

The Media and Communal Crisis in Nigeria: A Study of Selected Radio Stations in Cross River State (2006 -2024)

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Abstract

The study focused on the media and communal crisis in Nigeria with emphasis on selected radio stations in Cross River State. Its major objectives were to determine the various causes of communal crises in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria in general, to determine the role of the radio in the information management of communal crises in Cross River State, to identify the challenges faced by the radio as an agent of effective communal crises management in Cross River State. The agenda-setting theory of the mass media was adopted to set the theoretical framework of the study. Sample size of 58 respondents was randomly selected from HIT FM and Correct FM, Calabar. Data gathered were analyzed using the simple percentage (%) formula. The study found that the major causes of communal conflicts includes struggle for farmlands, landmark, boundaries, etc. However, the radio has a role to play in the resolution of the conflict through the organization of live talk shows, and other programs. The study also found that the media in the management of information during communal crisis is challenged by factors such as the inability to access some of the conflict-torn areas for the collation of relevant information, as well as the refusal of reliable sources to divulge relevant information. The study recommended that radio stations should leverage on social media platforms to enhance their role in conflict management.

Keywords: Communal crisis; Media; Conflict

Introduction

The development of every nation depends significantly on the surveillance role of mass media in covering and reporting events unfolding in the society. By virtue of their surveillance function, media outlets are always on the lookout for events and happenings that would be of interest to their audiences (Wolfsfeld, 2003). One of such events is conflict, which represents disagreement between one group and another (Francis, 2006). In virtually every country of the world today, there are spontaneous and long-standing crises or conflicts that, if unattended, could hinder the corporate existence of such nation or country. Nigeria, for instance, is faced with series of conflicts, including the resource-use conflict between communities in Niger-Delta region, political and religious conflicts, and ethno-tribal conflicts that have become rampant in various regions and states of the country. In recent times Southern Kaduna experienced a series of violent attacks, predominantly attributed to Fulani herdsmen. These attacks targeted mainly Christian communities, resulting in hundreds of deaths, injuries, and significant property destruction. The violence led to widespread displacement and heightened religious and ethnic tensions in the region leading to conflict threatens national security to the core.

Mass media, through their surveillance function, perform a formidable role in reporting conflict situations to the audience. Even when the media are not the original sources of information about conflict situations, people still resort to media for authentication and fresh perspectives (Zartman, 2011). Thus, through reporting and framing of conflicts, the mass media can shape public perception, understanding, views, and opinion formation about a conflict situation.

In Nigeria, the media and media practitioners have suffered deprivation in the hands of both military and civilian regimes. (Akinwale, 2010). During **General Sani Abacha's Regime (1993-1998)** the Nigerian media experienced severe repression. Journalists were frequently arrested, detained without trial, and media houses were shut down. For instance, in (1995), the editor-in-chief of *The News*, Bayo Onanuga, went into hiding to avoid arrest after the magazine published stories critical of the government, also during **President Muhammadu Buhari's democratic administration (2015-2023)**, there were numerous reports of journalists being harassed, detained, and attacked. In (2019), *Premium Times* journalist, Samuel Ogundipe, was detained for refusing to reveal his sources for a story on the security services. However, this has not diminished the growth of the media in all its ramifications.

Traditional media genre like newspaper radio and television have received much recognition and seminal attention, but social media such as twitter, facebook, blogging and other internet-based media are becoming more popular media of information dissemination especially in conflict situations across the country (Reddy, 2012). The mass media is a powerful tool of communication in peace and conflict situations. It can be use positively to promote peace and resolve conflicts at appropriate times.

In terms of taking active parts in the conflict, media reporters often represent the conflicting groups and thus project their respective views and interests to the detriment of the other (Hagos, A. M. 2001) Thus, a conflict situation is bound to escalate when media frame and disseminate information about conflict issues and the identities of conflicting parties in such a way that

entrenches polarization (Radoli, 2011). All media, including old and new media, can be used to escalate or de-escalate conflicts.

However, scholars are of the view that mass media can play both negative and positive roles in reporting conflicts. For instance, it is suggested that their role can take two different and opposing 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. (Gilboa, 2002).

Conversely, it can also be use negatively to initiate, escalate and sustain conflict covertly and overtly (Frere, M. S 2007) The potentiality of the media as a means of communication to promote peace or conflict cannot be over emphasized As a matter of fact, the information super-highway or internet and related technology have further enhanced the capacity of the media to either “destroy” or “build” humanity through their stock in trade (Hamelink. C. J. 2000). It is against this backdrop that this study examines the role of the media in the resolution of communal crises in Cross River State by assessing the radio stations operating within the state and their coverage of communal crises in Cross River State.

Statement of Problem

Generally, conflict is a reality of social relations. Conflict at any level arises from divergence of interests, desires, goals and value aspirations in the competition for resources to meet imposing demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment (Dixon, 2006). As a matter of fact, man in a socio-physical environment lives in continuous process of dependence and interdependence which often produces contradictions and conflicts. Communal conflicts constitute one of the major recurring problems bedeviling the socio-political landscape of Africa, Nigeria and in this context, Cross River State. Communal conflicts are not new, particularly in socio-cultural complex societies defined by a high number of ethnic nationalities and language groups such as Nigeria.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, communal conflicts have persisted over the years, primarily driven by ethnic and boundary disputes. Notable among these are the long-standing clashes between the Ebom vs Ebijakara, Akparaobong and Bendeghe Ekiem, Etung, Adadama vs Amagu, Usumutong and Ediba communities in Abi Local Government Area, and the conflicts between the Nko and Oyadama communities over boundary issues (Ajibade, 2013). These conflicts not only disrupt social harmony but also lead to severe socio-economic and political consequences.

The primary actors in these conflicts were the local communities involved.. These conflicts often draw in local leaders, youths, and sometimes armed groups from within these communities, escalating the violence and complexity of the situation. The socio-economic impact of these conflicts is profound. Many residents are displaced, leading to humanitarian crises as people flee their homes for safety. Agricultural activities, which are the mainstay of the local economy, are severely disrupted, resulting in food insecurity and loss of livelihoods.

Additionally, essential infrastructure such as schools and hospitals is often destroyed or rendered non-operational, further exacerbating the suffering of the affected communities. Politically, the

recurring nature of these conflicts poses significant challenges to governance and development in Cross River State. Effective governance and developmental projects are hampered as the state government is often forced to divert resources to manage security situations. This diversion of resources undermines long-term development goals and perpetuates a cycle of instability and underdevelopment.

The media has a crucial role in managing and resolving these conflicts through information dissemination, peace promotion, and accountability. The media informs the public about the conflicts, raises awareness about the causes, and highlights the human cost. Through talk shows, documentaries, and special programs, the media promotes dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties. Additionally, the media holds local leaders and the government accountable for their roles in either mitigating or exacerbating the conflicts. However, the media faces significant challenges in fulfilling this role effectively. Journalists often encounter difficulties accessing conflict zones due to safety concerns and restrictions imposed by the conflicting parties. Some media outlets may be biased or sensationalist, which can further inflame tensions rather than promoting peace (Lynch & Galtung, 2010). Furthermore, limited resources and inadequate training in conflict-sensitive reporting hinder the ability of media professionals to cover and report on conflicts effectively. Addressing these challenges is crucial for leveraging the media's potential in conflict resolution and fostering a more informed and engaged public. Integrating social media strategies and enhancing the capabilities of media professionals can improve the reach and effectiveness of media in promoting peace-building initiatives and providing accurate information during communal crises.

Objectives of the Study.

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To outline the causes of communal crises in Cross River State in particular and in general.
2. To determine the role of the radio in the effective management of communal crises in Cross River State.
3. To Identify the challenges faced by the radio as an agent of effective communal crises management in Cross River State.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of communal crises in Cross River State in particular and in general?
2. What is the role of the radio in the effective management of communal crises in Cross River State?
3. What are the challenges faced by the radio as an agent of effective communal crises management in Cross River State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Crisis

A crisis is an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending—especially one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome” Fink, 1986:15).

Communal Crisis

Communal violence in the form of riots or terrorism draws our attention in a dramatic manner, but the underlying and long term cause of violence is spread of communalism (Varshney, 2002). Communal violence, in its various forms rooted in extreme communalism and feelings of fear and hatred, is ultimately a barbaric and ugly manifestation of communalism as an ideology, representing the logical extension of its widespread propagation. (Marjoribanks, 2014). Communal riots, for instance, lend credibility to the core ideological tenets of communalism. However, it is the communal ideology and politics, propagated by communal politicians and ideologues during peacetime, that fundamentally underpin communal tension and violence. In essence, communal ideology and politics are the root causes, while communal violence merely represents the external symptoms of these underlying issues (Varshney, 2002; Brass, 1997). So the communal violence is linked to communal ideology. Communal ideology can prevail even without violence, but communal violence cannot exist without communal ideology" (Brass, 2003). Therefore communalism is above all a communal ideology.

A communal ideology consist of three element one succeeding the other. First, according to communal ideology, People who follow the same religion often share common secular interests. This means that in addition to having the same religious beliefs, they also tend to have similar political, economic, social, and cultural interests. This is the first bedrock of communal ideology. From this arises the notion of a religious community for secular interests (Chatterjee, 1993). A person who talks about the Christian community or Muslim community or their interests is already taking the first step toward communalism whether he knows it or not. The second step is taken when, in a multi-ethnic society, the secular interests—such as economic, social, political, and cultural interests—of the followers of one ethnic group differ from those of another religion (Horowitz, 1985). For Instance the secular interests of the Ejaghams are different from the interests of Efiks. When the interests of different communities not only differ but become hostile to each other—such that what benefits one group is detrimental to the other—their secular interests are inherently opposed (Horowitz, 1985).

The last step brings communalism to the stage of what would be described as extreme communalism. The first stage is beginning of communal ideology; the second stage is what may describe a liberal communalism or moderate communalism; the third stage is reached when secular interests of the followers of one ethnic group are counterpoised to the secular interests of the followers of another in a hostile fashion. Thus, communal violence is only a concrete conjectural manifestation of the communalization of society and politics (Kull, 2005). Communal ideology leads to political and psychological differentiation, distance, and competition along religious lines. Sooner or later, it leads to mutual fear and hatred, and ultimately to violence. Once communalism

segments politics along ethnic lines, violent conflict becomes a matter of time. Behind every riot is a strong collective communal mentality (Brass, 1997).

Root of Communal Crisis in Cross River

Communal crises in Cross River State, Nigeria, are rooted in a complex interplay of historical grievances, ethnic tensions, political instability, and socio-economic factors. Land disputes, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and inadequate land management policies, often escalate into violence (UNDP, 2007). Ethnic and cultural differences among the diverse groups in the state contribute to perceptions of marginalization and unequal access to resources (Ogundiya, 2013). Political competition and manipulation of ethnic divisions for electoral gain further fuel tensions and instability (Omeje, 2006). Socio-economic disparities and lack of infrastructure development exacerbate grievances, prompting outbreaks of violence (Ogundiya, 2013).

Table 1. Communal Crisis in Cross River State Nigeria

Communal Crisis/Communities Affected.	Dates	Cause of Conflict	Major implication/ effect
Usumutong vs. Ediba	2016; Feb 2014; Sept 2015; 2019 - 2022	Boundary disputes	Displacement, loss of lives, destruction of property, disruption of agricultural activities
Nko vs. Oyadama	2012; 2016; 2013 - 2022	Boundary disputes	Displacement, loss of livelihoods, infrastructure damage, food insecurity
Ebom and Ebijakara	2006 - 2022	Land Disputes	Displacement, economic hardship, destruction of property, loss of lives
Akparabong and Bendeghe Ekiem in Ikom and Etung LGAs, CRS.	Nov 2016	Land disputes	Displacement, destruction of farmland, loss of lives, strained inter-community relations
Adadama(Cross River) vs. Amagu(Ebonyi State)	2013 - 2024	Boundary disputes	Displacement, destruction of homes, loss of lives, increased tension between communities

Media and Communal Conflict in Nigeria

It has been observed that, in addition to promoting socio-economic and political aspects, the media has become the major source of all events, issues and actions which occur all over the world. Media is anticipated to be precise and unbiased by being objective in data collection and coverage so that the consumer could make appropriate resolutions. Designed or undersigned media scope of cruel occurrences and broadcasting the same to the people has frequently led to mistrust and hatred or even an urge to take revenge. Expertise in media coverage is crucial, as biased stories can exacerbate communal conflicts, especially given the uncontrolled nature of social media (Manoff, 1998). Media have been criticized for negative reporting on conflicts and neglecting peace-building initiatives. Radio stations sometimes provide contradictory information, fueling conflicts and failing to highlight key issues and players (Howard, 2002).

However, when badly used, it can also flame the violent conflict and make it difficult for conflict resolution processes to succeed. Sensitivity in media reporting is a model that, when used in covering conflicts, can better ensure the media does not escalate the conflict (Howard, 2009). Most wars are caused by intense competition of available resources which are always scarce such as food, water and grazing fields especially in Northern parts of Nigeria (Amisi, 2007). Cattle rustling is a culture and common practice among cattle rearing communities. As such, the communities use the practice to restock, particularly after their animals succumb to livestock diseases or severe drought. The skirmishes caused by the raids, if not prevented by security apparatus, can lead to widespread violence causing instability. If early symptoms of the conflicts are not dealt with accordingly, the instability affects other socioeconomic activities, impacting development" (Hendrickson, Armon, & Mearns, 1996).

Despite Nigeria been a multi ethnic state, having over 200 diverse ethnic groups it has witnessed numerous inter-community conflicts. These conflicts are composed of election related conflicts, pastoral and land conflict among other resource and cultural conflicts. According to Aho (2014), pastoral areas are more prone to inter community-based conflicts due to resource competition for example grazing pastures, inter-clan and ethnic rivalry. Political propaganda and hate speech broadcasted by media houses is attributed to have caused widespread violence after several communal and traditional royalty elections, thus leading to inter-communal conflicts (Batic & Schirch, 2007) A comparative report done after the skirmishes blamed competitive election experiences as the major cause of violence in many of the affected regions, especially in Cross River State)Collier & Vicente, 2012).

Thousands of lives were lost, property destruction and displacement were partly blamed to the media which instead of suggesting solutions to the conflict broadcasted real-time events as they happened and some of the content would cause bitterness among affected tribesmen who in turn would opt for revenge by use of violence (Akpan and Ering, 2013). This resulted to the conflict shifting to other aspects such as power struggle, land disputes and historical injustices which made the situations worse. Reddy (2012) also noted that politicians would also source arms for their tribe's men and such reports when made would lead to opposing political factions also arming their tribes leading to a full armed inter-communal conflict. Ndegwa (1997) noted that political leaders tend to use the media as a channel to issue statements which elicits the urge for revenge,

hence, the escalation of conflict. This clearly shows how media reporting affects in conflict management by either creating opportunities for solving the conflicts or escalation of the conflicts.

Review of Empirical Studies

Akpan and Ering (2013) in their study titled *The Media and Conflicts in Nigeria* aimed to examine the impact of media coverage on the prevalence and management of conflicts in Nigeria. It seeks to understand how media reporting influences public opinion and the dynamics of conflict, and how media practices can be aligned with conflict resolution efforts. The study found that sensationalist reporting and biased media narratives often contribute to the escalation of conflicts. Media outlets sometimes prioritize inflammatory stories that aggravate ethnic and religious tensions, thereby increasing the likelihood of violence and discord for the creation of a strong regulatory framework to guarantee responsible and ethical media practices. This framework should enforce strict adherence to journalistic standards, encourage balanced and accurate reporting, and impose penalties for sensationalism and biased coverage.

Muendo (2016) in his book titled *The Role of Media in Conflict Management of Inter-Communal Conflicts in Kenya* The study aimed to analyze the role of media in managing inter-communal conflicts in Kenya. It seeks to understand how media can influence conflict dynamics, contribute to conflict resolution, and the extent to which media practices can either mitigate or exacerbate inter-communal tensions.

Muendo highlighted that media can play a crucial role in conflict resolution by providing a platform for dialogue and disseminating information that promotes peace and reconciliation efforts.

Muendo recommends the implementation of training programs for journalists on conflict-sensitive reporting. This would equip media professionals with the skills to report on conflicts responsibly, emphasizing the role of media in promoting peace and understanding rather than exacerbating tensions.

Framework

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory was formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in a study on the 1968 American presidential election. Agenda setting is a social science theory. The theory also suggests that media has a great influence to their audience by instilling what they should think about, instead of what they actually think (Berkowitz, 2002).

Agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as "accessibility". Accessibility implies that the more frequently and prominently the news media covers an issue, the more instances of that issue become accessible in audience's memories (Iyengar, 2010).

When people are asked what the most important problem facing the country is, they answer with the most accessible news issue in memory, which is typically the issue the news media focused on the most and in the context of this study, people who resides in areas that are faced with the issue of communal crises are most likely to respond to the media that this is the major problem faced by them, hence, making a subject matter for the media. The agenda-setting effect is not the result of receiving one or a few messages, but is due to the aggregate impact of a very large number of messages, each of which a different content has but all of which deal with the same general issue. Mass-media coverage in general and agenda-setting in particular also has a powerful impact on what individuals think that other people are thinking, and hence they tend to allocate more importance to issues that have been extensively covered by mass media.

The theory is relevant to this research as it relates to the invaluable role of the radio in the presentation and publications of reports regarding the communal crises in Cross River State, with the aim of inciting public opinions towards the sustainable resolution of the issue.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The survey research design was used for the study.

Population of Study

Population accounts for the number of people in which the study focuses on. According to the management of the sampled broadcast firms, there are 36 staff members in the HIT FM and there are 32 staff in the Correct FM. Added together, there are sixty-eight (68) staff in the sampled radio stations and this constitute the population of the study.

Sample size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the questionnaire was obtained using the Taro-Yamane (1967) formular to extract a minimum sample size. The formula states thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = Population under study

e = the margin error and is usually 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01

1 = Constant

thus;

$N = 68$

$e = 0.0025$

$$n = \frac{68}{1+68(0.005)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{1+ 68 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{1 + 0.17}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{41.17}$$

$$n = 58$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is fifty-eight (58)

Table 3.1 Proportionate Distribution of Respondents

Radio Station	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
HIT FM	29	50%
CORRECT FM	29	50%
TOTAL	58	100%

Method of Data Analysis

Data gathered for this study were analyzed using the simple percentage (%) formula, applying Tables and frequency distribution method.

Data presentation and analysis

The data generated from 50 copies of questionnaire are presented and analysed below. Question 1-4 addressed demographic questions.

TABLE 1; Gender distribution of respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	35	70
Female	15	30
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above 35 respondents (70%) are male and 15 respondents (30%) are female.

TABLE 2; Marital Status Distribution of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Married	10	20

Single	40	80
TOTAL	50	100

The Table shows 10 of 20% are married, while 40 of 80% respondents are single.

TABLE 3: Religion Distribution of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	50	100
Muslim	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

The Table shows that 50 of 100% respondents are Christians.

TABLE 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
21 - 30years	30	60
31 - 40years	12	24
41 -50years	8	16
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, the age range of 21-30years had the highest number of respondents followed by those within 31-40 years range.

TABLE 5:How long has the Respondents been working in the media establishment?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
0-5years	40	80
6-10years	10	20
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, it is shown that 40 respondents (80%) have been working in the media establishment within the years range of 0-5 while 10 respondents (10%) have spent the years range of 6 – 10.

The Table above shows that 30 respondents (60%) agree that communal conflicts are still ongoing in Nigeria, meanwhile 10 respondents (20%) disagreed to this while another 10 respondents were undecided.

TABLE 6: Responses to "Can you identify the causes of communal crises in your visited locality?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Farmland struggle	4	8
Boundary/Landmark Struggle	7	14
Struggle for Natural Resources	11	22

Age long/tribal aggression	6	13
All of the Above	18	37
Undecided	3	6
TOTAL	50	100

The Table above shows that 4 respondents (8%) admitted that farmland struggles the causes of communal crises in their visited locality, 7 respondents (14%) admitted boundary/landmark struggle, 11 respondents (22%) admitted that struggle for natural resources is a case of communal crises, 6 respondents (13%) admitted age long/tribal aggression, 18 respondents (37%) agreed with all the provided options and 3 respondents (6%) were undecided

TABLE 7: Responses to "Do you think that the media has a role to play in the resolution of communal conflict in Nigeria?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	60
No	16	32
Undecided	4	8
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 30 respondents (60%) agreed that the media has a role to play in the resolution of communal conflict in Nigeria. Meanwhile, 16 respondents (32%) disagreed to this while 4 respondents (8%) were undecided.

TABLE 8: Responses to "Do you organize documentaries, live talk shows and other programmes within your radio station to address communal conflict in Nigeria?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	64
No	10	20
Undecided	8	16
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 32 respondents (64%) agreed that they organize documentaries, live talk shows and other programmes within your radio station to address communal conflict in Nigeria. Meanwhile, 10 respondents (20%) disagreed to this while 8 respondents (16%) were undecided

TABLE 9: Responses to "Do you think that your documentaries, live talk shows and other programmes has contributed to the resolution of persisting communal conflict in Nigeria?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	84
No	6	12
Undecided	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 42 respondents (84%) agreed that their documentaries, live talk shows and other programmes has contributed to the resolution of persisting communal conflict in Nigeria. Meanwhile, 6 Respondents (12%) disagreed to this while 2 others (4%) were undecided.

TABLE 10: Responses to "Are you faced with any challenge in your broadcasting role aimed at resolving communal conflicts?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	96
No	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 48 respondents (96%) agreed that they are faced with any challenge in your broadcasting role aimed at resolving communal conflicts. Meanwhile, 2 respondents (4%) disagreed to this.

TABLE 11: Responses to "Do you seem to have problems accessing conflict torn areas for the collation of information for your broadcast?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 49 respondents (98%) agreed that they seem to have problem accessing conflict torn areas for the collation of information for their broadcast. Meanwhile, 1 respondent (2%) disagreed with this.

TABLE 12: Responses to "Do you think that the refusal of reliable sources to divulge certain information for broadcasting is a challenge to your role in the resolution of communal conflict?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	88
No	6	12
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 44 respondents (88%) agreed that the refusal of reliable sources to divulge certain information for broadcasting is a challenge to their role in the resolution of communal conflict. Meanwhile, 6 Respondents (12%) disagreed with this.

TABLE 13: Responses to "Do you think that the challenges encountered by your radio station in the resolution of communal conflict can be resolved?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	50
No	15	30
Undecided	10	20
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 25 respondents (50%) agreed that the challenges encountered by their radio station in the resolution of communal conflict can be resolved. Meanwhile, 15 other respondents (30%) disagreed with this while 10 respondents (20%) are undecided.

TABLE 14: Responses to "Can you identify the strategies by which the challenges faced by your radio station in the resolution of communal conflict can be resolved?"

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Staff/Personnel training on information collation	10	21
Funding of radio stations to aid their access to interior communities	8	16
Provision of vehicles to enhance mobility	5	11
All of the Above	21	43
Undecided	4	9
TOTAL	50	100

From the Table above, 10 respondents (21%) agreed Staff/Personnel training on information collation is a strategy by which the challenges faced by your radio station in the resolution of communal conflict can be resolved. Meanwhile, 8 respondents (16%) admitted that funding of radio stations to aid their access to interior communities is an adoptable strategy, 5 respondents (11%) agreed with the provision of vehicles to enhance mobility, 21 respondents (43%) agreed with all the provided options while 4 respondents (9%) were undecided.

Discussion of Findings

Discussion of findings is based on the research questions.

Research Question One: What are the various causes of communal crises in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria in general?

Analyses from Table 7 indicates that majority of the respondents admitted that the various causes of communal conflicts especially in areas visited by them for media duties includes political power/royalty struggle, farmland struggle, boundary/landmark struggle, struggle for natural resources, age long/tribal aggression. This aligns with Aho (2014) who opined that communal crises in Nigeria have to do with the struggle for lands and the greed to exploit land related resources and royal privileges. The crises are therefore linked to the mode of economic production and distribution practiced in the society. In the pre-colonial Nigeria, the major means of production

was commonly owned. Farming, hunting and fishing were collectively carried out and the proceeds were equitably shared. There was little surplus and therefore no exploitation. The society was egalitarian and government was gerontocratic (Amisi, 2007). Under such conditions, it was relatively easy to handle disagreements and disputes in such a way that grievances did not reach that critical point at which they usually degenerate into riots or wars which disrupt the peace, the economic life, the tranquility or the progress of one or more of the communities involved. Pre-colonial Nigerian society at its communal mode of production was therefore relatively free from land disputes. Disputes which occasionally came about were usually handled by established conflict management mechanisms. However, with the experience of colonial and post-colonial rule which resulted in the poor fixation of boundaries and the introduction of new methods of farming, new crops such as tree crops (citrus tree) and several other aspects of the capitalist economy which have since continued to erode the base of communalism, Nigeria communal conflicts had become intermittent and destructive.

Research Question Two: What is the role of the radio in the effective management of communal crises in Cross River State?

analyses from Tables 8, and 9 indicates that majority of the respondents admitted that the radio has a role to play in the effective management of communal crises in Cross River State and such roles includes the organization of documentaries, live talk shows and other programs within the radio station that aims at addressing the ills of communal conflict.

This aligns with Acayo (2004) who asserted that as a result of their ability to reach and influence large numbers of people, the radio carry immense power in shaping the course of a conflict through its live and recorded programmes. Although many examples of the radio's negative contribution to the escalation of violent conflicts exist, fair and accurate journalism and media circumspect is vital for the development of every nation and attainment of peace beyond communal conflict. According to Kull (2005) media content that builds confidence and counteracts misperceptions may have a potential in both conflict prevention and transformation. The radio often plays a key role in today's conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms; either the radio as a mass medium 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.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges faced by the radio as the agent of effective communal crises management in Cross River State?

To answer this question analyses from Tables 11, 12 and 13 indicates that majority of the respondents admitted that the radio as an agent for the resolution of communal crises is faced with challenges in the delivery of its role and such challenges includes the inability to access conflict-torn areas for the collation of relevant information as well as the refusal of reliable sources to divulge certain information for broadcasting.

This aligns with Akpan and Ering (2013) who opined that the can also contribute by informing and supporting democratic values, in general and in the case of an intervention against persisting communal conflicts, however, most media personnel are unable to access the terror and conflict torn areas for information as this tends to put their survival at a critical stake. With this, the role of the media in the resolution of conflict is infringed upon but these notwithstanding, the media can play a particular role in promoting independent media and journalism based on sound journalistic principals. Manoff (1998) earlier stated that it is often more difficult for the media to be economically and politically independent as this places the media personnel at the mercies of reliable sources of conflict information who may decide to divulge the information or hoard them. In such situation, the media can only act as a temporary agent of conflict resolution without the opportunity to be launched into its fullest actions.

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the complexities of communal crises in Cross River State, Nigeria, and the critical role of radio in managing these conflicts. Communal conflicts in Cross River State are primarily driven by land disputes, Political power struggling competition for natural resources, and long-standing tribal aggressions. These issues have been exacerbated by colonial and post-colonial economic changes, which disrupted traditional communal practices. Radio plays a significant role in managing these crises through documentaries, live talk shows, and educational programs that promote peace and conflict resolution. However, its effectiveness is hindered by challenges such as limited access to conflict zones, reluctance of sources to provide information, and risks to journalists' safety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- 1: There should be detailed case studies or ethnographic research to document specific instances of communal crises, including their causes, dynamics, and impacts on communities. This could involve field research, interviews with affected populations, and analysis of historical data to provide a comprehensive understanding.
- 2: Implementing a media monitoring system that specifically tracks how radio stations in Cross River State cover communal crises. This would involve assessing the type of information broadcasted, the tone of coverage, and the effectiveness in reaching and informing affected communities in real-time. This could help identify best practices and areas for improvement in crisis communication.
- 3: Conducting stakeholder consultations with radio broadcasters, government agencies, and community leaders to identify and address the specific challenges faced by radio in crisis management. Develop training programs for broadcasters on crisis reporting ethics, emergency communication protocols, and community engagement strategies. Additionally, invest in improving infrastructure and technology to enhance radio broadcast reach and reliability during crises

4: To ensure effective mobility around the affected conflict areas for a wider and better coverage of the situation, radio station owners and government should provide vehicles that will aid this mobility while also allocating adequate funds for their maintenance and fueling.

5: Radio stations should leverage social media platforms to enhance their role in conflict management, by integrating social media strategies, radio stations can improve their reach and effectiveness in promoting peace-building initiatives and providing accurate information during communal crises.

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