

**RESOLVING COMMUNAL CONFLICTS USING MEDIA AS ALTERNATIVE
APPROACH FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG TRIBES: CASE STUDY OF
SHARE-TSARAGI, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Communal conflicts have ravaged many communities in Nigeria, Share-Tsaragi inclusive, leading to destruction of lives and property. Previous investigations identified the media as one of the instigators of these conflicts because of its position as a powerful tool for mass mobilization for violence. This research examines the emerging paradigm of using media as a potential manager of conflict in Nigeria by specifically looking at the extent to which the mediating roles of media impacted on the communal crisis between Share-Tsaragi in Kwara state. Sequel to this objective, the research adopts qualitative method of analysis which is premised on descriptive analytical technique for data presentation. Fifty key informants were purposively interviewed across the two communities, focus group discussions as well as other secondary data were used in the course of the investigation. Findings from the study reveal how the media can be used as a mediating tool to augment government's effort at restoring peace in conflicting communities. The research is significant to governments at all levels as well as ministries and agencies connected with land and boundary disputes, civil society groups, media practitioners and peace scholars, as it offers recommendations in respect of using the study to guide new policies and equally serves as an instrument of further research that have to do with conflict and peace studies as well as media expertise in conflict management. The study concludes by coming up with new model and shifting from old paradigm that media can be optimized for effective conflict management.

Keywords: Communal conflict, Conflict management, Media, Peace, Share-Tsaragi community.

Introduction

The role of media in surmounting and instigating conflict in any society no matter how socially cohered cannot be under estimated. Bearing in mind that one of the reasons that complicated the outbreak of the 2nd world war was media incitation as the then German leader, Adolf Hitler manipulated the media to create hatred for the Jews (Vladimir & Schirch, 2007:8) using

propaganda in radio broadcasting. Also in Cambodia, the media was used by the country's ruler Khmer Rouge to influence people's decision and continuously fuel division and conflict among the citizens before the United Nation successfully established Radio UNTAC in 1992 to counter government media, oversee the ceasefire and equally served as an alternative source of credible information. The initiative of United Nation's Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to establish Radio UNTAC later propelled the massive turnout for the country's election to the tune of 95 percent, despite counter-measures by the government to terrorizing the people into rejecting the polls (Neumann in Price, 2000).

Another instance of conflict at the world stage in which the Media was culpable is the 2005 Danish Cartoon displayed on the pages of newspaper as well as the 2015 Je'suis case in Paris. The two incidences triggered violent protest around the world, particularly in Muslim conservative countries. In fact, country like Saudi Arabia placed embargo on all Danish products and subsequently severe ties with it (Ewen, 2006). The African continent has equally experienced its share of media induced conflict. In recent past, News of the Arab Spring caught the continent unaware. The development led to ousting of Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan rulers through mass action motivated by the media. Also, in 2007, Sudan also witnessed what would have been another blood bath following the naming of a teddy bear "Muhammad" by a British school teacher Gillian Gibbons, who taught middle-class children at Unity High School in Khartoum, Sudan. She was convicted of insulting Islam by allowing her pupil of six-year-old to name a teddy bear "Muhammad" The Islamic Prophet. Many Sudanese Muslims marched forward to the police station where Gilliam was detained, the uprising was however, contained by the Sudanese Police. It is important to know that Gilliam's action was hyped by media report making the people to take to the street, as the situation was already being officially managed by the Sudanese authority (BBC, 2007). Other African countries like Rwanda, Congo, Liberia and Nigeria (which forms the nucleus of this study) have also experienced media induced conflict at one time or the other. For instance, the outbreak of the 1994 Rwandan genocide was caused by a radio broadcast when a radio presenter from *the Hutu majority described the Tutsi minority as cockroaches that would be stamped with his foot* (Yanagizawa-Drott, 2014: 11).

In Nigeria, there was also an instance of an interview granted to a man of Hausa/Fulani descent on Radio Nigeria, Kaduna, on the 6th of February, 1992 where he was alleged to have threatened that “there would be blood bath for the Atyp people if the Zango-kataf market was ever moved” to the new site. The Radio broadcast was the immediate cause of the 1992 Zango-Kataf crisis. There were reports that shortly after the programme, there were violent attacks in which many lives were lost, several casualties recorded and properties worth millions of naira destroyed (Philips, 2000: 7).

The November 2002 Miss World crisis was another violence instigated by the media in Nigeria which claimed the lives of more than 200 people (BBC, 2002). The Miss World beauty pageant riot was prompted by a publication on This-day Newspaper on November 16, 2002 written by Miss Isioma Daniel. She wrote that *the Islamic prophet Muhammad would probably approve the Miss World competition and would have chosen a wife from one of them* (This Day, 2002). The article was seen as blasphemous and an affront on Muslims. This led to bloody violence that erupted in Kaduna in which 200 lives were reported lost. Subsequently, the Kaduna office of This-day newspaper was equally burnt to ashes. Instances like these portray the media as possessing the inherent ability to cause, escalate and deescalate conflict. This explains why governments of different states attach great importance to it and deploy human and material resources to facilitate its positive utilization.

With the advancement in technology, the operation of the media has equally taken different dimension. Unlike the past when the media used to be limited to activities of the press, that is the print media alone, today media coverage cut across electronic media like; the internet or online media, the Television and the Radio. While the electronic media disseminate information to recipients by way of electro-magnetic waves making it the fastest and easiest to come by, the print media get in touch with people largely on the pages of newspapers and magazines. Although the relationship between both is synergistic as newspapers’ headlines are being reviewed on electronic media like Radio, Television as well as being read on the internet and vice-versa. This fortifies the reason why the word *media* is hitherto used to refer to all platforms of information dissemination. Under the electronic media, the online media seems to be one of the most profitable enriching its inventors at the click of a button, while the Television seems to

capture full attention of the audience through the display of captivating screen shows. Thus the radio has been described as the most accessible especially to the masses and people at the grass root (Conell, 2015: 3-8). The study conducted by Minority Right Group, MRG (2013) also shows that Radio is the main source of information in developing world like Nigeria. According to them, the high level of illiteracy in developing countries and inadequate electricity supply steadily made it difficult for the masses who are usually agents of violence to read newspapers and access television programs.

Although, there are numbers of conflicts which were caused by media broadcast; the genocide against the Tutsi minority by the Hutu majority in Rwanda and the Zango-Kataf crisis in Nigeria, media also plays important role in Conflict Management. For instance, Somali-Radio Galkiyu, Kenya's Kass FM, Mega FM in Northern Uganda, Sudan Radio Darfur or Radio Dabanga and Radio Ndeke Luka established by the United Nations in Central Africa Republic as well as the United Nations Radio UNTAC in Cambodia were all examples of media outlets that recorded positive contribution to peace building in their immediate environment. The reason for the choice of radio to mediate conflict in the identified places may not be detached from primitive nature of the third world countries, as majority of the people particularly the masses who are mostly agents and victims of conflicts are neither lettered to access print media nor financially stable to access television coupled with electricity problem. Unlike a radio that needs just or less than a battery to put it on. Some of the positive roles played by the media in the aforementioned places include; discouraging hate speech and incitement, continuous civic education, emphasizing the need for conflicting parties to embrace peace, just coverage of controversial issues during peace negotiations and constituting peace parley. However, if not handled with high level of professionalism and responsibility, media reportage particularly that of Radio could constitute potential threat to any society as it was experienced in the cases of Danish Cartoon, Rwandan genocide, Zango-Kataf crisis and Miss World beauty riot in Nigeria. This is because radio broadcast has direct effect on listeners.

Meanwhile, the choice of the media in taking active and purposive role in trying to manage the communal crisis between Share and Tsaragi community in Kwara State, Nigeria is what this research attempts to examine. Gamble and Gamble (1996: 2) submitted that one of the primary

roles of media is to transform conflict situation from confrontation to collaboration and from destructive to a constructive one by reducing the likelihood that media comments will cause anger and stir emotions. The work adopted qualitative research techniques with reliance on primary source of data from in-depth interview, communiqué from the communities, press release from constituted authorities as well as secondary data from textbooks, journals, newspapers, government publications and other online sources to arrive at its conclusion.

Problem statement

It is a strong view widely upheld by many that what is aired by the media during conflict often serves as one of the instruments of resolving or escalating such conflict (Alumuku, 2006: 5). Most of the actions and comments that revolve around conflicts are brought to lime light by the media. This has rendered many scholars to argue that media serves well as an instrument of covering and reporting conflict and issues surrounding it and as such, could only contribute to conflict escalation rather than managing conflict (Alumuku, 2006: 2). Their studies were premised on the negative role of the media at fomenting crises in different places across the world but insufficient or little attention was paid to other instances where the media equally played positive role in peace building. For example, in the 1990s Radio-Galkayo of Somalia was instrumental to resolving the country's conflict by encouraging the conflicting clans to embrace peace and at the same time organised sporting activities that subsequently bridged the gap between rival clans. Mega FM Radio station of Northern Uganda was also helpful in mobilizing the Lord Resistance Army, LRA members to negotiate with government and civil society groups (Struges, 2007). Likewise in Nigeria, the media can be assumed to have played pivotal role in the de-escalation and management of Share-Tsaragi communal conflict.

In spite of the significant roles played by the media in conflict management, there are minimal efforts by scholars and policy makers to study the potential media contributions to resolve conflict. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to fill this gap. In addition to shifting from the popular paradigm and unveils a new stand that, the media could equally serve as an instrument of conflict management if well-coordinated for that purpose.

It is also on record that government responded to these conflicts by deploying security personnel to restore orderliness as well as set up commission of enquiries. The 2016 Share-Tsaragi communal crisis was not different. Unfortunately, most of the outcomes of the enquiries were not sufficiently put to use by the government. In fact, claims in the case under study revealed allegations of injustice, unholy alliance, partiality and noncompliance with recommendations of previous reports leveled against the government of Kwara State. These were largely responsible for the failure of previous efforts put in place by government as the chief mediator. Stakeholders kept wondering, despite the huge human and material resources committed to the crises that ought to be used for other developmental projects, government find it difficult to institutionalize sustainable peace in the area especially without the use of armed force, a situation that justifies why civil society organization like the media waded in with a view to complementing government's efforts.

Also, there has not been enough effort to critically look at some predisposing causes like offensive media comments, hate speeches, poor communication and mutual suspicion as causes of communal conflicts in Nigeria. Even after the Zango-Kataf communal crisis which is unprecedented in Nigeria and believed to be escalated by offensive media comment, it is expected that government would have learnt from that and come up with stringent measures that will regulate offensive comments in the media. However, its inability to do this effectively saw to the emergence of another media induced crisis in Kaduna in 2002 and that caused by hate speech in Share-Tsaragi in 2016. A study of these crises is therefore needed with a view to understanding their causes, effects and to serves as prototype to other likely conflicts that may emanate within the country due to similar cause like offensive media comment.

The persistent inability of Government as the chief crisis manager to amicably manage communal conflicts in Nigeria especially without the use of force equally calls for concern. This portrays the Government as if it has not learnt from previous conflict situations. This could be attributed to inadequate comparison of similar cases or evolving cases with old ones as well as absence of conflict models that predicts the likely signals that government needs to watch out for before conflict got escalated.

It is important to state that, a lot of studies have been done to connect media to conflict in Nigeria, notable among them are; Nwosu (2004), Alumuku (2006), Deutch (2008), Yanagizawa-Drott (2014) and Osadola (2016). However, these studies hardly investigated the direct and the indirect roles of the media in conflict management despite evidences of mediating efforts of the media in some conflict cases. This deviation has made many to doubt the social responsibility of the media to its immediate environment. There is therefore need to interrogate this for better understanding of the potential role of media in conflict management in Nigeria. This will also go a long way in giving a synergistic and alternative approach to conflict management, owing to the fact that government's singular efforts as the chief crisis manager over time have been watered down.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the potentiality of media in conflict management in Nigeria using the Share-Tsaragi communal crisis as case study. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. investigate predisposing causes of the communal conflict.
- ii. examine the extent at which media contribute to the communal crisis.
- iii. evaluate the mediating roles of the media in the management of communal conflict
- iv. Examine the disposition of government to the communal crisis.

Literature Review

There is hardly any state in Nigeria that is free from its share of communal crises. This was attested to by Nwanegbo (2009) who noted that most of the crises were influenced by a lot of factors cutting across; land and boundary, chieftaincy, solid mineral deposit, communal prides and religion. Nwanegbo who studied *Inter-Communal Conflict in Igbo land (South-Eastern) Nigeria: A study of Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts* extended his work to understanding the genesis of the conflict, government's resolve to curtail it and offered recommendations. Parts of the recommendations offered by Nwanegbo in containing the conflicts were the need to re-integrate the youth and empower them as well as create platforms for continuous re-orientation of the youth. Despite his well-articulated recommendations, one stumbling block the researcher noticed in his recommendations is the exclusion of the adults and women in the empowerment and re-

orientation process. We see re-orientation as what is needed by everyone irrespective of status or background because man often forgets and conflict could also be caused by adult men and women.

In what is somehow related to poor orientation, Philips (2000) traced the remote cause of the crisis in Zango-Kataf to the violent nature of Atyab people whom he described as naturally hostile people, as most of them are animists. Although, no attention was paid to empirical confirmation of this oral tradition by Philips, particularly assessing the Katafs' side of the story, poor orientation could contribute to peoples' ill feeling about others. The media could thus be useful in this regard by particularly dissuading the ill feelings by placing on air different re-orientation programmes. The issue of ill feeling was also identified by Akinteye et al (2001), it was found that some of the youths in the conflicting communities especially in Kataf still have ill feelings about one another as most of them knew those responsible for the victimization of their parents or family members, under the Hausa-Fulani colonial administration. This type of situation consolidated the ill feelings among the two communities and was transmitted from generation to generations. The work also failed to take the Hausa/Fulani side of the story into documentation, as there was no evidence of administration of questionnaire in Zango community. It was more or less a one-sided analysis, this of course is not likely to yield the intended result of proffering solution to the problem since the other party was not granted audience to identify their own problems, whereas an understanding of their predicaments is pivotal to making an acceptable recommendation(s) for all. Thus, Kukah (2002) while tracing the cause of Zango-Kataf crisis narrated that Radio Nigeria instigated the 1992 Zango-Kataf Crisis.

Meanwhile, a study of Share/Tsaragi settlement over a century was conducted by Tijani (2000). He narrated how the intergroup relationship between the Yoruba and Nupe people in the twin settlement was the primary reason behind the quest to control land resources. He did not avail us the knowledge of how the relationship soured. The initially good relationship which later went bitter gave birth to ethnically demarcated residence and political structure in an attempt to align with their different ethnic identity. Tijani's work was close to that of Adams (1910), as he illustrated the genesis of communal conflicts across Nigeria, tracing it largely to boundary

dispute. Thence, Adams refused to inform us about the cause of boundary dispute itself. As most of the land boundaries were manipulated by British colonialists for their interest. As a British Army Colonel Adams ought to know that what existed today as communal clashes across Nigeria have deep roots in colonial administration.

Similarly, Otite and Albert (2001) gave an historical excursion into most communal conflicts in Nigeria, with selected cases from different regions of the country. The work which came up with recommendations for the government on ways of handling the crises failed to give specific recommendation to residents of the affected communities. It is therefore necessary to revise the work with a view to including specific recommendations for the affected communities on ways to conduct themselves, prevent future occurrences and managing the ones at hand.

Scholars have however tried to portray conflict management as the needed tool to find lasting solution to some of these challenges. Even though, others talked about conflict resolution and transformation, the idea of conflict management is wider in scope as it encapsulates both conflict resolution and transformation and it is more of a long-term arrangement involving long-standing provisions and guiding procedures for dealing with conflicts. It is on that premise that Salihu and Aremu (2013: 177-178) outlined two major options to achieve management of conflicts which include military option and mediation/negotiation. While the military option deals with going into war, history has however, showed that armed confrontations do not yield favourable outcome for either of the parties involved in the conflict. What this means is that, military might may not be a lasting solution to conflict. The ongoing assault on the Boko-Haram insurgents and the new born Niger Delta avengers by the Nigerian Military are examples that military might is not a final solution to conflict. Embarking on negotiation, round table discussion and settlement offer better remedy for conflict management. This is because numbers of conflicts are put to a halt through this option after parties might have come to realize the futility of military options, so conflict management must occur in polite atmosphere and context. This view perhaps assists to clarify the issue that, although conflict management may appear synonymous with conflict resolution and conflict transformation, the former, better than any of the latter describes the structures and dimensions which deal with issues of conflict (Nader, 1968).

This investigation posits that, it is necessary to include imperatives such as sacrifice, reciprocity and belief systems in conflict management. In the African settings where ethnic and communal conflicts are more pronounced there is need to mobilize State and Local Government functionaries including traditional kings and chiefs as well as religious leaders to be part of peace process. This will rather give people more sense of belonging when they see their kinsmen in the cobweb of peace building, rather than making the whole process look very official and perhaps like a white-collar arrangement.

With the involvement of the media in escalation and de-escalation of some numbers of conflicts across the globe, scholars have equally made attempt to analyse; the issues surrounding these conflicts, as well as the relevance or otherwise of the media in those conflicts. For instance, Yanagizawa-Drott, (2014:1-9) examined the effect of propaganda on conflict taking his evidence from the Rwandan Genocide. The work addressed how the media was responsible for fueling the 1994 Rwandan genocide using descriptive method. It however, did not give us background information that the genocide itself was instigated by the Radio Rwanda and not just deployment of propaganda to fuel it. A review of the work is needed to educate us on the fact that the media, Radio Rwanda ignited the crises when hate speech was relayed on Radio by Hutu Majority against the Tutsi minority. This underpins why the media is believed to be more or less an instrument of conflict reportage and perhaps escalation than de-escalation (Deutshe, 2008). The work did not take into account other instances where the media de-escalated conflict (Raji & Abdulkadir-Imam, 2018).

The researchers' understanding of trends in conflict management shows that there is an emerging paradigm that media could be effectively used to manage conflict if well-coordinated for that purpose as there are evidences in the case of Share-Tsaragi. With that we can begin to think of moving from a paradigm to theory if the third case occurs. Also in Cambodia, the media was used by the United Nation when it successfully established Radio UNTAC to counter government media, oversee the ceasefire and equally served as an alternative source of credible information. The initiative of United Nation's Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to establish Radio UNTAC later propelled the massive turnout for the country's election to the tune of 95 percent, despite counter-measures by the government to terrorizing the people into

rejecting the polls. These are pointer to the fact that despite its laxity as a potential conflict escalator, the media was also instrumental to the management of conflict on few occasions.

Methodology

The research methodology used for this work is qualitative. This is aimed at boosting the prospect of the work and makes it to be pragmatic as much as possible. The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it is mostly suitable for small samples, while its outcomes are not necessarily measured and quantified. It also offers a complete description and analysis of a research theme, without limiting the nature of participants' responses (Babbie, 2001).

Thus, in specific term, purposive and random sampling technique was used to select 50 key informant interviewees to gather information from major stakeholders in the conflicting communities. The design was done to garner 50 respondents from the two communities (25 respondents per community) cutting across the 7 major blocks of stakeholders in the conflict; Government, Security Agencies, Media, Actors, Victims, Traditional institutions and Religious bodies. The data was analysed using thematic analysis as this permits the categorization of the data into theme and subthemes based on interviewees responses to accomplish the research objectives (Bryman, 2012, Emmel, 2013, Ngu, 2005). Hence, a qualitative technique software; NVIVO was employed to ensure proper categorization of the issues and findings into themes and subthemes.

Research Design

The research design for this study is descriptive analytical with more emphasis on the case under study. To achieve this, data was collated through in-depth interviews and focused group discussion. This is expected to assist the researchers in gathering data from direct source, since such primary method of inquiry has the advantage of ensuring originality of the information gathered (Fugard, et al, 2015). Other secondary sources of data gathering like reports of commission of enquiries, government gazettes, media memoirs and historical documents from the archive were also improvised as contingency plan since all the information needed could not be harnessed from a single method.

Study area

The entity called Nigeria came to being as a result of the amalgamation of Southern and Northern protectorates by the British in 1914. It was the independence granted by the British colonial masters that however, ensured the transformation of the geographical entity to a nation. With independence on board, the country maintained most of the governance structures inherited from the colonialists, including the three regional governments. The three regions were Western region with capital in Lagos, Eastern region which had its capital in Enugu and the Northern region with Capital in Kaduna. Kwara State is one of the states in the Northern Region.

Created on May 1967 by the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon, Kwara State was among the first generation of 12 states that formed the Federation of Nigeria. Kwara was a local name given to a River. The state was formerly made up of the former Ilorin and Kabba provinces of the then Northern Region before it lost population and land mass to parts of four new states carved out of it. The states are Benue, Kogi, Niger and Ekiti State. Kwara State consists of sixteen Local Government Areas including Share-Tsaragi (the study area) with population of 2.37 million, according to the last official population count in Nigeria (NPC, 2006).

There are different variations lending their voices on the history of Share-Tsaragi. Most of them however, showed that the intergroup relationship between the Yoruba and Nupe people in the twin settlement is primarily influenced by the quest to control land resources (Mabogunje: 1971, Ndajoko: 1999, Tijani: 2008). This gave birth to ethnically demarcated residence and political structure in an attempt to align with their different ethnic identity.

Some historians claimed that the Yoruba were the first to settle at the present site of Share in the year 1818 A.D. They were the Igbomina Yoruba group who came as hunters probably hunting for ivory. They left Ahun, their home place and first settled at Sakama, a place in eastern part of Share. Another version claimed that the Yoruba left Oyo-Ile, (the capital of the Old Oyo empire) when it dispersed due to the Bariba expansionist wars in 1816 (Tijani, 2008). The Bariba army attacked Igboho which was then the capital of the Old Oyo Empire. Oyo forces were defeated

hence the civil population dispersed into different direction, some of them that went eastward were the ancestors of the Igbomina Yoruba who left Ahun and settled at Sakama.

Another version of the tradition claimed that the first settlers at Share were the Nupe, who left Atagara, settled at Sakama and later in the nineteenth century were driven by the Fulani Jihad to Share. At Share, the Yoruba people came and stayed with them, but because of cultural differences the Nupe people established a segregated settlement (Ndajoko, 1999).

The study observed that the Baruba expansionist wars and the Fulani Jihad had a double effect of bringing Yoruba and Nupe together as refugees in Share and Tsaragi as well as create cultural disparity that eventually led to the segregation of their settlements, thus Share-Tsaragi a twin town of Yoruba and Nupe was established in an approximate range of less than a metre, a borderless twin town it could be called. This arrangement was functional and harmonious at the beginning having both fled from war fronts (Tijani, 2008).

Population of the Study

The targeted populations of this research are two communities which are involved in the crisis, these include; Share and Tsaragi. The population of these communities based on the 2006 National Population Commission (NPC) stands at; 17, 603 for Share and 4,529 for Tsaragi. As it will not be possible to cover all the targeted population, relevant stakeholders were selected by the researchers to represent the whole population. For a thematic analysis premised on interview research, there is no consensus among scholars on what the sample size should be. Suggestions have therefore been made for as little as 6 and at most 400 (Fugard et al, 2015, Emmel, 2013, Bryman, 2012, Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007, Guest et al, 2006). What is most important is to gather the data from respondents that are most appropriate for addressing the research objectives.

Although, it has been suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) that 20% of the population will be sufficient to form a research sample, the percentage is however, outrageous for interview-based research of this nature. Meanwhile, the researchers planned to interview 50 respondents across the two communities under study (25 respondents per community). The reason for the choice of 50 respondents was premised on researchers' methodological reflexivity. Methodological

reflexivity connotes methodological self-consciousness that takes into account researcher(s) previous relationship and experience about what or those under study (Bryman, 2012:394). Thus, 50 key respondents will be purposively selected and interviewed cutting across 7 major blocs of stakeholders across the two communities. The choice of the seven major blocs of interviewees was premised on the fact that, it is the traditional bloc usually adopted by Judicial Commission of Enquiries to access information whenever conflict issue is at stake. The tradition of the Panel of Enquiry is to invite memoranda from members of the public and other stakeholders. The composition of respondents and participants by will or summon at most judicial panel of enquiry habitually encapsulates the 7 major blocs of stakeholders, hence the study will rely on this template as prototyped by an established institution (The Judiciary) in the case to select the respondents. The respondents in this research are expected to include; Principal Government Officials with the position of Director in the civil service as benchmark, Security Experts (Serving and Retired) like Officers of State Security Services, Police, Military and Paramilitary like Boys Brigade. Others are Media Executives and Practitioners, Residents of the study areas that are either victims or actors, Civil Society Group mostly religious organizations as well as community elders that are part of the Traditional Council of affected communities. This is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: List of proposed respondents across the seven major blocs of interviewees

Stakeholders/Interviewees	No. of Respondents in Share/Tsaragi
Government Officials	4
Security Officials	4
Media	5
Actors	5
Victims	20
Traditional Institutions	8
Civil Society	4
Total	50

(Source: Researchers' Design 2024)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive and Simple Random Sampling technique were used in selecting the sample. The Purposive Sampling was used to select the respondents whose numbers are limited and are experts or professionals among the population under study, this category includes; Principal Government officials, Security experts and Media Professionals. This method belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques. Sample members will be selected on the basis of their relevance and connection to the crises. The rationale behind the choice of purposive sampling technique is that, a small unit (sample) that is selected is a typical representation of the whole unit (population). It is like an inductive approach of enquiry. It also guarantees that data is gathered from respondents who might be difficult to locate but are stakeholders and pivotal to the research findings. It is a technique that is improvised to serve specific purposes (Kothari, 2012 and Babbie, 2001 Pp 179-180).

The researchers engaged Random Sampling Technique to select other respondents particularly those who are residents in the community. This category of respondents includes; victims, actors and traditional leaders in the affected communities. Hence, the researchers connected with leadership of Community Development Associations in the conflict areas, who supplied the names of interested participants and they were randomly selected by the research team. The choice of the random sampling for this category of people remains expedient owing to the fact that each unit of the large population has an equal chance of being selected to participate in the research just as it assists in reducing the sampling error (Bryman, 2012:187-190).

It is on this note that the researchers intend to interview 4 principal government officials, 4 security experts, 5 media professionals, 4 members of the civil society organizations all spreading across Kwara and Kaduna State. Across the conflicting communities, 20 victims will be interviewed, 5 principal actors and 8 high chiefs/community leaders will be equally interviewed, making a total of 50 respondents.

Instrumentation

The data collection tool for this research involved the use of face-to-face interview. An Interview Guide will be prepared by the research in order to guide the interview towards the satisfaction of

research objectives, but additional questions may evolve during the interviews. The reason for using this type of instrument is to allow respondents to pour in their views, sentiments and feelings to the fullest bearing in mind that issues of conflict cannot be devoid of beliefs, emotions, feelings and sentiments which cannot be expressed by a straight jacketed method of asking Yes or No, Agree or Disagree questions.

Validity of the instrument

According to Hassan (1995) validity is the extent to which an instrument addressed what it ought to address and how well it does it. Therefore, in order to ascertain the content validity of the instrument for this research, the copies of questions for the interviews were given to academics in Kwara State University and University of Ilorin (The two foremost universities in the study area) for adequate evaluation and recommendations in order to systematically eliminate questions that were deemed irrelevant to the Research Questions and Objectives. Also, conflict correspondents in media organizations and experts in conflict studies at the Centre for Peace Studies, Ilorin were contacted to make necessary input. This process of validation and re-validation, which considers issues such as clarity of language, clarity of variables and their rational link to the research objectives is expected to jointly improve the quality of this instrument and render it a more reliable instrument for data collection.

Procedure for Data Administration and Collection

In depth interviews were used in this research to collate data. In depth interviews are personal and unstructured interviews, which aim is to identify participant's emotions, feelings, and opinions regarding a specific research interest (Ngu, 2005: 135). The main advantage of personal interview is that, it permits personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees, as well as reduce non-response rates. Unstructured interview offers flexibility in terms of the flow of the interview, thereby giving room for the generation of conclusions that were not meant to be derived *ab initio* regarding a research subject (Babbie, 2001). However, there is the risk that the interviews at times may deviate from the pre-specified research objectives.

Thus, the researchers took care of this unavoidable deviation by generating an interview guide which was administered to respondents in the communities under study by the researcher and other research assistants. The researchers carried out one -on -one interview with major actors in the crises. The research assistants helped to translate items in the interview question to those that are not lettered and subsequently transcribe their statement into English language.

Data Analysis Technique

The study adopts narrative technique to analyze the data gathered. This type of research analysis creates an easy platform for data to be gathered and categorized into themes and sub-themes making it to be comparable to others (Hassan, 1995). Another advantage of narrative analysis is that it helps to reduce and simplify the data collected. It will also assist the researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives.

Ethical Consideration

The study was subjected to certain ethical issues. Most importantly, it is expected to assure participants that their participations in the research are voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason. Next to this, participants were fully informed about the objectives of the study, while those that choose to be anonymous will be reassured that their answers will be treated as confidential and used only for the purpose of this particular investigation. The respondents were coded in numbers to ensure confidentiality. In essence, the researchers try to create and maintain a climate of comfort where participants are not harmed or abused, both physically and psychologically during and after the investigation.

Sponsorship

This research benefits from the funding of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), and the goodwill of Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

Results

Based on the four objectives on which the study is predicated. The major findings as distilled from the result confirmed that;

1. There exist among other problems, offensive media comments, hate speech, mutual suspicions and poor communication as causes of conflict in the communities.
2. The media made positive contributions to the communal crisis in Share-Tsaragi to a large extent.
3. Media played significant roles in deescalating conflicts and its conflict mediation programmes influenced communal conflict.
4. Government made significant efforts like establishment of judicial commission of enquiry to resolve the crises but most of the commission's reports were not sufficiently implemented by government.

Discussion of findings

Theoretical Models

The researcher came up with a model that explains how conflicts transcended in the Share-Tsaragi. The Turbulent Water Flow Model was used.

Graphic 1: Turbulent Water Flow Model



(Source: Researchers' model 2024)

Here the taps are the same, showing that the interest behind the conflict is one (land ownership) but what comes out of it (water) is not the same. This explains the different stages that the Share-Tsaragi oscillated (i.e from its laminar stage to its latest turbulent stage). Unlike other conflicts that have multiple dimensions like; land, religion, chieftaincy and economic interests behind the crisis, the Share-Tsaragi has just one interest that borders on land ownership. However, the crisis got to its turbulent stage because of failure to identify or curb the potential signals shown by the conflict at the early stage.

Findings on the predisposing causes of the conflict

The research which relied on primary and secondary data, found that there were quite a number of predisposing causes of the conflict. These including rivalry over land, non-implementation of previous commission of enquiry, sitting the headquarters of Ifelodun local government in Share, non-implementation of previous reports by commission of enquiries, hate speech and ethnic rivalry (Mabogunje, 1971, Ndajoko, 1999, Tijani, 2008). However, dispute over farmland, particularly the Kange Farm where Tsaragi farmers were chased away by Share indigenes was the most immediate cause of the Share-Tsaragi crisis (Respondent 6).

Findings on the extent at which media contribute to the communal crisis.

In its bid to grant audience to the communities involved in the crises, the media approached the Share community for their own side of the story. Most of the claims by Tsaragi people were refuted by the Share community making it difficult to ascertain the fact. It took an exercise of professionalism through investigative journalism for the station to find out that some Tsaragi farmers were actually killed, namely; Madu issa, Aliyu issa, Alhaji Saba, Muhmini and Kadiri (Respondent 30). There was no evidence of linkage to the Share youth as at the time of compiling this work.

It took another display of professionalism for the station to go on air and pacify the Tsaragi people, even though such had been done for the Share people in the past when their indigenes were also killed. In doing this effectively, radio programmes were redesigned for this purpose (Bello, 2018). This time religion coloration was adopted, as Islamic and Christian clerics were

engaged to speak on; the importance of peaceful coexistence, spirit of forgiveness, and need to eschew vengeance. Respondent 49, an Ilorin based Islamic Scholar and founder of a Non-Governmental Organization, Madrasatu Muhammad, Dr. Abubakar Aliagan from the Department of Islamic Studies University of Ilorin and his counterpart, Dr. Abdulhameed Olohunoyin was staged on air to admonish both communities and the general audience on the topics listed above.

Also, Respondent 50, a famous Christian theologian known for his eloquence and spiritual prowess Pastor Sam Aweda of the Cross Bridge Society also spoke extensively on the evil of vengeance and benefits of forgiveness. All these were not happenstance but a design of the station's management. The steps had no doubt served as catalyst in deescalating conflict and brought about appreciable sanity to the area. Both respondents 44 and 45 attested to this fact.

Representatives of the Chief Mediator (Kwara State Government) were equally invited to the station to talk about government's position and plans on the conflict. This they honoured with enthusiasm, as they see it as an opportunity to address the nerve-racking parties on a neutral ground, having being successfully black mailed by the Tsaragi people as a biased mediator using its state own media to support expansionist mission in Share. Kwara state government's Spokesman also featured on specially designed programmes by the station to convey government genuine interest of working out an acceptable peace accord for both communities.

In addition to that, between December 2015 and August 2016 when the intensity of the crisis was high, a number of round table discussion were held at intervals with representatives of Tsaragi and Share community particularly the youth alongside Management of Radio Nigeria Harmony FM as well as the Kwara State Director of National Orientation Agency (NOA). This was done with the view to making the youth reconcile themselves with the responsibility of promoting peace in their area, as the place of youth in peace building cannot be underestimated in any society being another principal agent of escalating and deescalating conflict.

Respondent 12, Kwara State Director of National Orientation Agency (NOA) noted that the NOA was also availed the opportunity to use the station's airtime free of charge to address the conflicting community on the importance of peace to development in their respective

community. English and Yoruba Audience Participatory Programmes like Kwara on the Move and *Alejowa (Our Guest)* frequently featured Principal Staff of NOA in the state. In an interview with staff of News and Current Affairs Unit of Radio Nigeria that were also regular anchors of the two programmes; Mr. Abdulrazak and Mallam Jeti, the management of the station deliberately gave out the airwaves for free in order for NOA to speak and orientate people on the significance of peace. They added that before then, the NOA presence in their studio usually attracts certain amount of money paid to their treasury.

Jingles in Nupe and Yoruba languages were also played on regular basis to convince the conflicting communities that war is costly and its effects spare no one, irrespective of age, sex, status, cultural or religion background. Citing examples of depicted communities within and outside Nigeria, some of the jingles also emphasised the importance of peace to development. Based on our own observation, the jingles were rolled on popular programmes like *okodoro-oro (Factual News)* and breakfast show, they were also played as interlude at least thrice in a day. Also, news commentaries were relayed to address issues of peace and development.

Apart from the in-house broadcast style of Radio Nigeria targeted at deescalating the Share-Tsaragi conflict, some of their reporters were at the scene of the crisis as well as the seat of the Justice Sulaiman Akanbi's commission of enquiry, the Kwara state Sharia Court of Appeal. The researcher who was at these venues for research purpose and other reasons came across some of them thus inquired about their activities. They however, made the researcher know that, it is by doing so that they will have a balanced coverage of the crisis situation hence making them to ascertain the fact rather than rely on what they were being told by conflicting parties. Consequently, this will assist them in their conflict management efforts back home in their station. To them, this is called investigative journalism, but we perceived it as an essential conflict management skill, because for any conflict manager or mediator to succeed, a fact-finding mission must be embarked on to verify the true situation on ground and subsequently arrive at a solution.

Findings on the role of media in conflict management

Media can play significant role in conflict management, with effective coordination. Though it is an oversight duty, making many to question its appropriateness for that purpose, however, conflict as we know is usually impromptu, the improvisation of the media as conflict manager in the partial or total absence of effective conflict management strategy by government and other stakeholders has proven to be effective in the case under study. Hence, one may begin to look for the third, fourth and fifth cases and possible generalization as an evolving paradigm and a required model for conflict management.

With respect to the above, the radio seems most suitable for conflict mediation programme among the different media alternatives going by its achievement in different places across the world. For instance, the United Nations brought Radio UNTAC to Cambodia in 1992 to resist oppression and institutionalize freedom; Radio Ndeke Luka was also established by the United Nations in Central African Republic to facilitate peace; in the 1990s Radio-Galkayo of Somalia was instrumental to resolving the country's conflict by encouraging the conflicting clans to embrace peace and at the same time organised sporting activities that subsequently bridged the gap between the rival clans. Mega FM Radio station of Northern Uganda was also helpful in mobilizing the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) members to negotiate with government and civil society groups; Radio Dabanga in Sudan; Kass FM in Kenya were all examples of cases where radio contributed to conflict mediation (Neumann in Price, 2000, Struges, 2007, Conell, 2015: 3-8).

A study conducted by Minority Rights Group, MRG (2013) also shows that radio is the main source of information in developing countries like Nigeria. According to the report, the high level of illiteracy in developing countries and inadequate electricity supply steadily made it difficult for the masses who are usually agents of violence to read newspapers and access television programmes. The reason for the choice of radio to mediate conflict in the identified places may also not be detached from primitive nature of the Third World countries, as majority of the people particularly the masses who are mostly agents and victims of conflicts are neither lettered to access print media nor financially stable to access television coupled with electricity problem. Unlike a radio that needs just or less than a battery to put it on. Some of the positive roles played by the media in the case under study include; discouraging hate speech and

incitement, continuous civic education, emphasising the need for conflicting parties to embrace peace, just coverage of controversial issues during peace negotiations and constituting peace parley (Respondent, 13).

Findings on the disposition of government to the crises

On the conflicting views held by some of the conflicting communities that the State Government was biased in managing the communal crises. As earlier stated, this allegation couldn't be proved beyond reasonable doubt as the government refuted all the claims and maintained neutral position with all parties involved in the crises at least in the open. However, allegation of such magnitude is normal considering the background of those in power at the time of the crises. Governor Abdulfatai Ahmed of Kwara State was from Share community. Findings of this study also show that there were major appeals from the communities. The major appeals are;

- i. Share community strongly appealed for permanent boundary demarcation.
- ii. Tsaragi community demanded return of Local Government headquarters to Tsaragi.

Although, the government responded to the crises by deploying security personnel to restore normalcy to the area, the inability to mobilize state mechanisms for the actualization of the communities' major demands and failure of other logistics of peace building to work effectively prompted the recurring crises from time to time. Previous unrests in the communities though wrecked a lot of havoc, it is the 2015/2016 Share-Tsaragi crises that received great media intervention due to its far-reaching effects; politically, economically, and socially.

Findings however show that, there were failure by successive Government to implement the reports of previous Commission of Inquiry and Administrative Panels established to investigate past boundary disputes between the two communities. This has made the Tsaragi people to boycott the last peace effort initiated by government in the community (Respondent, 6). When the researcher asked a senior government official reason why the government as the chief mediator failed to implement the reports of the commission, the official couldn't place a definite reason before the researcher but noted that it could be because of sensitive reason connected to state security. He equally noted that government was working on permanent demarcation of

boundary between Share and Tsaragi to prevent frequent conflict between the two communities (Respondent 2).

Conclusion

This research identified land dispute as the principal cause of the communal conflict in Share-Tsaragi. It also affirmed that the media has played positive role in managing the Share-Tsaragi conflicts through peace advocacy, peace parley, mediation and other specially designed programmes denoted as Peace Journalism among media professionals. These efforts have greatly led to the de-escalation of the conflicts. In spite of the numerous roles played by the media in containing the crises, it is worthy to note that the clout of the media is constrained, particularly by insecurity and poor logistics, because the media cannot stamp out conflict completely on its own especially without a first force like the Government. The work therefore, suggests that government as the chief mediator of conflict in Nigeria should find ways of assisting the media to curtail these challenges principally in the area of providing adequate security for reporters covering conflict zones as well as seek effective collaboration with the media to curb likely conflicts in the future owing to the fact that government's singular effort at curtailing crises has not been consistently sufficient as well.

Recommendation

The study offers the following recommendations:

1. Government should strengthen enforcement and monitoring of media reportage to prevent malicious and unprofessional media practice in order to curtail predisposing causes of conflict like offensive and divisive media comments and hate speech. In doing that, a law establishing special media court is recommended to be put in place for broadcast regulatory bodies to prosecute and mete stiffer punishments on erring media outlets.
2. Media should promote positive contributions to conflict particularly sensitization of people on the negative consequences of conflicts and equally aid effective communication between conflicting communities as well as between the communities and government.

3. Government should implement vital recommendations made by judicial commissions of enquiry and address some of the critical demands raised by the communities, particularly the issue of permanent demarcation of land boundaries. This will help to restore the confidence of both communities that they were not wasting their time by partaking in a new commission set up by government.
4. It was concluded from the study that the media has played positive role in managing the Share-Tsaragi communal crises which has substantially de-escalated the conflicts. In spite of the efforts, there are still other challenges in the management of conflict by the media. The study calls for effective collaboration between policy makers and the media in containing the challenges of conflict management as this will ensure the optimal use of media as an emerging paradigm and credible alternative for managing communal conflict in Nigeria especially at a time when the singular effort of government at doing that is being decimated.

The four recommendations above are in alignment with the four objectives of this research. Expectation is therefore high that if strictly adhered to, they will resolve the identified problems.

Other recommendations include;

- i. It is suggested that peace and conflict department should be created in government media outlets. For the private media outlets, government media team including the ministry of information should work closely with Nigerian Guild of Editors, Media Executives and Practitioners on the need to embrace government-media initiative for peace.
- ii. The study suggests an immediate national conference or convention for media organizations where ideas will be shared by practitioners themselves on ways to promote sustainable peace through the media. Participating media outlets could be persuaded to be signatories to the convention. The logic is that, once all media stakeholders are involved there is likelihood that sensational journalism will reduce.
- iii. Government should be sincere and should not politicize peace processes. Socio-welfare programmes should be designed and taken to aggrieved parties to rekindle their thrust in public governance.

- iv. The models as well as the potential signals of conflict identified by this work could be used by government and peace practitioners to track and nip communal conflicts in the bud before they get escalated.
- v. There is need to recognize the roles of the media and incorporate them in conflict management strategies both at the local, national and international levels. This measure will help to position the media as an effective tool for communicating peace and alternative platform for conflict resolution. On the contrary, if this measure is left unattended to, the media will continuously hype the existing tension and promote ethnic or racial hatred for its selfish gains.
- vi. Public facilities like military barracks and any other armed forces training institute should be erected on the disputed land. The physical presence of a military formation could deter prospective trouble shooters. Of course, the establishment of a military formation is not a duty of a state government based on provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, but this can be done by the federal government at the instance of the state government with effective collaboration. This step if taken is likely to be among the most productive solutions. For instance, we are aware of an old rivalry between Shao community and Ilorin emirate in the past, but the siting of the Sobi Barrack (22 Armoured Brigade) of the Nigerian Army in between the two communities had possibly forestalled what could have been recurring crises between the two ancient towns of Kwara State.
- vii. There is need to mobilize State and Local Government functionaries including traditional kings and chiefs to be part of the peace building process and meetings periodically. This will instil sense of belonging in the people when they see their kinsmen in the cobweb of peace building, rather than making the whole process look very official and perhaps like a white-collar arrangement.
- viii. Employment opportunities should be created in both communities to keep youth busy and eschew them from taking arms in competition or exchange for meager resources.

With the implementation of these recommendations in peace making process, sustainable peace is likely to be enthroned among conflicting communities in Nigeria.

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