

IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

The main general objective of the study is to examine the role of mass media in conflict resolution using Ife-Modakeke crisis as case study; while the specific objectives of the study are to ascertain whether the role of mass media in Ife-Modakeke have been setting agenda of peace; find out whether the mass media have been giving objective reports of Ife-Modakeke crisis; and determine the contributions of mass media to conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke crisis, and specifically help us in knowing which of the medium was more active in the coverage of the crisis.

KEY WORDS: *crises resolution, conflict management, mass media.*

INTRODUCTION

In a society suffering from prolonged conflict (religious, ethnic or communal), the integrating of cultures (people, customs, mores) through education seems to be a hopeful and lasting initiative for conflict resolution. Ife and Modakeke are neighboring communities in Osun State, Nigeria, which have engaged in protracted communal violence and intra-ethnic conflict. Asiyanbola (2007) asserted that so far, there had been seven major wars between the Ife and Modakeke, that is- 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946- 1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998, and 2000. Based on this, the conflict appears to be the oldest intra-ethnic conflict in Nigeria because it has been going on for more than a century. Also, Augsburg (2002) and Omotayo (2005) concluded that the conflict has become its own *raison d'être*; its own self-empowered, and self-fulfilling, as it had since detached from its original cause.

The conflict has grown and matured to the extent that it is no longer a physical battle alone. Its psychological dimension has reached the extent that both parties are in cold war. Asiyanbola (2007) concluded that women that are married to the other community and particularly their children have identity crisis in the sense that some see each other as strangers and enemy, although quite a percentage of the respondents see each other as kinsmen. Therefore, it seems there is existence of segregation between the two communities in terms of marriage and even schooling most especially among the youths. Education is often used as a tool for achieving social change in the society. Hence, there should be an educational setting in which children from Ife and Modakeke communities would attend school together. This would ensure contact of not only the pupils at school but also the parents in the management of school. This study examines the intensity of the crisis, strategies to curb the violence and why these strategies have not produced lasting solution. It also considers an integrated education as a peace initiative based on contact theory according to which Ife and Modakeke communities should be brought together in the same school setting in order to overcome their attitudinal differences. It is therefore in line with the foregoing that the study examines the role of mass media in conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke crisis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The prevalence of conflict in the world and particularly in the Ife-Modakeke community has been a major source of concern to individuals, families and the society at large. People have become apprehensive about the negative consequences of conflict, due to the way and manner it erupts in our society.

However, the media have also been noted for its dysfunctional roles in the society. Since the media seek to mold the opinion of users, it is logical that their negative roles would have negative effects on society. Although the media to a large extent indeed play biggest role of ensuring that conflicts or any particular conflict receives wide public attention. The question this research work seeks to answer therefore is, what role does mass media play in conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke crisis?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions for the study

- How has the mass media been giving objective reports of Ife-Modakeke crisis?

- What are the contributions of mass media to conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke crisis?
- What prominence was given to the coverage
- What was the people's assessment of the media coverage?

THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT

Conflict can be seen as the perceived divergence of interest or belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously from gradual interactions. Pruitt and Robbins, [2002]. Conflict can range from simple disagreement to war. Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot's definition describes conflict "as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from other party in achieving their goals". This definition emphasizes the central role of communication. Conflict can be experienced without being expressed; group members can be acutely uncomfortable without saying a word. But how conflict is expressed and how it is handled are communicative acts, which explore. Therefore, efficient application of communication through the broadcast media, such as State Broadcasting Service must occur, considering the understanding of dynamics of conflict.

Closely related to the conflict background are the stages of conflict. Each conflict has its dynamics, characterized by different stages and phases of change and transformation. Lederach points out, conflict is not a static phenomenon, but is expressive, dynamic and dialectical (Lederach, 1997). According to Simon Fisher et al, [2000].

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Task conflict: This is also known as substantive conflict. It is found in disagreement over ideas, meaning, issues and other matters to the task. Task conflict is work-related and is the basis for effective decision making and problem solving. This type of conflict allows group members to challenge and evaluate ideas, proposal, evidence, and reasoning.

Relational conflict: This is also known as affective conflict. It originates from interpersonal power clashes, likes and dislikes unrelated to the group's task. It represents who in the conflict and it's generally detrimental to the efficient functioning of any group. Mahmat Bayazit and Elizabeth Mannix found out that relational conflict, not task conflict, was the main reason team members gave for expressing a desire to leave the team.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICT

- Two persons must be involved in the conflict or parties conflicting.
- The view of the contending party must be different. That is, disagreement on an issue.
- Each party must have a leader who is responsible in maintaining the conflict.
- There must be a third party to resolve the conflict.
- In all conflict it can be resolved partially or totally.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFLICT

According to Ikechwu, N. (2004), there are three causes of conflict.

- **Intrapersonal level:** this is when one is not at peace himself. Several factors usually have independent impacts on the individual to make the conflictual in a situation. It is mostly those who have psychological makeup that tend to behave in that manner. This could arise from individual needs or expectations, perceptions of events.
- **Interpersonal conflict:** This arises as a result of incompatible goals between two parties. At this point, it is caused by faulty interpersonal communication such as unclear instructions or messages, inappropriate criticism by subordinate in public, wrongly-timed criticism.
- **Structural functional causes of conflict:** It could also be referred to as structural ownership of land; such as land between two parties. It has its roots from interactions between organizational or group structures. They arise as a result of scarce resources, ambiguity over responsibilities or jurisdictions, faulty or inadequately applied reward systems, unreasonable deadline, poor decision making system approach etc. Kreltner, K. (1995).

Others are;

- **Beliefs:** Beliefs such as cultures and traditions of a land amounts to conflict.
- **Endemic situations:** Endemic situations such as diseases cholera, malaria could amount to conflict.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict management is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. This term is sometimes used synonymously with conflict. It covers the entire area of handling conflict, by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment and litigation. In the words of John Burton, this may include “conflict prevention”. Burton, [1990], said that the term can be used to connote containment of conflict through steps introduced to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control the behaviour of conflicting parties. The term “conflict management” is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflicts is inevitable, but that, not all conflicts can always be resolved. Therefore, what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Communication is a veritable tool to effective understanding and management of conflict at all levels. To achieve success in conflict management, one has to be familiar with interpersonal communication, intrapersonal communication, group communication, national and international communication practice.

Ikechukwu, (2004), the mass media of communication have special role to play in conflict understanding and management at various levels of human existence. Although their influence or role in conflict management tends to be perceptually more pronounced at the group, communal, societal and global or international levels of conflict management.

ROLES OF MASS MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- In times of crisis the responsibility of the mass media is magnified ten folds by society's demand for more news, information and analysis. That is, the mass media informs the public on the level of crisis or war in a community where involved.
- It is a carrier of different shades and colours of information both positive and negative.
- It increases capacity to influence debate and shape public opinion. Every word, written or spoken by the media is a potential matchet, bullet or bomb in the minds and hands of victims and perpetrators. (Sankore,p. 13).

THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution has been conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a conflict usually in the shapes of group members initiating a compromising dialogue or ideologies to the rest of the group. Augsburger, [1992]. This is to say that conflict resolution is essentially aimed at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a conflict. Conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with the parties concerned, with the hope of at least reducing the scope, intensity and effects of conflicts. During formal and informal meetings, conflict resolution exercises permit, a re-assessment of views and chains as a basis for finding options to crisis and to divergent point of view. Communication thus, is very pivotal in resolving any conflict and this is where the media comes in handy (Bannon, 2003).

However, one factor that has been found common in conflict situation is the absence of the right information or breach of communication between parties involved. Provision of the right information has been seen as the panacea for conflict resolution. According to Gisesa [2002]. Conflict and peace have revealed that conflict are based on deficiency of information, stressing that cases of misinformation, wrong information or missing information chance, disparity in opinions and social difference which may lead to as well as heighten conflict.

Thus, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflicts exist, following the reason behind them. This includes but not limited to the following;

- Negotiation.
- Mediation.
- Diplomacy.

Negotiation: This is a dialogue between two or more people or parties, intended to reach an understanding, resolve point of difference, or gain advantage in outcome of dialogue, to produce an agreement upon courses of action, to bargain for individual or collective advantage to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests of two people or parties involved in negotiation process (Burton, 2001). Bronowski (1983), further puts that negotiation is a process where each party involved in negotiating tries to gain an advantage or minimize disadvantage for themselves by the end of the process. That is, it is intended to aim at a compromise and occur in business, non-profit organizations, government branches, legal proceedings, international dealings and in personal situations such as marriage divorce, parenting and in everyday life event that is prone to friction and conflict. (Michel, 1990). The employment of negotiation in conflict resolution stems from general assertion that when the parties involved in a conflict are optionally satisfied, conflict will definitely not ensue.

Mediation: Broadly refer to any instance which a third party helps others to reach an agreement (Johan, 2002). The term mediation on the other hand is used as a form of alternative disputes

resolution a way of resolving disputes between two or more parties to negotiate a settlement. Adam Currie, (1992).

More often, mediation has a structure timetable and dynamics that “ordinary” negotiation lack. The process is usually private and confidential, possibly enforced by law. The mediator acts as a neutral third party and facilitates rather than directs the process. Mediators use various techniques to open, or improve dialogue between disputants, aiming to help the parties reach an agreement. Much depends on the skill of the mediator. As the practice of mediation gained popularity, training programmes, certification and licensing followed, producing trained, professional mediators committed to the discipline.

Diplomacy: In conflict resolution diplomacy refers to any art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of groups or states. It usually refers to international diplomacy, the conduct of international relations through intercession of professional diplomats.

DUAL CONCERN MODEL OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The dual concern model of conflict resolution is a conceptual perspective that assumes individual’s preferred method of dealing with conflict is based on two underlying themes or dimension.

According to the dual concern model, group members balance their concern for satisfying personal needs and interests with their concern for satisfying the needs and interest of others in different ways .The intersection point between these two dimensions ultimately lead individuals forward towards exhibiting different styles of conflict resolution (Goldfien and Robbennolt, 2007). In the light of this, the model identifies five conflict resolution styles or strategies that individuals may use depending on their dispositions towards pro-self or pro-social goals. They were;

AVOIDANCE CONFLICT STYLE

This is characterized by inaction and positivity. Avoidance conflict style is typically used when an individual has reduced concern for their own outcomes as well as the outcome of others .During conflict, these avoidance adopt a “wait and see” attitude, often allowing conflict to phase out on its own without any personal involvement (Bayazi and Mannix, 2005).Unfortunately, by neglecting to address high-conflict situations, avoider risk allowing problems to fester out of control. Avoidance also means a way of ignoring or suppressing conflict with the hope that they either disappear or remain at manageable levels without escalating. It should therefore be used in conflict situations in which issues are trivial or more important issues are pressing, when you will gain by avoiding conflict or preventing it.

YIELDING CONFLICT STYLE

In contrast, yielding or “accommodating” conflict style is characterized by a high concern for others while having a low concern for one’s own self. This passive pro-social approach emerges when individuals derive personal satisfaction from meeting the needs of others and have a general concern for maintaining stable, positive social relationships. When faced with a conflict, individuals with a yielding conflict style tend to give into others” demands out of respect for the social relationships.

COMPETITIVE CONFLICT STYLE

Competitive or fighting conflict style means being uncooperative. The individual seeks to satisfy himself only, not minding the import of his decision and activities on the other parties to the conflict he is competing. It could also maximize individual assertiveness (i.e. concern for self) and minimizes empathy (i.e., concern for others). Groups consisting of competitive members generally enjoy seeking domination over others, and typically see conflict as a “win or lose” predicament. That is, fighters tend to force to accept their personal views by employing competitive power tactics (e.g., argue, insult, accusation, violence) that foster feelings of intimidation. In essence the best way to resolve this is the use of force or forceful achievement of one’s objective especially when situation demands quick decision action in emergencies, and against people who take advantage of non-competitive behaviours (Bartol and Martin, 1997).

COOPERATIVE CONFLICT STYLE

It means an active concern for both pro-social and prop-self behaviour. Cooperation conflict style is typically used when an individual has elevated interest in their own outcomes as well as of others. This is used when objectives of the party is to find integrative or unifying solution on perspective. During conflict, cooperators collaborate with others in an effort to find an amicable solution that satisfies all parties involved in the conflict style tend to be highly assertive and highly empathetic at the same time. By seeing conflict as a creative opportunity, collaborators willingly invest time and resources into finding a “win-win” solution. Strmberg and Dobson, (1987). Jarboe and Witterman, (1996). Opined that the cooperative conflict style is ideally recommended above all others

ROLES OF BROADCAST MEDIA

Okafor, (1994). Writes, media are first and foremost entertainment media, although they are equally profoundly capable of educating and entertaining listeners and viewers which individuals are helped to attain the development of his potential and his maximum activation when necessary to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment.

Throwing more light on the functions, broadcasting performs different roles to its audience such as;

- **Surveillance:** Here the mass media are the eyes and ears of the public. News media provide information and alert us of the changes that take place around us. Television conveys an impact of immediacy in its news reporting; viewers feel that what they see is happening at the moment even though they may know what a great deal was recorded earlier on film or video tape.
- **Entertainment:** It relates to relaxation. It is meant to ease tension from much labour. The function of entertainment in mass communication is not meant for punishment but for leisure and relaxation. This is simply why families can sit comfortably in their various homes viewing comedies; sports and cartoons for children; this is to say that entertainment by the media does not simply mean people dressed in rags dancing and entertaining the audience only. Entertainment comes not only from film and television, but also from other media like newspapers, magazines, books and radio. Approximately, three-fourth of the programming on TV qualifies as entertainment; for radio stations with a music format, the percentage is even higher. For many years entertainment was passive activity; people watching TV were often referred to as “couch potatoes” because they

sat on their couches and watched what someone else produced. TV can be an excellent companionship for older people who live alone. A simple turn of radio switch can bring you relaxing music.

- **Correlation:** Hornby et al, (1980) in Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of current English, defined correlation as mutual relationship. This means, it is an agreement between two things brought together. In keeping the definition by and large, correlation is closely related to surveillance.
- **Cultural transmission:** The media mirror the society, standardize and reinforce its behavioural norms. We learn how to behave by observing the actions of others through
- **The media.** Cultural transmission as function of the broadcast media is simply the preservation of past heritage or culture, and since culture permits small and total departure from its prescriptions, this function of the broadcast media is the transfer of culture from one ethnic group to another and from generation to generation, for the purpose of promoting and even integrating culture.
- **Status conferral:** Lazarsfeld and Merton remind that the media confer status on person's organizations and ideas. This function means that the more one is featured in the media, the more one's status is raised to public prominence.
- **Enforcement of cultural norms and value:** Through their coverage of cultural festival, traditional dances, exhibitions of local arts and crafts, folklore and vernacular discussion programmes on radio and television as well as publications in magazines and the mass media play a role in the enforcement and transmission of culture.
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CHARACTERISTICS OF BROADCAST MEDIA

- Broadcasting uses electro-magnetic radiation.
- Broadcasting uses voice, not code.
- It uses signals that are intended for reception by the general public.
- Its operations are usually licensed or authorized by government.

However, the above mentioned, indicated that the media or broadcast media, is capable of influencing, educate and also change the perception of its target audience on issues that arise in the society, whether negatively or positively, through the programmes aired time to time with much emphasis. Therefore, the ability of the broadcast media to report objectively, right information or breach of communication to its public, would rather maintain balance in the society. It is the absence or deficiency of information or missing information chance disparity in opinions and social difference which may lead to as well heighten conflict in the society.

OBJECTIVITY, PERCEPTION AND THE MEDIA IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In answering the question "what is objectivity?" Lichtenberg (1996) has this to say "some say journalism is not objective; others say that it cannot be objective, still others say it should not be objective". Awoshakin (2002,) observes that in reporting conflicts, the issue of "objectivity" is usually an important ideal to aim for even if it is impossible to fully attain. He explains that journalists whether they acknowledge them or not, will always have feelings and opinion in response to the story they are covering and trying to ignore or cutting off those feelings and

opinions can lead them to distort. Without fully acknowledging it even to themselves, decisions they make about what to cover and how to cover it. He believes that the problem with this is that when journalists present opinions as facts in the choice of words and language, the reader, cannot identify, inspect or access the bias; it seeps into the way the conflict is constructed. (Woodhouse and Miall, 2005) in Eti (2009) say conflicts are defined by the (differing) positions parties take on issues. They suggest that when the actors in a conflict change their positions, it could lead to a transformation of the context and structure of the conflict. Eti affirms this in her statement that conflict is hard to talk about without engaging the emotions of the discussants. Her reason is due to the humanitarian, implications, especially when conflict becomes a tortuous, almost impossible task. According to her, the very nature of conflict constitutes a bane to objective reporting. In her words “conflict, especially when it gets violent affects the editor’s judgment of news value. Allan and Zelizer (2004) holds the view that confronted with the often horrific realities of conflict, any belief that journalist can remain distant, remote, or unaffected by what is happening tends to go out of the window in a hurry”. Tumber (2004) in Eti (2009) observed that when it comes to objective reporting, correspondents face criticism in two ways: by following the tradition of detached reporting journalists are censured and condemned for their dispassionate stance often in the form of accusation of a lack of patriotism and for eschewing the perceived national interest. At the same time, the journalism of attachment, the human emotional face of war corresponding has been criticized for opening the door to mistaken accounts of the conflicts and for being self-righteous and moralizing. In an analysis carried out by Mark, Frohardt and Jonathan, Temin (2003), they posit that conventional media-radio television and newspaper usually play a positive and informative role in society. They however noted that there are documented cases of media being manipulated by actor’s intent on instigating violent conflicts. They said the author asserts that a number of “clues to conflict” can be observed in the media landscape, clues suggest that a society is vulnerable to abuse by actors intent on instigating conflict, or simply that journalism may play a role in precipitating conflict.

Emphasizing the role the media can play in helping prevent conflict from escalating, Van de Veen (1997, p.1) says both mediators and journalists agree that it is big one but they disagree on how. Oklobzija in Van de Veen (1997, p.3) feels that the negative image painted by the average journalist and editors is too much of a generalization and singles out for special praise the role of independent, local journalists in conflict situations. “It requires an enormous amount of courage and knowledge to keep one’s independence in a situation like that” she says.

Shoemaker (1991) in Shymkova (2006) writes that media message is affected by communicators’ professional backgrounds, experience, attitudes, values and belief and by communicators’ roles ethics and power within the organization. Das (2009) believes that the hallmark of any media should be objectivity. But he says objectivity is something that needs to be constantly tested and proven. To him, the good newspaper,... must walk a tight-rope between two great gulfs- on one side the false objectivity that takes everything at face value and lets the public be imposed on by the charlatan with the most brazen front; on the other hand, the interpretative reporting which fails to draw line between objective and subjective, between a reasonably well established fact and what the reporter or editor wishes were the fact. Hackett (1984) in Nwanne (2009), states that the ideal of objectivity holds that facts can be separated from values and opinions. He states further that traditional studies of objectivity and bias in news accounts assume that news can and ought to be objective and a reflection of social reality. A perspective in general education holds that in reporting...confrontations, reporters and editors

“aren’t doing their jobs” unless they devote large amounts of space to ‘background’ reports based on evidence from scientists and technologies. Such a perspective, however, fails to take into account the nature of the conflict process and the structural principles that editors and reporters at all stages are dependent upon the acts and statements of the various interest groups. From a structural standpoint, it is very understandable why reporters do become immersed in the day-to-day chronology of conflict events rather than in background analyses when the conflict reaches a phase of organized confrontations and demonstrations....In Nwanne (2007), he said if media truly desire to assist in conflict resolution and peace building they must be objective. He emphasizes that achieving a higher level of objectivity require journalists to always present conflicting possibilities, supporting evidence, judicious use of quotations, structuring information in an appropriate sequence and above all, humility.

In the long run, like Das (2009) would say “the journalists’ mission becomes that of telling what is going on, as completely, accurately, honestly and dispassionately as possible... In his words, “Journalists should attempt to present all sides especially as there is more than one side to any story”.

CONFLICT AS A SOURCE OF NEWS REPORTING

Conflict has always been known to generate news. It is the pillar on which news reports stands. Rogers (2006) says conflict is newsworthy because as humans we’re naturally interested in conflict. In his words: *Conflict is what propels human drama. Conflict is as interesting to us as humans that it can make an otherwise dull- sounding story the passage of a city budget- into something utterly gripping. And the ultimate conflict war-is always a huge story.*

According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005) in Eti (2009), “conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints.” Eti (p.91) added that conflict by its very nature, holds a forceful attraction for the media. In a conflict resolution toolkit for media, Dr. Stella Cornellius writes that “conflict is exciting and the very stuff of change. It is never to be ignored or swept under the carpet”. Van de Veen (2009) summarized the whole concept of conflicts and its newsworthiness in her statement: *Conflict sells; cooperation or the process of resolving conflict does not. It could be argued that because of this assumption, the media tend to dramatize conflict either openly or tacitly by focusing on irreconcilable differences between the parties, extremes positions and inflammatory statements, violent or threatening acts of win- or lose outcomes. Furthermore, most news media ordinarily only turn their attention to conflict at point of high public interest such as dramatic escalation phases, unusually violent incidents, peace treaties or other events considered especially newsworthy.*

From the foregoing, it will not be farfetched to say that conflict makes news and news is more or less about conflicts.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The roles media play in conflict resolution have been seen to be a controversial one. Media have been said to contribute positively to resolving conflict while on the other hand exacerbating conflict. Arno (1984) recalled the argument that communication about certain kinds of issues can create or intensify conflict. According to him, both arguments agree that media content does not merely reflect level of conflict in the society but has a functional relationship to it: either

intensifies or diminishes it. Awoshakin (2002) opined that the media have the power to encourage conflict and violence or to assist in conciliation. Puddephatt (2006) says mass media often play a key role in today's conflict. According to him the media can take two different forms, either to take an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of the conflict and alleviation of violence. He added that the growing recognition of the crucial role the media can play in helping provoke conflict has led to examine how the media can play a constructive role in resolving conflict. Van de Veen (1997) says many advocates of conflict prevention are convinced that the media can play a critical role in defusing tensions and forging peace. He opined that conflict sells, cooperation or the process of resolving conflict does not, thus because of this, it could be argued that the media tend to dramatize conflicts (either openly or tacitly) by focusing irreconcilable differences between the parties, extreme positions and inflammatory statements, violent or threatening acts and win- or- lose outcomes. In their work, "Conflict Reporting as an Instrument for conflict management in the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria" S.G. Anaeto and M. Solo –Anaeto (2009) quoted Park and Deshapriya as saying: *media have an important role to play in promoting an honest and pluralistic political debate, and in providing accurate and timely information about issues, policies and strategies that will reduce tension, create the conditions for equitable development and reduce the levels of ignorance and fear that contribute to misunderstanding and hostility in society.*

According to them, the role of the media in conflict reporting is basically for conflict resolution. It is to bring about peace and it seeks to bring the parties in the conflict to a peaceful common plane.

While highlighting some functions of the media in crisis situation, Das (2009) noted that the media can function as a peace building mechanism for conflict resolution... it can also warn of impending dangers and how to avert it if the situations so arises, flow of accurate information without any political bias, guidance for future preparedness, educate public in the right direction for safe guarding national interest as well as check and counter check for media bias by national/local/international media house.

Conversely, he believes the media is also capable of causing considerable damage and inciting violence as well as influencing the mind of the people to destabilize society. In his word: *When we look closely at the way media functions today, it becomes obvious that media are bedeviled by prejudices of one kind or the other. Media are often used in order to cultivate and nourish sustain and spread prejudices...media can set agendas, criterion, and social norms and become guilty of branding certain areas as trouble torn Conflict zone e.t.c.*

Drawing a paradox on the opposing point of view on media role in conflict, a document by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS) reads: *Media can exacerbate conflict...it can also be irresponsible Media can educate. Media can facilitate. It has the power to bring together sectors of our society previously out of touch with each other. Media can mediate, mediation is a neutral, objective process which helps conflicting parties to design their own solutions. It addresses problems of power inequality and aims at 'leveling the playing field...*

In their view, Mark Frohardt and Jonathan Temin (1997) say that across the globe, media have been used as tools to inflame grievances and accelerate the escalation towards violent conflict. They recalled the belief that independent media can play a critical watchdog role in societies vulnerable to civil conflict, but the capacity of underdeveloped media to resist insidious abuse and manipulation is often limited. According to them, in the area where access to information is

limited, providing accurate, balanced information already constitutes a large step towards promoting peace. They posit that the better the media, the less the chance of an outbreak of violent conflict.

Tichenor et al. (1984) are of the opinion that conflict is rooted in social differentiation and newspapers and other media may contribute to increasing intensity and broadening of the scope of those conflicts while performing according to their traditional roles. This participation may serve to reinforce the difference in orientations and outlook between different interest groups and sectors of society.... In the same vein, Mowlana (1984) affirms that despite the fact that the media not only reflect but also have functional relationships to public controversies both within and among nations, their roles in conflict management is at best, a tenuous one. Bill (2007) describes the media and press as politics and religion which has long been a tool for unscrupulous leaders to manipulate the thinking and behavior of the ignorant masses.

Obijiofor (2008) recalled the debate in academic and non-academic community, including diplomatic groups about the ability of the news media to influence Government policy aimed at resolving conflicts. He says the argument is framed to suggest that sustained media coverage of a conflict usually propels government to develop policies to resolve the conflict. Writing on "Media and Conflict", Awoshakin (2002) posits that there is not yet a substantial body of scholarship that investigate what roles the media conceivably could play in preventing or ameliorating international or intra-state conflict. He believes that there is little practical information available to help guide diplomats, mediators, parties to conflict, or journalists and media managers on how to minimize the often contributory role of media in conflict and how to bring the media to bear on the tasks of conflict prevention or transformation.

In the end, the mass media should approach conflict discourse with the understanding that there are far more than two sides to every story. Hence McCormick (2004) warns against representing "the image of conflicts as a two-sided war" but rather as image of a prism with many facets that are at once interconnected and distinct and also change with the angle of light and the angle of the viewer.

MASS MEDIA AGENDA AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

Mass Communication plays an important role in our society; its purpose is to inform the public about current and past events. Mass communication is defined as the process whereby professional communicators use technological devices to share messages over great distances, to influence large audiences. Within this process, the media, which can be a newspaper, a book, radio, television, etc, takes control of the information we see or hear. The media then use gate keeping and agenda setting to control our access to news, information and entertainment (Wilson, 2004). The media set agenda of social change in every modern society. According to Asemah (2009), through the media of mass communication, the community members can be bound together. John (1997) noted that the mass media bind communities together, by giving messages that become a shared experience. The media play an important role in integrating the members of the society, thus, in times of conflicts, whether religious, ethnic or political, the media of mass communication can be used to preach peaceful coexistence, thereby, bringing about peace. Commenting on the role of the media in conflict resolution, Obot, in Nwosu and Wilson (2004) notes that: In resolving conflict in modern societies, the media, to a great extent, provide rendezvous for all the interest groups or the aggrieved parties to sit and express their

minds on issues in contention. This would be possible by providing and guaranteeing every citizen, easy access to media facilities. All the groups in conflict have to be represented in news and other programmes in which issues in conflict are discussed. The fact that divergent views are represented in the news and discussion programmes, usually goes a long way to calming frayed nerves. Thus, the mass media should go beyond reporting eruption of conflict, to investigating and reporting remote and immediate causes of the crises.

The above assertion by Obot aptly captures the relationship between mass media and conflict resolution. Meaning that the extent to which the media can be used to promote peace in modern societies cannot be over emphasised. Asemah (2011) notes that whenever there is crisis in any community, the media are quickly employed to preach oneness, unity and emphasise the need to leave in peace and harmony. In the same vein, Ndolo (2005), says that the media gain insight into circumstances of others, they identify with others and gain a sense of belonging, thus, they are so useful in times of crisis. According to Okunna, (1999), integration has automatically become a function of mass communication, which is of particular importance in our society (modern) whereby, ethnic, religious, political and other diversities divide people, both nationally and internationally. The mass media, according to Okunna provide messages, which people from different groups and nations, require in order to know understand and appreciate each other. Free and critical media plays a central role in democracies by constituting the main source of information, which provides the society with knowledge and a variety of experiences. It also serves as a forum for public debate, conception and development of opinions. The media are viewed as a source of power that influence, control and promote new standards in the society and reinforce the existing ones. Media are thus, the principal agents for societal development, democracy and good governance and a crucial element in areas of conflict. It can be suggested that media are both a friend and a foe to a peace process. Media can foster human security and there is evidence that media can reinforce motives for fuelling wars. They can be instruments for peace and conflict management, which promotes messages and strategies that can lead to peaceful agreements and tolerant behaviour in a given society. Media can also be a weapon of violence that propagate biased information and manipulate societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict. The role of media in conflict has increased its place in public attention (Forsberg, 2006). There are efforts to promote the use of media to facilitate conflict resolution and peace media. Peace media can be defined as the use of radio, television and print media to promote peace, to disseminate truthful information or alternate viewpoints that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict or to counter "hate radio". Peace media workers are supposed to be balanced and unbiased when describing the parties involved in the conflict, but not neutral and passively observant when it comes to depicting peaceful means as the only acceptable way of resolving conflicts. Media in many ways can contribute to reshaping the course of events in a peaceful direction. For instance, media can stress the advantages of peace building, promote individuals and groups involved in peace initiatives and balance the views of the actors.

As a watchdog, the media should give credit where it is due and criticism where appropriate. Acting as watchdog, the media should bark as an early warning when there is potential danger. By heeding the early warnings and sounding the alarm, the media could act as a powerful tool in conflict management and prevention. All conflicts start as misunderstanding or tension between

and among a group. If not quickly recognised for what it is or its potential, it can in time, explode to engulf a larger section of the community or nation. The African media can play a vital role in defusing tension, reducing and containing conflicts. It can do so by being deeply aware of the fragility of their countries' social fabric, of the efforts being expended at unifying their countries, the weaknesses and strengths of governing impoverished, developing countries. By gaining in-depth knowledge of their own countries, people and culture, then and only then, are journalists in a position to use their skills, knowledge and experience positively and in the public good. In our mission to inform and educate, we must stop to think of our roots. African values, customs and traditions, so as to be better able to situate ourselves to report objectively, professionally and knowledgeable on the issues affecting our societies. A journalist, in this case, can be seen as a public servant with a public service to perform (Onadipe and Lord, n.d). Many advocates of conflict prevention are convinced that the media can play a critical role in defusing tensions and forging peace. But most media representatives are opposed to becoming actors in the developments they have to cover. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for them to be won over to the cause of conflict prevention (Hans van de Veen, n.d). What role can the media play in helping to prevent conflicts from escalating? Potentially, a big one! They agree that both conflict mediators and journalists, but they disagree on how.

Galadima, in Pate (2002) notes that the journalist needs to be aware of the fact that reports of crisis have the tendency to either escalate or diminish the crisis. The reports of crisis generate reaction from different people within and outside the place where the crisis is taking place or has taken place. The reports generate discussions from people of the same tribe, religion, profession, etc, thus, if the report does not go down well with such people, it causes more confusion. According to Galadima, the reaction is often a show of solidarity which is normal with group membership. He notes that it is the best method of protecting or promoting group interests and relevance. The reactions may therefore be negative, positive, violent or non-violent, spontaneous or piecemeal, sudden or gradual, all depending on the nature of the crisis. The journalist must be so meticulous in the stories that have to do with crisis. The essence of this carefulness is to avoid being accused of taking sides, inflaming the crisis or posing as a security threat to the nation. This is to avoid being judged by the law. The journalists must report stories accurately and factually during crisis. The journalist should not be happy about occurrence of crisis in any given society to the extent of turning it to a money making venture. The journalist should not capitalise on crisis, especially the one that affects people directly, to sell their stories and make money. Avoid showing stories with gory pictures during crisis. By gory pictures, we mean pictures or photographs of beheaded persons, burnt persons, etc. More so, the journalist should not mention names of persons affected by the crisis. The journalist must be very careful when dealing with the parties involved in the crisis. This is because, as noted by Galadima in Pate (2002:61), every party to a crisis would always want to use the media to promote its interest at the expense of their opponents. The journalist must also be conscious of the media laws governing media reports on crisis and crises; every crisis has security implications. More so, the journalist must be conscious of the ethics of his profession.

AGENDA SETTING THEORY

Agenda setting theory states that the news media have a large influence on audiences, in terms of what stories to consider newsworthy and how much prominence and space to give them. Agenda setting theory's main postulate is salience transfer. Salience transfer is the ability of the news media to transfer issues of importance from their news media agendas to public agendas. Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors, etc, focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the agenda setting role of the news media. Related to agenda setting is agenda building theory, which explores how an issue comes to the attention of policy makers and media. The media agenda is the set of issues addressed by media sources and the public agenda, which are issues the public consider important. The agenda setting theory, thus states that issues that receive prominent attention on the national news become the topics that the viewing public considers to be most important. The theory is relevant to the study in the sense that the media set agenda for the public to follow and have the ability to influence what people think about. Thus, since the media can set agenda for the public to follow, it becomes imperative to use the media to set the agenda of peace in Osun State, especially Ife-Modakeke.

FRAMING THEORY

The concept of framing is related to the agenda-setting tradition, but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand, rather than on a particular topic. The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. The theory assumes that the media draws the public attention to certain topics, it decides where people think about, the journalists select the topics. This is the original agenda setting „thought“. Thus, a frame refers to the way media and media gate keepers organise and present the events and issues they cover and the way audiences interpret what they are provided (Asemah, 2011). Framing theory and the concept of framing bias suggests that how something is presented (the frame) influences the choices people make. Communication itself comes with a frame. The elements of the communication frame include: A message, an audience, a messenger, a medium, images, a context and especially, higher-level moral and conceptual frames. The choice of language is, of course, vital, but it is vital because language evokes frames — moral and conceptual frames. Baran and Davis (2009) explain that the framing theory examines the idea about how people use expectations to make sense of everyday life. The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. This field of meaning can have an effect on the audience's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, by connecting a particular meaning or interpretation on an issue. For example, when journalists select topics that they are going to write about, they are inevitably drawing the audience's attention to a particular topic, which is the original concept behind the agenda setting theory.

Just like the agenda setting theory, the framing theory is also relevant to the study; relevant in the sense that it can be used to also set the agenda of peace in Osun State.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was adopted for this paper, people were selected from the two stated which is Osun State and Oyo State, precisely from some selected media. These media are NTA Ibadan, BCOS, Galaxy T.V, NTA Osogbo, OSBC, and Gold Fm.

Survey research method was adapted because it will give opportunity for sampling large numbers of people in which, their responses can be generalized.

SAMPLING SIZE

The total of 150 academic staff were randomly selected from the aforementioned institution. The sample size was also stratified to accommodate both male and female in the institution.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

This instrument was a comprehensive interview schedule. It consisted of both open and close ended questions related to the objectives of the study.

The questions elicited information on Ife and Modakeke crises, and the impact of mass media in resolution of the crises.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Question 1: Do you have access to the media?

Table 1: Response to question 1

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	141	94
No	9	6
Total	150	100

From the table above, 141 respondents (94%) had access to mass media, while 9 respondents (6%) did not.

Question 2: How often do you listen to the media?

Table 2: Response to question 2

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Often	50	33.3
Very often	70	46.7
Not often	20	13.3
Not very often	10	6.7
Total	150	100

From the table above, 50 respondents (33.3%) listen to the media often, 70 respondents (46.7%) listen to the media very often, 20 respondents (13.3%) said not often, and 10 respondents (6.7%) said not very often.

Question 3: What do you understand by conflict resolution?

Table 3: Response to question 3

Response	Frequency	Percentage
It is a method of settling disputes	27	18
It is a method of facilitating a peaceful ending	30	20
It reduce the intensity and effect of conflict	48	32
It involves a peaceful negotiation	40	26.7
No response	5	3.3
Total	150	100

From the table above, 27 respondents (18%) saw conflict resolution as a method of settling disputes, 30 respondents (20%) saw conflict resolution as a method of facilitating a peaceful ending, 48 respondents (32%) saw conflict resolution as method that reduces the intensity and effect of conflict, 40 respondents (26.7%) said it involves a peaceful negotiation, while 5 respondents (3.3%) made no response.

Question 4: What are the major causes of conflict?

Table 4: Response to question 4

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Incompatible goals between two parties	31	20.7
Endemic situations	38	25.3
Beliefs, such as traditions of a land	60	40
Structure of ownership	21	14
Total	150	100

From the table above, 31 respondents (20.7%) saw incompatible goals between two parties as a major causes of conflict, 38 respondents (25.3%) saw endemic situations as a major a causes of conflict, 60 respondents (40%) saw beliefs, such as traditions of a land as a major causes of conflict, while 21 respondents (14%) saw structure of ownership as a major causes of conflict

Question 5: Have you witnessed any conflict or crisis in your ward?

Table 5: Response to question 5

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	110	73.3

No	40	26.7
Total	150	100

From the table above, 110 respondents (73.3%) had witnessed conflict or crisis in their ward, while 40 respondents (26.7%) had not.

Question 6: Does the government play any role in conflict resolution through the media?

Table 6: Response to question 6

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	80
No	30	20
Total	150	100

From the table above, 120 respondents (80%) said the government plays a lot of roles to conflict resolution on the media, while 30 respondents (20%) said it doesn't.

Question 7: Do you listen to anti-conflict messages on the mass media?

Table 7: Response to question 7

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	121	80.7
No	29	19.3
Total	150	100

From the table above, 121 respondents (80.7%) had listened to anti-conflict messages on mass media, while 29 respondents (19.3%) had not.

Question 8: Does mass media shape your perception on conflict resolution?

Table 8: Response to question 8

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	110	73.3
No	40	26.7
Total	150	100

From the table above, 110 respondents said the mass media does shape their perception on conflict resolution, while 40 respondents said it did not.

Question 10: How has the mass media contributed to conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke?

Table 10: Response to question 10

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Positively	82	54.7
Negatively	35	23.3
No response	33	22
Total	150	100

From the table above, 82 respondents (54.7%) said mass media had contributed positively to conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke, 35 respondents (23.3%) said it had contributed negatively to conflict resolution in Ife-Modakeke, 33 respondents (22%) no response.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings among others showed that the mass media broadcasts a programme that has the potential to resolve and quell conflicts. A great number of the audience agreed that the mass media programmes impact on them positively. The state government interferes in the affairs of mass media and contributes to conflict resolution in Ife Modakeke,

The findings of this study has shown us the positive roles media could play in conflict resolution, thereby serving as a guide to both broadcasters and journalists in their reportage of most state crisis and similar crisis in the country. The government would also benefit as it would help them in effective policy formulation, policy implementation and decision making.

More so, placing emphasis on the effect of words, language use and framing of issues by the media in the coverage of Ife-Modakeke crisis especially in terms of subsequent development of the region; this study will be of great relevance to conflict resolution experts.

CONCLUSION

The Osun state government should accept the wide role of media such as to inform, educate and entertain. This is to say that the information and education role of mass media provides it with a major opportunity to help resolve conflicts, especially when the ethics of the profession are strictly adhered to. Studies on conflict and conflict resolution matters are of paramount importance to everyone, the conflicting parties, the government, etc. This study formed a documented framework exposing the ills and dangers of conflicts and recommending ways to avert or sustain such occurrences in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- Mass media should be objective and balance in their reportage. That is, stick to the truth in reporting all sides of the conflict instead of publishing falsehood and propaganda from interest parties.

- The mass media programmes that aid conflict resolution should be appropriately sponsored to make for continuity.
- Mass media should carry out regular research to appraise their effectiveness in the area of conflict resolution and not miss the sufferings of the victims of conflict instead of placing undue emphasis on the „heroic“ deeds of the combatants.
- The level of the state government interference in mass media affairs should be reduced to ensure efficiency in their discharge of duties.

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