national political equation; what Auvinen (1997:178) correctly describes as "alienation from the political system" and "ethnic dominance."

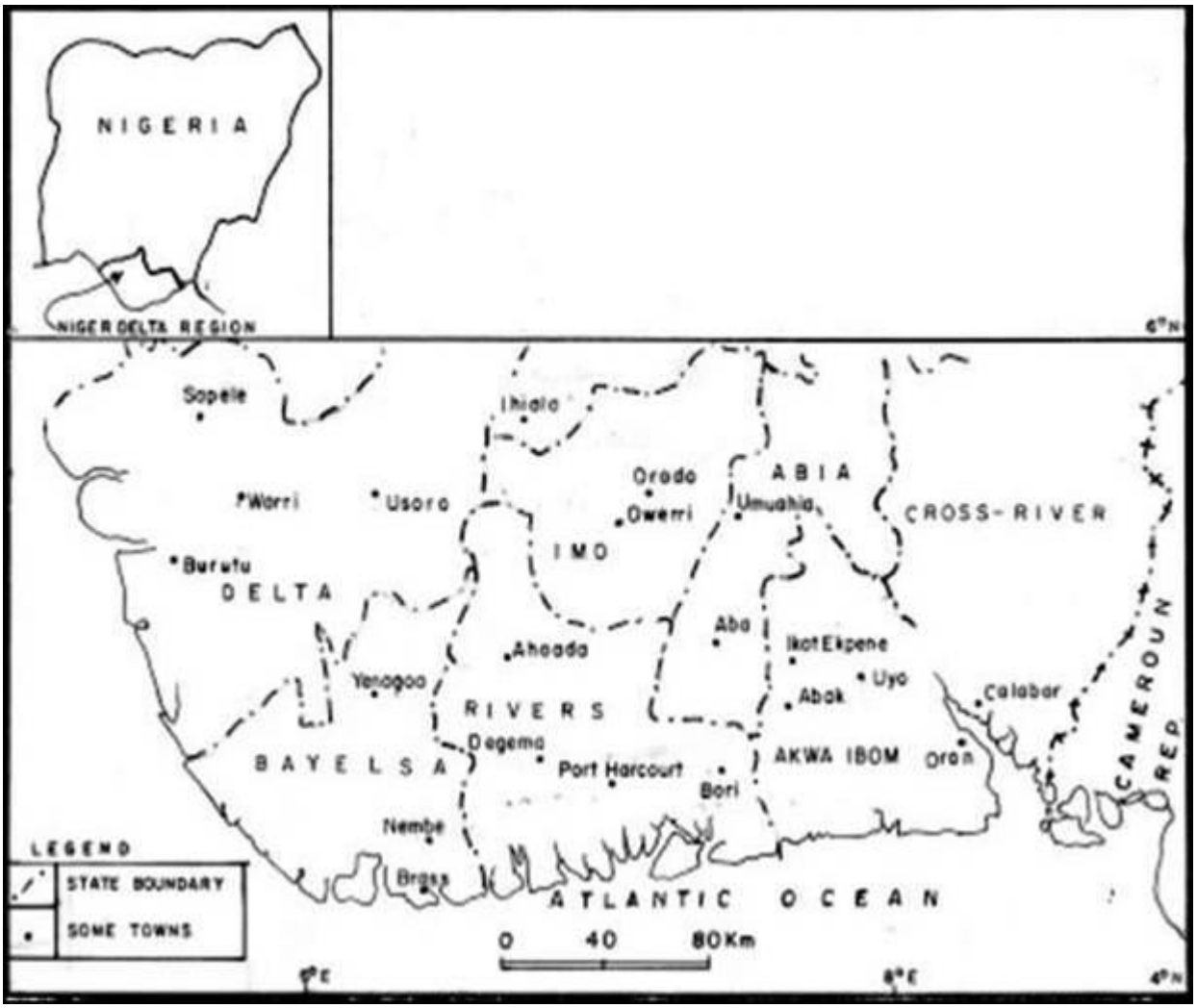
This factor manifests in the seeming relegation of the area from political participation especially at the presidential level. It is also seen in the perceived imbalance in state and local council creation, which is tilted to favour the northern part of the country. On these factors hang other issues like resource control, on-shore-off-shore dichotomy, fiscal federalism, environmental degradation through gas flaring and unmitigated oil spillages which have affected both water and land resources, massive unemployment for the teeming youth in the area, inequitable distribution of national wealth which manifests in the crisis of federal allocation and derivation formula. Conflict then stems from the constant disagreement between the Niger Delta people and the Nigerian government on these values which all revolve around economic and political empowerment, both of which are considered to be mutually enhancing. In other words, there seems to be a strong correlation between political

power and access to the nation's resources. Put differently, access to political power may be directly proportional to economic empowerment.

Udomisor (2002: 87) has it that "politics in developing democracies is the very essence of existence and survival," a situation which he adds "generates conflict too frequently." It is apt to note that over 70% of nation's earning potential is attributable to the oil of the Niger Delta. ANEEJ (2006: 7) states that three of the states in the region, namely Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers account for about 75% of oil output and over 50% of federal revenue. There is however a stiff contest between the federal government and the people of the region for the control of this resource.Incidentally, the lack of compromise on these issues has created the scenario of a myriad of conflict behaviours of enormous violent dimension.

These conflict behaviours include Sea piracy (ceasing of oil-laden vessels), kidnapping, pipeline and flow-station terrorism, and other acts that are intended to sabotage the Nation's capacity to function as a big player in the international oil market. Others are robbery and political thug, which are not peculiar to the Niger Delta, but have heightened as a result of the general atmosphere of tension in the area. So we see the emergence of a culture of violence and insecurity, which has formed the fulcrum of media discourse on the Niger Delta.

Fig. 7 MAP OF THE NIGER DELTA REGION



In Warri, no fewer than five children have been killed at Foutorugbene, 1, 2, 3 and Apodubigha communities in Ekeremor Local Government of Bayelsa state following an oil spill that allegedly polluted the river, which is the source of drinking water to the people. Leaders of the Forutorugbene Federated Communities: Mr. Prey Warri, Emmanuel Jebbi and Samuel Jebbi, who addressed reporters in Warri, Tuesday, said pregnant women were having complicated delivery and ovulation discharge due to intake of the polluted water. They identified the five children as Arekekedomene Pigha, Blessing Facados, Adiborere Tabode, Premobeowei Debowei and Timiebi Peretu.

According to them, the oil spill occurred on May 21 2012, from the Benisede flow station, operated by Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC, in Ekeremor local government area of Bayelsa state, but since then, the oil company has not carried out clean-up exercise."Our fishing activities have been greatly affected as a result of the pollution and this is our means of livelihood. The people are hungry and they need urgent help", they asserted."Besides, there is fear of imminent outbreak of cholera, chronic heart disease, cough and other similar epidemics imminent in the areas and we are sad that Shell is neglecting its responsibility. It is this kind of behaviour that causes unrest in the Niger-Delta region", they added.

The communities called on the Bayelsa State Government and House of Assembly to intervene in the matter, saying they should prevail on the oil company to put in place measures to alleviate the predicament of the people. This study will focus on Bayelsa State, because of financial constrain; also Bayelsa has faced a lot of environmental issues and conflict, arising from oil spills. The state has been suffering from environmental degradation and pollution resulting from oil spills. It has become part of the people's lives. Below are images of environmental degradation and pollution in the state.

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Environmental degradation



Environmental degradation



Polluted river caused by oil spill



Polluted river caused by oil spill



Dead fish caused by oil spill found in the river



Environmental degradation



Polluted stream



Polluted River caused by oil spill



A polluted stream



Fire caused by a burst pipeline



Polluted river



Environmental degradation

From the above images, it would be seen why there are conflicts in the state. The Federal, State, local government and the oil companies in the state have tried different polices to solve the issues, but to no avail, even with the amnesty, the people still are agitating. It is time to try a different approach. According to Nasidi (2003), four approaches which demonstrate the potency of theatre as a tool of development. The first approach is theatre as entertainment in which case it can engage and hold the interest of large numbers of people, many of whom have been alienated by traditional approaches to adult education and development. The second approach is theatre as an oral medium.

Here, it can involve many people who are left out of development activities because of their illiteracy or lack of understanding of the official lingua franca. The third approach is theatre as a means of cultural expression which everyone in the community is capable of and which can be kept within the control and use of the local people. The fourth approach is theatre as public or social activity which brings a community together and creates the context for cooperative thinking and action.

At the end of this study, it will be demonstrated that communication, could be used to effectively to resolve conflicts arising from environmental issues, as we have in the Niger Delta.

2.11 Communication for Conflict Resolution

Communicating conflicts, unrest or disasters, demands the highest commitment from facilitators involved in conflict resolution. The obstacles to be faced are many – firstly, there will always be those who see the presence of the media as an essential weapon in their particular propaganda war. They want a reporter to report mainly if not only – their side of the story. The presence of camera, recorder or microphone can also sometimes worsen a tensed situation. It encourages people in their actions; others may see it as a threat by those who fear

betrayal or identification through the pictures, a good case in the Niger Delta Militancy which gained wider media coverage without any link aimed at resolution until the amnesty proclamation by the Nigerian government.

The different mass media are important factors that need to be linked into the process and have hitherto been neglected. As the North-Central report in the Federal Government report (2002) noted- 'There were examples of the communication facilitators trying to promote awareness around conflict in special activities, but there is also some indication that the media is contributing to conflict by feeding into the discourse around it and failing to provide even handed reporting.'

They have been too easily persuaded to promote sectarian or selfish political perspectives. They have been irresponsible in relation to the risk of violence. Even today they do not seem to have understood that democracy –including their own freedoms- cannot survive without active commitment. The recent coverage of the communal clashes in the Nigeria from the north to the south provides a vivid illustration of how the misnomer reportage of media looks. The media instead of approaching the conflict objectively takes a stand.

Still on the media coverage of the crises volatility in most states in Nigeria is the media and its personnel's affinity. A good instance of this, is when facilitators only have a fair knowledge of the situation on the ground to the area; their familiarity with the influential people makes it easy for parties in conflict to seek their support. To play its ought-to-be roles, the media should embark on upon managing these problems by ensuring that reporters who cover this war zone are not from the area (Bamigbetan, 2002) as cited in Adamu (2008). When they do, people from other ethnic groups should be made to join and participate by expressing their views and to ensure the neutrality.

Thus, participation is crucial for setting the tone for what follows. But the depth and nuance necessary for substantive coverage of conflicts is in many ways antithetical to the methodology and requirements of the modern media. This is particularly true when addressing the delicate steps in a peace process. The media require controversy, conflict, certainty and confrontation. Its stock in trade is the thumbnail exposé. Yet the elements most necessary to better understanding conflict, such as nuance, ambiguity and complexity, are filtered out, or avoided altogether. Efforts to provide context are often perceived as complicating matters, yet even well-intentioned efforts to lend context to conflicts, when offered at all, have (often inadvertently) reinforced stereotypes, favoured the conventional wisdom, and led to historical oversimplification.

In many cases the seemingly un-resolvable 'ancient ethnic conflict' paradigm suits the requirements of the modern media, serving as a convenient and easily package able concept which precludes more complex investigation and analysis. This underscores legitimate and far-reaching questions about whether the news media is equipped at all to respond to the ever changing complexities of conflict resolution (O'Sullivan (2001).

The Federal Government report (2002) field studies indicated that the media do not usually play a constructive role in the management of conflict but sometimes may often spread sensational stories and motivated opinions. On the positive side, radio stations had been involved in promoting peace through jingles and discussion. The contribution of the media in the coverage of conflicts ravaging the Nigeria nation-state continues to be aggravating. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations sought to sell the exclusive angle disregarding the fact of curbing the ugly situation. In their reportage, statistics of number of victims were carried exponentially. Reports of conflict began to tilt, depending on which

sources are friendly to the reporters. The doctrine of balanced reportage was thrown overboard hence leaving their role of peace-building to that of conflict escalation.

Again O'Sullivan (2001) stated that when the news media do focus on world conflicts, it frequently emphasizes a particular causation at the expense of other possible explanations. Media concentration on 'ethnic identity' and 'history' with its stress on inevitability and determinism can often overlook the critical political and economic factors that contribute to violence. Such approaches can contribute to popular misconceptions of wars being fought solely for 'historical' and 'ethnic' reasons which are beyond the comprehension of everyday media users. Increasingly, historical context is offered, if at all, as a 'final verdict.' In many cases, historical analogies and precedents are used, not to lend context or substance to a particular conflict, but to support an all-encompassing theory to explain a specific conflict (Rudolph, 1993).

In the words of Hanitzsch (2004), conflict communication geared at achieving peace is defined as a special mode of socially responsible communication which contributes to the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Although this concept has been widely discussed, there has been no assessment of its underlying philosophy from the perspective of mass communication theory. This paper argues that peace journalism draws epistemologically from a naive realism and is, according to mass communication theory, largely based on the assumption of powerful, causal and linear media effects. By contrast, the author theorizes journalism as a highly autonomous though not autarkic system whose function is to provide social co-orientation. If that is true, it cannot be the task of journalism to engage actively in the peaceful settlement of conflicts since this is the task of politics or the military.

There is, however, no doubt that journalism can contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, but its potential influence is limited. Peace journalism in a conflict scenario demands that the notion of what constitutes good journalistic practices be realigned. Journalists are expected to function variously during conflict: to be present enough to respond to what is happening, yet absence enough to be safe; to be sufficiently authoritative so as provide reliable information, yet to be open to cracks and fissures in the complicated truth-claims that unfold; to remain passionate about the undermining of human dignity that accompanies conflicts, yet impartial and distance enough to see the strategies of conflicts which are always more than one side, (Allan and Zelizer, 2004). Using communication present conflict stakeholders have large potentials for creating a common basis and cultivating conditions for conflict resolution and transferred by securing a free flow of accurate and constructive information, counteracts misperception and identify interests underlying an issue and help build a consensus for conflict mitigating and resolution, (Manoff, 1998).

Clearly, the communication for conflict resolution consists of something beyond the specific outlets that deliver news and information. Moving forward, to underscore this point, let us look at the challenge of the pastoralists. This scenario has generated decades-old crisis between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria. Yet, as the watchdogs of society, it is the media's role to report such skirmishes when they occur. However, to effectively communicate this socio-economic crisis without aggravating tension, is core challenge. Unfortunately, it is an issue for which most of communication experts have not taken the time to study and for that reason, the reportage has also in most instances caused more harm than good.

In the normal cause of the day, pastoralists leading their animals to grazing lands and watering points, inevitably trespass on farmlands, damage and destroy crops. This leads to instant retaliation and quarrels which sometimes degenerate into large scale violence, loss of

lives and property. Reporting such occurrences require sensitivity while analyzing same requires even more. Conflict communication is vital to conflict prevention and early warning (Best, 2006). How people receive and transmit information about conflict in their immediate environment is very central to their perception of and about the conflict as well as how they would want peace and security to evolve. Where the media is used to fuel and escalate conflict, the tendency for the perpetuation of fear and prejudice that may propel people to violence is conceivably high.

Fuelling conflict could come in form of negative communication which promotes hate speech, incendiary rumour; deliberate underreporting and misreporting; over-reporting and sensationalisation of crime, violence and insecurity that would incite violence. And where it is used to quell conflict, like coverages and reportage that promotes peace and security, linking citizen to changing attitudes and behaviours. Others could be by providing early warning and signals of divisive issues or instability; balanced reporting; mediation and negotiation that would lead to reconciliation can assist in shaping the public understanding of the dynamics of violence, harness or encourage peaceful ways of addressing them and build communication, accountability and trust between the state and society (Best, 2006).

Conflict resolution is a more comprehensive term, which implies that the deep- rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed. This implies that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed. It is difficult to avoid ambiguity, since the term is used to refer both to the process (or the intention) to bring about these changes and to the completion of the process. The new field of conflict resolution in the 1950s defined itself in relation to the challenge of understanding and

transforming destructive human conflicts of this kind. In contrast to older established fields, such as international relations, conflict resolution was to be:

i. multilevel: analysis and resolution had to embrace all levels of conflict: intra- personal (inner conflict), interpersonal, intergroup (families, neighbourhoods, affiliations), international, regional, global, and the complex interplays between them;

ii. multidisciplinary: in order to learn how to address complex conflict systems adequately, the new field had to draw on many disciplines, including politics, international relations, strategic studies, development studies, individual and social psychology, etc.;

iii. multicultural: since human conflict is a worldwide phenomenon within an increasingly intricate and interconnected local/global cultural web, this had to be a truly cooperative international enterprise, in terms of both the geographical locations where conflict is encountered and the conflict resolution initiatives deployed to address them;

iv. both analytic and normative: the foundation of the study of conflict was to be systematic analysis and interpretation of the 'statistics of deadly quarrels' (polymology), but this was to be combined from the outset with the normative aim of learning how better thereby to transform actually or potentially violent conflict into non- violent processes of social, political and other forms of change;

v. both theoretical and practical: the conflict resolution field was to be constituted by a constant mutual interplay between theory and practice: only when theoretical understanding and practical experience of what works and what does not work are connected can properly informed experience develop.

2.12 Theatre for Development

The challenges facing oil hosting communities in Bayelsa state are developmental and as such needs viable approach. TfD is one of such approaches. The Other terms nowadays used for TfD projects are Theatre in Education (TiE) projects or Community Theatre projects. All these fields overlap. Which of the three applies best to a particular project depends on definitions of the terms "development', 'education' or 'community'. TfD is mostly used in the context of 'development support communication' and /or in the field of adult education and training. Theatre in Education (TiE) basically refers to the use of theatre within a formal school or out-of- school context. According to Jackson (1997:29-50), TiE began in Britain during the mid-1960s and spread rapidly as theatres sought to extend their outreach programme and developed a variety of ways of speaking to the communities they served. TiE refers to the use of theatre for explicit educational purposes, closely allied to the school curriculum and mostly in educational texts: school, colleges and youth clubs, or sometimes museums and historic sites.

Community theatre refers to theatre initiative taken and further developed by the community itself, most often based on local forms of indigenous theatre or performing arts within the community. All three types of theatre are participatory in nature (Epskamp 2006:11).

Theatre for Development aims to offer an alternative approach and medium by which theatre can be of direct service to the marginalized urban and rural peasant masses. The TfD approach which is gaining much ascendancy in Nigeria emphasizes collectivism and participation. It stresses community and inter-personal participation in self-realization and uses existing and familiar performance forms in the various communities such as songs, dances, music, storytelling, puppetry and mime to either validate those cultural forms or serve as an adequate instrument to bring about social change in those communities. Byam (2009) records that

Nigeria's effort at creating theatre for development began during its post-colonial period starting in 1977 when it was first adopted as an academic activity at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The project gained wide acceptance soon as it was adopted by the popular MAMSER campaign for mobilization. *Wasan Samaru* and *Wasan Manoma* were projects that originated from the community playmaking project of the Ahmadu Bello University which were more communal in style. The process according to Byam involved information gathering, interviews and discussions, playmaking, presentation of the play and after presentation discussion. Both *Wasan Manoma* and *Wasan Samaru* were classic example of theatre as an instrument of social mobilization and conscientization. For instance *Wasan Manoma*- a Hausa phrase for play for farmers was used to examine daily problems encountered by Soba farmers who lived at the outskirt of Zaria. The opportunity for dialogue between the farmers and university students created by the University staff brought the students close to issues and vices like poor healthcare, education and corruption. A play is then developed and presented before the people. Here, theatre essentially tries to make people more aware of their situation and commits them to want to do something about it.

There has been many other initiatives in the past like plays that focused on government programmes such as the National Food Production Initiative dubbed Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the Green Revolution programme of the Federal Government, although underscoring the role of theatre in identifying and analyzing societal problems and in mobilizing target audiences, particularly the grass root towards addressing developmental issues.

In theory and practice, TFD is a communication strategy and process that aims at community participation that achieves sustainable development. This participatory methodology has an appeal that relates to community development, because it encourages the people themselves to

take part in identifying their problem and to proffer solutions to those problems through participatory research analysis, playmaking, and discussion.

The potential and inseparable attributes of the theatre – as a communication and an educational medium – make it a ready and an attractive tool for development. In its final stage of evolution, TFD proposes to liberate conscientize, empower, emancipate, inform and educate people towards complete change, and in its practical application, its two key objectives are the transference of skills and the aim to facilitate or spur on changes in behaviour.

Theatre for development because of its participatory nature is a series of activities that involve a process of dialogue and interaction in which communities and other stakeholders increase their understanding of each other's knowledge and priorities, and work to identify mutually acceptable approaches and solution to identified problem. The system has birthed many participatory approaches to engaging communities; one of which is the Participatory Communication approach that makes use of the people's traditional entertainment forms, their language, proverbs, songs and dances, puppetry, local norms and cultures. As a ready strategy for fostering community participation, TFD has been found to be an effective method of communication among rural communities who constitute the "silent majority" of Africa's teeming populations. This situation has been exacerbated by the limited access of the majority of our people to modern and new communication technologies, including newspapers, radio, television, cinema and the internet, largely because of increasing levels of poverty, illiteracy, and the lack of electricity. Sometimes it has been as a result of the misdirection of major development programmes to urban instead of rural communities, where the support is more desperately needed. UNESCO has thus aptly described Third World TFD as "folk media".

TFD has in the last thirty years been tested, beaten, reshaped and accepted by scholars, communities and NGOs who have used the technique in various contexts of community development and for development activities (Abah, 2004). The aesthetics of TFD in practice is defined by what Abah calls "perforaltics".

According to Abah (2004), the concept perforaltics is:

> The oral and gestural amalgamation of a community's cultural system into a dramatic representation of their own reality. The oral which names and codifies the issues in this system of performance does not only refer to dialogue. It is about the gamut of languages which includes speech, song, drums and dance. They expound and locate the community's philosophy and ethos. The added conveyance of meaning happens through physical body gestures and movement not necessarily acting to concretise the issues named. Perforaltics in action is therefore, the deployment of the oral and gestural instruments in the performance warehouse of the performer in the pursuit of creating a picture and in generating meaning. It is the practice in which a dramatic piece is created through an essentially oral process incorporating, if not entirely relying on the performance modes of the community giving each drama life and meaning.

The significance of perforaltics is that it includes people in the process as every member of the community is both as discussant and as spectator; that is, spectator and actor rolled into one. The principles of inclusion and participation are in operation. A key element of perforltics is the use of the people's art form; and when native forms are made to carry as well as foreground discussions on community action, it is an expression of voice through means known and understood by the community. That very act is an act of participation. Dramatic performances in this system also allow people to broach taboo issues and yet they are not picked upon for punishment because the fictionalization is understood: the platform for action in the village arena is flat, transgressible and can be reconstituted. Herein lies the democracy of TFD.

It has been observed that most government development projects have often adopted a top-to-bottom approach in their conception and execution of programme activities. This process has resulted in alienating local beneficiary communities. Thus, many government

projects, though laudable, have failed to bring about changes in the lives of the rural areas because they have not sufficiently sensitized and mobilized the masses, and often ignored the people's indigenous and traditional wisdom and knowledge. The rural people then see such projects as an invasion of their culture and lifestyle, and refuse to meaningfully participate. However, TFD as a communication strategy is based on the theory that people, especially underprivileged communities in rural or semi-urban areas, relate more to development programmes in which they become and are seen as active participants, rather than passive recipient of development assistance. Thus, TFD relocates indigenous cultures from the periphery to the very centre of the community and makes it an integral part of the communal and decision-making process. This is why TFD has also been described as "a planning, educative and managerial instrument". TFD is concerned with not only the final messages and product but the "process" of a creative and dialogical engagement with the subjects of development. But has this process been used ell enough to engage the communities in the NDR in Nigeria? It is significant to veer into the Nigerian oil industry and the impact which the industry has had in the environment of its host communities.

These theatre forms affect the communication paradigm of this study; firstly because theatre is a means of communication that is functional and at the same, an instrument for mobilization. Beyond entertainment, theatre offers an alternative platform of unveiling the realities in the society. One of the ways it does this is through re/presentation with the major aim of getting members of audience to act or to take certain actions. In Bayelsa State, several groups, both government and nongovernmental, has deployed the use of theatre to engage local communities. However, they cannot be said to be successful because of the transient impact it has. Most of the performances done in these communities have been usually imported along with the media used in interacting with them. From the plotting of the stories

to the use media which do not reflect the cultural forms of host communities, such groups have only achieved little successes. More so, where local media are used, the issue of sustainability have also arisen as neither the facilitating groups nor the relevant agency come out with any viable communication plan to relate to members of these communities. This the TfD as a germane instrument necessary to the development of viable communication plan between multinational industries and oil hosting communities in conflict scenario.

2.13 Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that can fit into this study. However, these theories are laboriously imposed on environmental management especially as it concerns development communication. This study adopts Environmental Communication Theory as the conceptual framework for this study. This theory is propounded by Robert Cox in 2010. Though Environmental Theory has been on existence before Cox, it was mainly a subject used in the disciplines of geography, regional planning and environmental studies. The development of this theory within communication and development studies is traceable to Robert Cox who sees Environmental Communication as the pragmatic and constitutive vehicle for understanding environment as well as people's relationships to the natural world; it is the symbolic medium that people use in constructing environmental problems and negotiating society's different responses to them (Cox 2010:20). With this definition, Cox opens up for a dual functional theory. The first function is the pragmatic view of environmental communication. This is meant as a tool or vehicle to educate, alert, persuade, and help communicators to solve environmental problems. This is often the function used in campaigns by NGO's and governmental offices; however, it can also be used when multinational companies or extractive industries are comparing their activities with others in order that members of communities accept their impacts on development. The second function of the

theory is when environmental communication is constitutive. This implies how communication is able to shape people's views on nature. The method of how natural aspects are perceived as attractive or intimidating can be affected through the construction of the communicative message.

This study adopts this theory because it concerns itself more with environmental content in designing communication for local communities between government organizations, industries, multinationals, and communities that has a noticeable effect upon the way the environmental situation is formed. One of the leading proponents of this theory is Robert Cox. According to Cox (2010:3) environmental communication has three different purposes. Firstly, the aim is to create knowledge into how communications affects the way people perceive environmental related aspects. Secondly, the purpose is to draw attention to methods used by organisations to communicate environmental issues and finally, the purpose is to engage the members of communities in joining the discussions taking place about organisational environmental commitment. Cox presents seven areas in which his definition is embedded; however, this study examines only the areas relevant to this research. They are: "environmental collaboration and conflict resolution", "risk communication" and "Representations of nature in popular culture and green marketing".

Environmental collaboration and conflict resolution is grounded in local business having conflicts about various issues with relation to the environment. Different scholars Gore (2009), Kilbourne (2004), McDonagh (1998) have therefore found interest in how companies can communicate in order to gain mutual benefits. This type of dialogue is characterized as constructive, open, civil communication, generally as dialogue; a focus on the future; an emphasis on learning; and some degree power sharing and leveling of the playing field (Walker 2004:123). This means

A third area of which Cox's definition is reflected by is "Risk Communication' (Cox 2010:18). Cox argues that risk communication covers two areas. The first being, the commutative strategy performed by most organizations in the Niger Delta when informing the public about possible health risks. An example of this can be seen when organizations communicate about diseases such as cholera and cancer. The other area is how cultural understating is shaping the acceptance level of risk by the public. The example which is given by Cox reflects how the residence living near a refinery accepts or rejects certain cleanup methods; this is bound to whether they have a high cultural sensitivity compared to a technical sensitivity.

The final area of interest is representations of nature in popular culture and green marketing. However, in comparison with the previous discussed concept, this part of Cox's definition is reflecting the use of natural elements in mass media. In addition, these explorations are also affecting the public's attitude towards nature. Thus, Cox's description of environmental communication takes many different aspects under its theoretical umbrella. Nonetheless, the concern of this study is to examine how the environmentalists and communication strategies of operating organizations in the NDR, especially in Bayelsa State.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research Design

Descriptive research design in form of survey will be used for this study. This research design is adopted because it the best method suited for handling a large population located at different places under a natural setting .Especially on events that are in process or those that have taken place (Razaq and Ajayi, 2000: Osuola, 2001). Descriptive research design helps to clarify the purpose of survey research in identifying norms or baseline information which can be used for comparative purpose. Ekeh (2003) posited that survey method of research is concerned with systematic collection of data and generalized statistics resulting when data are obtained from a large of cases. Since the researcher is comparing the communication strategy had been used and new communication strategy been postulated by the researcher in solving environmental conflicts resulting from oil spills in Bayelsa State, descriptive survey method is therefore considered appropriate for use in the study.

3.1 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises of selected literate men and women from the eight local government areas in Bayelsa State: Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, and Yenagoa, In each of these local governments, a community was also be selected from them to apply the Theatre for Development approach.

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Eight local government areas were selected from the state. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the population for the study, which was limited to only one hundred and fourteen (114) literate men and women from each of the local governments. Indigenous enumerator was used to clarify barriers, where they exist, which occurred in the process of gathering data. Also, the technique was also used to select the community.

3.3 Instrument for Data Collection

Structured questionnaires were used to gather data for the research. The questionnaire was structured based on the research objectives, research questions. Formal and informal conversations were also used to gather data.

3.4 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted using 20 literate men and women from Brass local government, which is among the sampled local government area. This done is done in order to determine the reliability and consistency of the research instrument, and to ascertain the difficulty the researcher may encounter when carrying out the main study, as well as to determine the possibility of the subjects in providing necessary information required for the study. Another reason for the pilot study is to test whether the subjects will understand the questions and in providing answers that are valid for the study.

3.5 Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument being used, the data from the pilot study was coded and subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 16.

3.6 Procedure for Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using the appropriate statistical method, from the SPSS statistical package. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentile was used for identification and classification of respondent's demographic characteristics, while percentile and weighted mean score was used in answering the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected for this research. Also data collected from questions were presented and analysed. The questions were calculated and their percentage defined. Therefore, the method of data analysis of this research is a quantitative method. In questionnaire analysis, attempt is usually made in discovering and establishing of the existing relationship between the different variables involved in the analysis. To this extent, this chapter evaluates "communication for the effective management of environment".

4.1 Data Presentation

This Section presents the analysis of responses collected from one hundred and ten respondents (110), out of one hundred and fourteen copies of questionnaire administered (114).

Table 4.1.1: Sex of the Respondents

Options	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	73	66
Female	37	34
Total	**110**	**100**

The above table shows the sex distribution of the respondents. 66 percent of the respondents are male while 34 percent of the respondents are female.

Table 4.1.2: Age of the Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percent
18-30	44	40
31-40	33	30
41-50	26	24
51 and above	7	6
Total	**110**	**100**

The above table shows that, 40 percent of the respondents are in the age bracket 18 – 30, 30 percent are in the age range 31 – 40, 24 percent of the respondents are in age bracket 41 – 50 while 51 and above are in the age bracket 51 and above.

Table 4.1.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percent
Single	46	42
Married	64	58
Total	110	100

From the above table, 42 percent of the respondents are single while 58 percent are married.

Table 4.1.4: Educational Qualification

Options	Frequency	Percent
OND/NCE	29	26
HND/B.SC	59	54
M.SC / PGD	20	18
PHD	2	2
Total	**110**	**100**

The table above shows that 26 percent of the respondents had OND/NCE certificate, 54 percent of the respondents had HND/B.SC 18 percent degrees, of the respondents had M.Sc/PGD degrees while 2 percent of the respondents had P.HD.

4.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Table 4.2.1: Respondents affirmation of conflict situation experience in the state

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	101	92
No	9	8
Total	**110**	**100**

From the table above, 92 percent of the respondents said they have experienced conflict in the Niger-delta area while 8 percent of the respondents said no they have not.

Table 4.2.2: Respondents aggregated views of experienced of conflict situation

Option	Frequency	Percent
Struggle for control and equitable and justifiable means of distribution of wealth	29	26
Unfavourable Government policies	33	30
Poverty and Under-development in Bayelsa State	19	18
Oil Spillage and activities of the oil companies operating in the region	20	18
No response	9	8
Total	**110**	**100**

From the above table, 26 percent of the respondents said struggle for control and equitable and justifiable means of distribution of wealth led to the conflict in the state, 30 percent of the respondents said unfavourable government policies led to the conflict in the state, 18 percent of the respondents said poverty and under-development in state, led to the conflict in, while 26 per cent of the respondents said oil spillage and activities of the oil companies operating in the region led to the conflict in the state.

Table 4.2.3: Respondents affirmation of the effective communications and functional dialogue as a means of conflict resolution in the state.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	79	72
No	31	28
Total	**110**	**100**

From the table above, 72 percent of the respondent said effective communications and functional dialogue is a means of conflict resolution in the state while 28 percent of the respondents said effective communications and functional dialogue is not a means of conflict resolution in the state.

Table 4.2.4: Respondents Affirmation of any conflict resolution strategies

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	90	82
No	20	18
Total	**110**	**100**

From the table above, 82 percent of the respondent said there are conflict resolution strategies in the state while 18 per cent of the respondents said there are no conflict resolution strategies in the state.

Table 4.2.5: Respondents aggregated conflict resolution strategy

Option	Frequency	Percent
Functional Dialogue	40	36
Federal Government Amnesty Initiatives	20	18
Effective communications	30	27
No response	20	18
Total	**110**	**100**

From the above analysis, 36 percent of the respondents said functional dialogue is one of the conflict resolution strategies applied in the state, 18 percent of the respondents said federal government amnesty initiatives is one of the conflict resolution strategies applied in the state while 27 percent of the respondents said effective communications is one of the conflict resolution strategies applied in the state.

Table 4.2.6: Respondents views on the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies

Option	Frequency	Percent
Effective	79	72
Ineffective	31	28
Total	**110**	**100**

From the above analysis, 72 percent of the respondents the present federal government initiatives like dialogue with Niger Delta elders, Clean up of Ogoni Land, Advocacy visits by the Minister of Petroluem Resources Mr. Ibe Kachikwu and the Town Hall meeting with the

Vice Presidents Professor Yemi Osinbajo is effective while 28 percent of the respondents the federal government amnesty initiative is ineffective.

Table 4.2.7: Respondents affirmation of challenges facing conflict resolution in Niger-Delta

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	86	78
No	24	22
Total	**110**	**100**

From the table above, 78 percent of the respondent said conflict resolution in the state is faced with challenges while 22 percent of the respondents said conflict resolution in the state is not faced with challenges.

Table 4.2.8: Respondents affirmation of linkages between effective communications and conflict resolution in the state

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	75	68
No	35	32
Total	**110**	**100**

From the above table, 68 percent of the respondents said there is linkage between effective communications and conflict resolution in the Niger-Delta while 32 percent of the respondent said there is no linkage between effective communications and conflict resolution in the state.

Table 4.2.9: Respondents affirmation of that communications and functional dialogue contributed positively to conflict resolution in the state

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	79	72
No	31	28
Total	**110**	**100**

From the above table, 72 percent of the respondents said Effective communications and functional dialogue has contributed positively to conflict resolution in the state while 28 per cent of the respondent said Effective communications and functional dialogue has not contributed positively to conflict resolution in state.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Conflict refers to contradictions arising from differences in the interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies of the people concerned. These contradictions are inherent at all levels of social and economic interactions of the human race. It may therefore exist at the individual, group, institutional, regional, national and international levels. Conflict is thus a pervasive phenomenon in human relationships and has been seen as the 'basic unit for understanding social existence.

Conflicts may have negative or positive effects. The resolution of conflicts helps to push society towards enhanced humanity. Conflicts are inevitable in human affairs but if carefully handled, they can lead to social and economic progress. When unresolved contradictions are allowed to linger and explode into violence, however, conflict becomes undesirable and may develop into a menace. Violent conflict is therefore the consequence of the inability or failure

to accommodate and resolve contradictions in society through arrangements and procedures that eliminate their negative effects and maximize their positive effect.

Resolving conflict anywhere in the world is intrinsically linked with the forms and processes adopted in communicating the issues that first led to the conflict, and how they should be resolved. In resolving a local conflict, indigenous communication channels like family meetings, swearing of eats to justify are innocence as well as the payment of fines, punishment for guilty and restitutions are common tools used. Taking a step further, resolving an issue that concerns the people of the Niger Delta, calls for the adoption of all the forms of communication be it endogenous, exogenous and indigenous. This implies the combination of town hall meeting, advocacy visits, social meetings, workshop, interpersonal interaction, family discussion, the use of radio, television and mobile media like Whatsapps, Facebook, Twitter, bulk Short Messaging Services – SMS's and high profile visits like the one embarked upon first by the minister of state for petroleum – Dr. Ibe Kachikwu and later by the vice presidents of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo to listen to the people's clamour and agitation for fairness in development, resource control, employment opportunities, and clean-up of the region.

Adopting a mixed method forms of communication without enabling active participation of the people to air their views and express their opinion about the deprivation which majority of the feels and the destruction to the sources of the livelihoods in the modest of the glut of oil spillages which has oiled and provided the revenue for the sustainable growth and development of the country in almost five decades since the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Oloibiri in 1958. The agitations by the people in the area could be said to have arisen from the deprivation of the area from access to the wealth that comes from

the area, gross neglect in the provisions of infrastructures necessary for the modernization of the area and environmental degradation due to over-exploitation, poor standard of oil exploration and to drive it home the inability of the people: demands and agitations.

The consequences for this, has been increasing militancy and the blowing up of oil wells, pump stations, and pipelines which has grossly reduced oil production in Nigeria. Thereby dwindling oil production, shooting up global oil price which the country can not benefit from because, it is production output is lowest. One would say that the amnesty strategy adopted by President Yar'Adua's administration was a step in the right direction even palliative until the present administration of president Buhari halted it and decided to use brute force using military might. The consequence of which was the return to militancy by splinter group of MEND namely the Niger Delta Avengers and host of others. Hence, it could be said that the process of intervention and communication because unilateral, forceful, top down and manifest exclusion of the people; in how the issue could be resolved. By this, the study found that the initial process of intervention in resolving the conflict failed in resolving AU conflict.

The success of any communication process in development and conflict resolution circles depends largely in the ability of the warring factions as well as the public to agreeing to embrace peace and stop the wanton destruction and blowing up of oil families. It was such identification, that prompted the present government efforts in adopting advocacy visits by leaders such as his Royal Highness Alfred Diette-Spiff and Dr. Edwin Clerk visits to tender the people demand to the governments as well as reciprocal visits and town hall meeting carried out by the Acting president Professor Yemi Osinbajo when he visited each of the states in the Niger Delta region and secured the assurance of the leaders and militant groups to cease hostilities as well as that on the side of government to halt military campaigns against the

militant groups. In this regard, advocacy visits and town halls which are more endogenous form of communication than the exogenous ones carried by the mass media becomes the main communication strategies adopted by the state and federal government in addressing the challenges facing the region.

To a significant extent as found in this research, this communication strategies used by both the state, federal government and leaders in the area is seen as achieving its objectives of halting military action against the people, cessation of the bombings carried out on oil installation by militants groups, increase in oil production and finally a strategic resolve by the Federal government to be more proactive in paying attention to the regon as well as moves to reconcile with militants leaders like Ekpomolo Tomopolo, the return of stolen artefacts from the shrine of the Gbamaratu Kingdom and the establishments as well as immediate commencement of the Federal University of Maritime Technology in Okerenkwoko which has hitherto being one of the reasons behind the upsurge in militancy in the area.

Modern forms of communication in addressing development, needs and aspirations in any given society is no longer restricted to only a single paradigm as well as its attendants communication channels, tools or method. The weakness witnessed in the adoption of the unilateral, and top-down approach which by and large exclude the people at the centre of development intervention makes it necessary for the adoption of the alternative communication strategy which hinges more on people's participation and inclusion in the processes and stages of development intervention actively and not passively. Here, the voices, opinions and suggestions of the people and noted and acted on, in order to create an atmosphere of acceptability, and sustainability of the intervention in this case, cessation of bombing by the militants with pledge and action taken to develop the area sustainably.

As noted earlier, the use of endogenous communication process such advocacy visits, and town hall meetings could be strengthened with the inclusion of issue based dramatic performance that looked at the cause, effect and ways of resolving conflict in the areas as exhibited in the TFD methodology being advanced by Abah, (2001). The town meetings and advocacy visits should not be seen as a stage managed and cosmetic process that only allows for a selected few to express their views, hence, the need for the people to communicate participatory as advanced by proponents of participatory as advanced by proponents of participatory communication like Sevaes (2001), Metalupolas (2009) and Okori (2011) becomes very apt in achieving sustainable conflict resolution and development intervention in the Niger Delta region.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the research, and findings, conclusion of the research and its implication on Environmental Communication Theory being the theoretical perspectives used. Finally, the research made some recommendations drawing largely from the findings based on the analyses of the data gotten from the instrument used.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study evaluates communication for the effective management of environment. Effective communications and functional dialogue approach to conflict management is a collaborative approach to 'problem solving' and decision making. It places an equal priority on the relationship with the other parties and on a mutually satisfying outcome. The strategies of the 'problem-solving' conflict management style include building trust, communicating face-to-face, gathering information, dialoguing, negotiating, valuing diversity, team building, having focus group discussions, searching for alternatives and seeking 'win-win' solutions (Kepner & Likubo 1996:11-28). In order to empirically find out how communication strategies was used in resolving the perennial conflict in the Niger Delta, the study set out the following research objectives which were (i) Identify the communication strategies use by the government and the multinational companies and (ii) Find out the effectiveness of the communication strategies used Suggest an alternative communication strategy in resolving the Niger Delta conflict. Other objectives are to (iii) Compare the current strategies being used with the new one been suggested and (iv) suggest alternative communication strategy in resolving the Niger Delta conflict.

The study used the quantitative survey research design that sought to gather data one hundred and fourteen (114) respondents purposively chosen and systematically administered from some areas in Bayelsa State. From the analysis of the data, the following were the summary of findings:

1. Communication strategies used by both the state, federal government and leaders in the area is seen as achieving its objectives of halting military action against the people, cessation of the bombings carried out on oil installation by militants groups

2. The weakness witnessed in the adoption of the unilateral, and top-down approach which by and large exclude the people at the centre of development intervention makes it necessary for the adoption of the alternative communication strategy which hinges more on people's participation

3. The use of communication process such advocacy visits, and town hall meetings as a conflict communication approach could be strengthened with the inclusion of issue based dramatic performance that looked at the cause, effect and ways of resolving conflict in the areas.

5.2 Conclusion

The conventional methods of dealing with contradictions in the Niger Delta cannot be said to have broker peace in the region. Rather, these strategies have heightened tension, insecurity and conflicts in the region. The participatory approach to conflict management is an invaluable tool which would enable a wide cross-section of people to share information and opinions about their lives and environment. People, who under normal circumstances are voiceless and

powerless in the community, are empowered to gain confidence and to speak out. The face-to-face interaction which TfD provides creates the opportunity for policy makers to gain an understanding of the issues at stake and to develop community trust and confidence for the government and its intentions. The application of a participatory approach in the Niger Delta is not new but policy makers have over the years paid lip service to the issue, and its principles have not been wholly applied. Hence the desired result of peace in the Niger Delta region has remained an illusion.

The root causes of the Niger Delta anger, restiveness and insurgency are well known. Through the preceding pages we were able to establish that it is an inevitable product of close to fifty years of criminal neglect; inhuman environmental devastation; complete exclusion of the people of the region from the benefits of their natural resources; violent and brutal onslaught on the oil-bearing communities by the Nigerian state; monumental looting of oil revenue at all levels of government; and intolerable poverty in the midst of unimaginable oil and gas wealth. All these issues have thrown up the crisis of development in the region. Therefore, any attempt aimed at addressing the crisis is a call for finding lasting solutions to the fundamental issues that form the bedrock of the crisis in the oil-bearing region. And we are not under any illusion that finding a practical solution to the Niger Delta problem would be easy.

This is so because apart from the fact that it is a multidimensional and complex crisis, the Niger Deltans, as a result of several years of government insincerity, have become very cynical of government's intentions and policies. Government at all levels must act fast if they hope to turn back the hand of violence and insecurity associated with the crisis of backwardness and underdevelopment in the region. So much lofty policies and projects have been promised to the region since this new administration came on board. Promises and good dreams or plans do not mean anything to the suffering people of the Niger Delta. The three

tiers of government must as a matter of urgency fashion out an aggressive policy mechanism to address the simple and basic needs of the people of the region. The near absence of basic infrastructure such as health services and facilities, pipe-borne water, good and affordable shelter, electricity supply, road construction and maintenance, education and effective skill acquisition and empowerment programmes, must be immediately and aggressively addressed. This should be the primary policy thrust of government at all levels. And in order to sustain the process and structures, it must be done with genuine participation of the affected communities and community based organizations. It is our belief that this measure will enthrone trust and confidence in the relation between the government and people of the region. And this measure should serve as a plank fir further engagement between the government and the people of the region.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the descriptive and empirical analysis, the recommendations of the study are stated below:

To The Federal Government

i. To promptly tackle the problem of unemployment and to engage restive youths, an enabling law should be enacted to will make it mandatory for MNOCs to employ bulk of their staff at all levels from the oil producing communities.

ii. To limit the environmental consequences of oil exploration and exploitation, the federal government in collaboration with oil producing states and communities, should enact stringent and enforceable legislations that will ensure that MNOCs maintain universally acceptable best standard in their operations.

iii. To cut off the easy flow of weapons into the region and groups with violent agenda, the federal government must explore means to end illicit and illegal payments by MNOCs for security purpose to both militants or youths groups and paramilitary security forces deployed to protect oil installations.

iv. To frontally address selfish leadership and criminal looting of public funds, stringent and enforceable legal instrument should be put in place to deal with culpable public officers.

v. Should create the enabling environment that will make the people of the region real stakeholders not just spectators in the management of oil and gas resources.

vi. Supporting the above point, there are also proposals for a change in the joint venture agreements to enable the oil-bearing communities own shares in the MNOCs.

vii. To urgently take concrete and practical steps to diversify the Nigerian economy in order to reduce it's over dependence on non renewable oil and gas resources.

viii. Initiate a credible sustained dialogue on control of resources with Niger Delta civil society including militants.

ix. Seek in parallel with the dialogue on resource control, an agreement with militants that includes a phased withdrawal of Nigerian soldiers from the region, concurrent with a weapon return amnesty programme that pays militants and gang members' market value for guns and enrols in skill and job training programmes.

x. Inaugurate a democratic constitutional reform process in which an elected assembly will work out modalities for restructuring of the Nigerian Federation in order to guarantee the ownership and control of resources by the component groups and the equality of the federating units (states).

To Bayelsa State Government

i. Provide effective governance and robust service delivery based on the democratic principles of equity, accountability, probity, transparency, vision, compassion and nationalism. To whom much is given much is expected.

ii. Along the same line, local government councils as the closest to the people and base of development, must be reformed and made more democratic.

iii. As a matter of urgency, the state government must put mechanism in place to diversify their economies and sources of revenue.

iv. Engage more fully with professional nongovernmental organizations that demonstrate a capability and willing to assist communities to take responsibility for their own development.

v. In their quest for resource control and denationalization of the petroleum industry, the Bayelsa state government should not only build synergy within themselves, they should be tactful, calculative and diplomatic enough to build partnership and extend hands of friendship to non-oil producing states.

To the Multinational Oil Companies

i. Prioritize long-term interest of operating in Nigeria over short-term production goals. This also involves seeking community consent before proceeding with production related activities.

ii. Conclude agreements to ensure prompt and commensurate payments of compensation to individuals and local communities for land use and pollution.

iii. Develop partnership with non-governmental, community-based bodies with a demonstrated ability to provide skills training and capacity building for development projects within the affected community.

5.4 Contribution to knowledge

This research on the use of communication strategies in conflict resolution in the Niger Delta has been able to show that:

1. The adoption of appropriate and an all-inclusive communication approach like the alternative participatory communication strategy would lead to armistice in any conflict situation.
2. The use of an all-inclusive communication strategy that encourages the right people or conflict stakeholder participations in conflict situation like town hall meeting and pragmatic advocacy visits and committed development intervention are effective in bringing about the resolution of conflicts in the Niger Delta.
3. Bring all stakeholders like the Pan Niger Delta Elders Forum-PADEF, Bayelsa State Government, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Environment, the Presidency as well as representative of the militant groups is key to achieving sustainable conflict resolution process in the Niger Delta.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The research was carried out because of the need to assess how effective communication approaches could bring about conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. With this in mind, this study suggests that further research could be conducted by investigating communication approaches to study ethno-communal conflict in states like Plateau and Nassarawa.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE

BIO-DATA

(i) Sex: (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]

(ii) Age:..... ……..……

(iii) Marital Status: (a) Single [ ] (b) Married [ ]

(iv) Educational Qualification:..... ……

SECTION B

1. Have you ever experienced conflict situation in Bayelsa Sate?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

2. If yes, what led to it?

a) ……

b) ……..

c) ……..

d) ……..……..

e) ……..……..

3. Is effective communications and functional dialogue a means of conflict resolution in Bayelsa State?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

4. Are there any conflict resolution strategies in Bayelsa State?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

5. If yes, what are the strategies?

a) ……..……..

b) ……..……..

c) ……...

d) ……..……..

e) ……..……..

6. How is the federal government amnesty initiative?

a) Effective [ ] (b) Ineffective [ ]

7. Is conflict resolution in Bayelsa State faced with challenges?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

8. Is there any linkage between effective communications and conflict resolution in Bayelsa State?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

9. Effective communications and functional dialogue contributed positively to conflict resolution in Bayelsa State

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

10. There is a significant relationship between Conflict Resolution strategies Bayelsa State and Development in Nigeria

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

11. Is there any significant difference in the communication strategy used by the oil companies and the people involved in conflict in Bayelsa State?

a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

Appendix II



Source: Hoffmann, (2013). 'Communication for Peace Model