THE MEDIA ROLE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

NGIGE, Chukwudum V., BADEKALE, A. Foluso & HAMMANJODA, I.

Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria, P.M.B. 2076, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Corresponding author’s email: ngigecompact@hotmail.com; ngigeresources@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Peace, in all societies, is a necessity for the actualization of the development potentials of any society. As such, cultures, institutions or groups that abound in the society should not only co-exist peacefully with one another in the society but should also be seen to promote social harmony and peace, if development is to be achieved and sustained. The mass media have direct and immediate impact on either promoting peace or conflict especially in contemporary African society. As such, it is imperative to examine how such institutions contribute to violent de-escalation and peace promotion. Media can be a tool for building the society. The media also have a role to play in conflict prevention and peace education, and the media can also play a positive role in bridging the gaps and creating unity, in how it influences and guides. Therefore, the study examined the Media Role in Conflict Prevention in a Multicultural Environment like Nigeria. The study examined issues like: multi-culture and conflict generation in Nigeria, an overview of conflict prevention in Nigeria, the role of the media in conflict prevention in multicultural environment, media challenges in conflict prevention in multicultural Nigeria, Approaches in improving media role in conflict prevention in multicultural Nigeria. The study however, recommended that the media should refrain from promoting prejudicial stereotypes about other culture, groups and individuals through selective reporting not supported by facts and figures. The media should interact more with all interest groups, individuals and stakeholders so that no opinion or interest is marginalised. The media as a whole should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and the right to reply.

Key Words: Multicultural, Media, Environment, Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the media has a powerful capacity to encourage global awareness thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and acceptance of ethnic, cultural, religious and gender differences in communities across the globe. The media has always been at the forefront at any given time for the nations struggle. The media generally play a critical role in the society. It has the principal role of informing, educating and entertaining the citizenry. Ahmad (2015) asserted that the mass media are very powerful instruments that inform, educate, enlighten, sensitize and entertain the public and society at large. The media have the capability to affect the society positively and negatively. Alternatively, the media in an attempt to educate, inform and entertain have some negative effects on the audience. This therefore, means that the mass media plays functional and dysfunctional roles.

Imtihani (2013), states that the constructive role of mass media is located on the formation of reality on a peace process in conflict resolution (peace process). The mass media have the power and capability to bring about change in society for the improvement of the quality of life. Mass media often plays a key role in today’s conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes 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 conflict and alleviation of violence. The peace process in conflict resolution can simply be defined as the multidimensional methods, including economy, politics and security, in order the conflict can be resolved without any violence. Otherwise, the deconstructive role of mass media can be indicated by the news content causing a probability of violence reaction among the conflicting actors. The information delivered by the mass media is capable of constructing the reality of various actors and society in the context of conflict. The media sometimes acts as a third party watchdog that provides feedback to the public on local problems. Media can bring hidden stories out into the public.

In a pre-conflict phase, one of the greatest needs is often for effective early-warning systems, which rely heavily on the availability and quality of information. During active conflict, when opposing fronts have been established and violent rhetoric has become the norm, a neutral and objective media can act as a bridge between communities, provide information about essential services and events, and allow for international attention not to wane. In post-conflict settings, as nations move from violence to peace, a free and fair media ensures accountability vis-à-vis newly installed politicians and promotes unity by filling the gap between civil society and governments (Monzani, 2009). As noted by Kuusik (2010), since most armed conflicts these days have governmental and not territorial reasons; the parties are often concerned with making sure that the majority of people are on their side, which bears a lot of potential for misrepresenting facts and trying to seize control over the distribution of information. For this very reason the intervention of unbiased and free media is important not only for the world public but also for the people directly affected. The media can therefore not only influence society before the conflict by recognising and properly addressing the issue but also afterwards. Local media are a recognized part of society with the ability to accelerate and magnify fears or reduce them. One should not forget that journalism can play a role in escalating conflicts, which also demonstrates the potential for positive purposes. The media have the power to defuse tensions before they even reach a critical point and keep a critical eye on government, opposition and society. By supplying credible information and reaching a large audience, the media help in managing conflicts and promote democratic principles. In the aftermath of a conflict, reconciliation and societal development can be encouraged as well.

In a multicultural setting like Nigeria however, media try to uncover the causes behind a conflict and true goals of all participants while making sure to humanise all victims of the conflict. Kuusik (2010) posited that the journalists don’t try to exploit the loss and suffering but make sure that the reporting is balanced and also demonstrate how easily news can be manipulated. Part of the ethical guidelines for this kind of reporting is to bring out people that use peaceful measures and speak out against war and violence and document the suffering and loss on all sides. Kuusik (2010) asserted that possible solutions and trying to prevent further escalation of the conflict are at the centre of peace journalism as well.

The media stations in Nigeria can facilitate a mediation that is neutral, objective, and helps conflicting parties design their own solutions. Media through their programmes could facilitate a win-win approach in conflict management through creative response, empathy, appropriate assertiveness, co-operative power, managing emotions, and willingness to resolve contending issues (Batta, 2009). Mass media can facilitate the creation of meaningful communication between conflicting parties. It is infused with a social responsibility, and could provide tools and strategies to manage and process the rhythms, images, collective memories, fears and needs that shape positive perceptions about conflict management. The television, however, have greater political relevance, including the collection, organization, and transmission of news and information, the formation of opinion, and, in more or less open societies, some contribution to public debate (Ojo, 2003). Since conflict prevention is the activity in support of the mutual co-existence process where the primary target is the peace, it therefore means that the mass media can play a veritable role in conflict prevention. As a matter of fact, the mass media has the capacity to inform, educate and entertain a wider audience, particularly the entire civil populace on issues of peace and love.
However, tackling the issue of conflict prevention and peacemaking in a multicultural environment like Nigeria by the media programmes have become a major concern in Adamawa state. In recent times, media programmes aimed at educating, improving and fostering the unity among the citizens Adamawa state, Nigeria through the various form of media outreach. Despite these efforts, there seems to be increased in fear, tension and unprecedented manifestations of suspicion/distrust among the major and minor ethnic groups and other social groups in Adamawa state. The study intends to provide answers to these questions: to what extent is media programmes on conflict prevention in the state effective? What are the challenges faced by the journalists in their attempt at promoting peace in Adamawa State? To what extent can the media programmes contribute to building peace in Adamawa State? How the media can make a constructive contribution to conflict prevention? How they can detect violence at an early stage and monitor peace agreements? And how they can increase social cohesion and thus contribute to reconciliation? It is against this backdrop that, this study intends to do a holistic assessment of the role of the media programmes in ensuring adequate conflict prevention among the various competing cultures in Nigeria, using Adamawa State as the area of study.

MULTI-CULTURE AND CONFLICT GENERATION IN NIGERIA

The term culture points to the collective material and non-material accomplishments of particular groups, their ways of life and the manner in which these patterns of behaviour are transmitted from one generation to the next. Ogirisi (2011) asserts that its strong points are usually seen in its broadening of narrow horizons and exposing people to the wide range of cultural heritages. It presents however, problem when seen in the sense of politicized group identities vis-à-vis individual human rights in democracies because, treating groups equally is much more difficult than treating individuals equally. Multiculturalism therefore has in view the whole society through its national identity. It imperative to state here that in Nigeria, we are multicultural nation with over 350 nationalities, with each entity having its own norms, values, beliefs and even language. This has tended to influence our ways of living and relationship with our neighbours. Our goals and aspirations in life are often a product of our culturally held valves (Oyaziwo and Maliki, 2005).

However, culture is one of the most powerful forces in our world. It's central to what we see, how we make sense of our world, and how we express ourselves. As people from different cultural groups work together, values sometimes conflict. When we don't understand each other we sometimes react in ways that make a partnership ineffective. Often we're not aware that cultural differences are the root of miscommunication. Therefore, Nigeria needs only pay attention to its constituent entities, respect and recognise their interests. In Nigeria, strong multicultural identities are something good, but they need a framework of vibrant, dynamic, national narratives and the ceremonies and rituals which give expression to a national identity.

In supporting the above view, Deepak and Kailash (2014) posited that multiculturalism preserves the multiplicity of cultural values of an existing diverse culture. Multiculturalism is the cultural diversity of communities within a given society and the policies that promote this diversity. Multiculturalism encourages ideologies and policies that promote this diversity or its institutionalization. In this sense, multiculturalism is a society "at ease with the rich tapestry of human life and the desire amongst people to express their own identity in the manner they see fit" (Deepak and Kailash, 2014). The radical idea that people in other cultures, foreign and domestic, are human beings, too moral equals, entitled to equal respect and concern, not to be discounted or treated as a subordinate caste. Thus understood, multiculturalism condemns intolerance of other ways of life, finds the human in what might seem other, and encourages Cultural diversity. The objective of multiculturalism is promoting interaction across social boundaries of class, ethnicity, religion and national origin. Multiculturalism therefore refers literally to a plurality of cultures.

Conflict in other hand, can occur between two or more individuals because of differences in personality, values, and opinions. Conflicts can also occur between two or more organizations or community groups. These conflicts may no longer be about individual differences, but also about divisions perpetuated by ignorance and intolerance, discrimination, and a history of fear and animosity (Aharoni, 2005). In a diverse
community composed of two or more ethnic or cultural groups, like we have in Nigeria, conflicts are more likely to occur because of: differences in group identity, which is shaped by the group's cultural values, history, socioeconomic status, and perceived power, history of hostile interaction and discrimination, misinformed stereotypes and perceptions caused by prejudiced attitudes and other external influences (e.g., the media).

It has therefore become urgent to build an effective multicultural system, at regional and global levels. To accomplish this, the following measures are recommended: states media should invest in developing the multicultural peace culture that would help people and nations to understand and respect each other; this would reduce the possibility of conflicts and save in the cost of armaments. The creation, developing and spreading of a multicultural peace system, could be the best investment for defense. The promotion of a harmonious multiculture can prevent the dangerous influence on society caused by a widespread rise of fear, terror and hatred that lead to conflicts and wars.

CONFLICT PREVENTION IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

From antiquity, man has experienced conflicts, sometimes with himself, among and between families or societies and even across nations or continents. Therefore, conflict is a universal phenomenon which occurs as a result of differences in opinions or competition for the control of the limited available resources in a plural society. Albert (2001) observed that conflict pervades all spheres of human existence such as politics, religion and culture and it could be violent or non-violent. Some people express their opinions violently in order to preserve privileged positions while the oppressed does the same to achieve justice.

Therefore, conflict prevention aims to stop tensions from escalating into violence by means of short-, medium- and long-term. Pureza (2002) stated that theoretically, the more effective the preventive action the less tension there will be and the greater the distancing of violence. No single measure excludes the others. Prevention can include coercive diplomacy (e.g. arms embargos); institutional incentives (e.g. aid in exchange for peace); co-operative management (e.g. easing mediation); and systematic transformations (e.g. constructing a legal system). The wider the perspective, the more dynamic the response will be. Just as there is no mechanical relationship between factors that generate conflicts, there cannot be a mathematical summation of action that will halt violent escalation. Conflicts are in the hands of people and the results are always unpredictable. Furthermore, Gardner (2001) opined that prevention should be carried out cautiously (in order to avoid producing the opposite effect) but without trusting in its results. Gardner (2001) says that prevention should signify immediate diplomatic or military interventions so as to bring about an immediate halt to violence and towards political and socio-economic structural changes, which improve people’s standard of living. Therefore prevention according to Gardner (2001) includes: actions, policies or institutions which are used in order to avoid a significant and constant escalation of violence; internal or international disputes at times or places which are particularly vulnerable, the promotion of activities that bring about non-violent reconciliation of the interests in dispute; this reconciliation includes helping to prevent the conflict from starting up again once attention is turned to avoiding other conflicts.

For Okolie (2009) it is an interventionist effort towards preventing the escalation and negative effects, especially violent ones, of ongoing conflicts. Rarely are conflicts completely resolved. More often, they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Okolie (2009) stated that such developments can be followed by a reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issues or grievances. Conflict prevention when actively conducted is, therefore, a constant process. For Obot (2004) it involves a variety of techniques have been identified and employed in conflict prevention efforts. Obot (2004) stated that the following are the most prominent: First, conflicting parties are brought together to establish a mutual agreement. Second, governments or third parties to the strife may directly intervene to introduce or impose a decision. Third, new initiatives, programmes, or institutional structures (for example, elections) are implemented to address the conflict in question. Fourth, contending parties are compelled or coerced to utilise previously established means of resolution or containment. Fifth, government
or another third party may use coercion to eliminate or instill fear among one or all those engaged in a given conflict, leading to subsidence.

Therefore, it is the position of this paper that conflict prevention should not be viewed as a simple, linear or structured process. Those assuming or charged with such a task must usually overcome an intensely chaotic situation. Conflicts are frequently managed directly by the society in which they occur. When not possible or when conflicts become national in scope, government normally assumes the task, provided it is not a party to the conflict. In cases where a government is unable or unwilling to intervene, international organisations increasingly assume the role of conflict manager. The strategies for prevention are set down in three principles: act rapidly on the earliest signs of the problem (this implies possessing prior knowledge of the ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic, national and religious roots of conflict); act from the outside using political, economic, social and military measures to relieve the pressure that has sparked the violence; activate policies that resolve the underlying problems lying at the roots of the violence.

Conflict prevention has predominantly been viewed as the task, if not the responsibility, of international organisations or nation-states neutral to the given conflict. It, however, does not necessarily rely nor should it depend solely on external parties. The most effective method of conflict prevention, although not described as such, is accountable governance, whereby citizens and groups have access to effective avenues and mechanisms for resolving the range of disputes and conflicts that ordinarily arise within societies. Such access not only involves governmental structures, but also requires the cooperation of civil societies and business communities. This is particularly true in settings where violent conflict has already occurred and conflict prevention focuses on inhibiting recurrences, for example through some form of reconciliation.

CONFLICT PREVENTION IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The point has been made that the mass media are crucial in the achievement of society-wide objectives, be it in the area of social, health, infrastructural, political, educational or security development. The mass media in Nigeria constitute one of the most important institutions of socialization and in fact, the major cultural industry responsible for the distribution of ideas in the Nigerian society (Pate, 2011). The surveillance and correlation functions of the media are at the core of mobilization against acts of insecurity. The surveillance role says the media provide information to the society which is used in opinion molding and attitude adoption. The correlation role says the media relate news and various happenings in the society to the individuals’ life and environment. This is done through interpretation and explanation of the implications of happenings on the life and environment of the masses, including implications of acts that breed insecurity on the society. It is expected that through effective information, the society would gradually turn against such acts.

Osadolor (2001) cited in Orhewere and Kur (2004) writes that the most critical role of the media should be in helping to prevent or at least attenuate the severity of conflicts. Publicity is critical in exposing and checking vices. The mass media in every society are seen as agents of social change. This is because they carry out certain roles and functions, which help to develop the populace positively. It is generally agreed that the mass media set agenda for the public to follow. Any analysis of the role that media can play in conflict prevention and resolution starts with a simple question: what do we exactly mean by media? Howard (2002) posited that a different way to look at the question is to shift the focus from the media to the conflict-prevention and peacebuilding field. Howard (2002) noted that an analysis of the conflict cycle can already reveal a series of entry points for media in a broader sense to play a positive role in conflict situations. In a pre-conflict phase, one of the greatest needs is often for effective early-warning systems, which rely heavily on the availability and quality of information.

In addition, Asemah and Edegoh (2012) stated that besides calling attention to matters of potential public concern, the media also provide clues to the public about the degree of importance of an issue. Matters
covered prominently by the media on the front page, with big headlines and pictures or as a major television or radio features, are likely to be considered most important coverage, even though it is brief and comparatively inconspicuous, lends an aura of significance to most publicised subjects. 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.

Asemah and Edegoh (2012) also noted that the media have a crucial role to play in setting the agenda of peace in Nigeria and to do this effectively, there has to be objective reporting. Asemah and Edegoh (2012) argued that the media practitioners must learn how to remove themselves from the stories that they are reporting and report objectively. One other area that needs to be touched is the area of sensationalism. The media must not sensationalise, it motivates the parties in a crisis or conflict to carry out more havoc. The duty of the media in crisis situation is to set the agenda of peace so that the conflict should be resolved. 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. 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. 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.

Therefore, this paper argues that 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. There are efforts to promote the use of media to facilitate conflict resolution and peace media.

From the forgoing, 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 multicultural nation 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. A suggested framework used by peace-building media can employ different strategies such as: conflict-sensitive and peace journalism; peace-promoting entertainment media; media regulation to prevent incitement of violence, but also peace-promoting citizen media.

Finally, in a multicultural nation like Nigeria, lack of information can, at any stage of a conflict, make people desperate, restless and easy to manipulate. The ability to make informed decisions strengthens societies and fosters economic growth, democratic structures and the positive outlook on the future. For this very reason, the United Nations Millennium Declaration stressed the need to ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information. If democracy is to work properly, society needs access to news and information; analysis of the status quo, debate, practical information and exchange as well as entertainment are needed and provided by the media. The definition of conflict and defining conflict areas is not easy and no two places are alike. Journalists need to know what they can expect on sight in order to define the objectives of their project.

MEDIA CHALLENGES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION IN MULTICULTURAL NIGERIA

The media profession like other professions in the society no doubt shares in the limitations and inadequacies inherent in the society. Monzani (2009) is of the view that the absence of adequate legal frameworks in conflict-affected countries, which impedes the development of a free and fair media capable of acting as a neutral watchdog. Monzani (2009) noted that weak coordination among the many actors involved in media activities, often compounded by confusion between public relations activities and support to local media outlets. Poorly paid media workers, vulnerable to bribes and biased reporting, are a major deterrent to free media. Adequate remuneration and respect for independent journalism are essential to any project’s sustainability. In certain situations, it is not possible to intervene, even if desired. Different types of conflict require different responses. There is a need to differentiate between conflict and violence.

With media practitioners especially practicing journalist suffering from the harsh socio-economic and political existential realities in the country, their reportage incidences particularly violent conflicts are informed by these harsh constricting conditions. Ndolo (2011) itemize some of the constricting conditions affecting the media and practitioners in Nigeria to include: Nigerian journalists are poorly remunerated and are usually owed salaries in excess of at times six months. There is a high level of corruption in the media, with journalist demanding money before they can write stories or gives coverage. Ndolo (2011) claimed that they collect “sandwich”, extort gifts and gratifications either directly or indirectly all in attempts to influence news judgment. We now witness a lot of “cash and carry” or “Cajun-pepper” journalism. For the same reason they become chatter boxes and sycophantic megaphone of government (or their sponsors). Journalists are killed, jailed, horswhipped, branded coup plotters, broken bottle used to shave their heads, their media houses closed, newspapers and magazines proscribed and licenses withdrawn even temporarily (Ndolo, 2011). In the study conducted by Pate (2002) the finding of the study is consistent with the reasons why journalists become bias during conflicts reportage, among others, may be: religion, ethnicity, ownership interest, unprofessionalism, etc.
From the findings of this study therefore, due to the systematic collapse of tertiary institutions, half-baked students are graduated without any academic content and as they enter the industry they become un-trainable. There is a decline of professionalism- Media owners are not interested in adding value to their human capital. So, more often than not, those who should be in training are now trainers. Moreover, since media owners do not want to remunerate well they employ quacks. Journalists do not enjoy freedom of expression and are denied access to information (perhaps with the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, 2011 there would be a difference).

**APPROACHES IN IMPROVING MEDIA ROLE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION IN MULTICULTURAL NIGERIA**

The media and the general public must rise to the challenge of combating rising insecurity in the nation by embarking on communication-based approaches that would effectively stigmatize such acts in the society. Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013) observed that while the journalists and other media workers are urged to engage in responsible journalism committed towards discouraging the acts of insecurity in the nation, the public should step-up the use of citizens or civic journalism through the mass media as a way of complementing media workers’ role in exposing and combating insecurity in the nation. Responsible journalism devoid of contents capable of heating of the polity and the society in general should be avoided.

In general, the various ways the mass media could be effectively adopted in combating insecurity as explained here, require commitment on the part of media workers. Both the public and mass media workers should play complimentary roles as partners in this regard. the following are the means the media can perform effectively in conflict prevention in a multicultural society like Nigeria: the media should encourage and facilitate a dialog between groups clarifying the conflict, present information to the groups to show them how they are all affected by a particular issue and how it serves their purpose to work together, or create a safe place where that dialog can be held, bring leaders together who will publicly declare that its time to deal with the issues rather than let a bad situation get worse, hold sessions with group leaders to discuss the importance of reconciliation, help draft a public commitment statement where groups promise to try to work out their differences. Reconciliation requires that two or more groups develop trusting friendships, identify underlying causes of their conflict, work together to develop a common mission, and promote equity and justice.

Other means include: make a personal and collective commitment to social change, Leadership support (engage all levels of leadership (top, middle, and grassroots) in the process of peace building), change agents (Establish and train a committee, task force, or special commission of change agents representing all the groups that are in conflict to call out and transform potential conflicts), information dissemination (use all the forms of media that appeal to the different groups, e.g., street theater, radio, television, music, ethnic newspapers to continuously distribute images that show people from the conflicting groups working together). Evaluation (Evaluate, on a regular basis, the results of the alliances that have been strengthened through the conflict transformation process, e.g., new activities, projects, or resources that came about because of people working together across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.

Furthermore, the media can also engage the diverse culture in Nigeria in peace building process through: encouraging people to make a conscious decision to establish friendships with people from other cultures, put yourself in situations where you will meet people of other cultures, examine your biases about people from other cultures, ask people questions about their cultures, customs, and views, read about other people's culture's and histories, listen to people tell their stories, notice differences in communication styles and values; don't assume that the majority's way is the right way, risk making mistakes and learn to be an ally.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of its inherent challenges and the difficulties facing the media in promoting cultural exchange between the cultures in Nigeria, sensitivity to cultural differences and values become an important issue for consideration. Adamu and Ibrahim (2014) reports that there is a feeling that the press in particular is not showing respect for plural nature of the Nigerian cultural environment. However, in time of peace, people depend on the media as their source of information, but they depend on the media more in times of conflict. Also, the rumor mills are more active in times of conflict than in peace time. These two scenarios underscore the role of the media in conflict and peace management. Conflict is an indication of disagreement and the media handling it will go a long way in explaining the situation to resolve the conflict or aggravate the situation. It is the duty of the media to ensure the authenticity of the information being disseminated and convince the audience of the reality of the messages. The media has been seen or suspected of being involved in propaganda which in turn erodes its credibility.

The media or the Journalist must recognize that he/she responsibility imposed on them by the society is a sacred one and they must be guided by the dictates of truth, honest, sincerity, integrity, accountability and transparency. It is harmful for the media to assume the role of collaborators and conspirators with politicians, the electoral body, ethnic or religion group to misinform or misguide the general public in issues. This if done, will surely promote violence rather than help in managing conflict that will arise from misunderstanding from various cultures in Nigeria.

The media should refrain from promoting prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals through selective reporting not supported by facts and figures. The media should interact more with all interest groups, individuals and stakeholders so that no opinion or interest is marginalised. The media as a whole should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and the right to reply. Also, the media, as the key stakeholder and purveyor of information, should contribute to the maintenance of peace and reconciliation in the country by reporting conflicts and crises within the context of the Code of Ethics based on credible, factual, balanced and objective reporting. The journalist should observe professional integrity regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.

Furthermore, there should be training and re-training of journalists, particularly on methods, techniques and parameters for understanding, identifying and reporting sources of conflicts and crises in a multicultural environment. The media must work in collaboration with stakeholders (like non Governmental Organisations and International Communities) in the Nigeria to ensure that government policies directed at curving the conflicts are properly implemented. The media should refrain from giving any particular segment preference above the other. And finally, Media should give emphasis on information that neutralize friction and clear the ignorance and misconceptions which breed the misunderstanding among different cultures in Nigeria.

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