

## PEACE JOURNALISM: A STRATEGY FOR CREATING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups with different cultural and religious backgrounds which hinder peaceful co-existence in the society. This study was conducted to establish the role of peace journalism as a strategy for creating sustainable peace in Nigeria. The study is situated on the tenets of the social responsibility theory while the secondary sources of data were relied upon for analysis. The study revealed that the role of peace journalism as a strategy for co-creating sustainable peace in Nigeria involves exploring the backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation, causes and options on every side, giving a voice to the views of all rival parties to be heard, creating ideas for conflict resolution as well as exposing lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on both sides as well as the damages caused by both parties. Despite this all-important role in co-creating sustainable peace, peace journalism is challenged by lack of readership/viewership for peace stories, reluctance by journalists on the grounds that the media should be objective, resource constraints, safety of peace journalists is not guaranteed as well as hostile sources. The study concludes that Nigeria as a country is currently faced with issues of Boko Haram, farmer-herder clashes, bandits' activities and kidnapping on daily basis, the need to restore peace is imperative hence the relevance of peace journalism to achieve this purpose. The study thus recommends that peace journalism should be encouraged among media houses in Nigeria for enhanced peaceful-co-existence. Media houses in Nigeria should organize workshops with a view to reminding practising journalists to adopt objectivity as a hallmark of journalism, media

houses in Nigeria should acquire drones to enhance the practice of peace journalism as this would further ensure the safety of peace journalists on the field and sources with credible information should be allowed to speak on the basis of anonymity since they are not always willing to speak to the press for security reasons..

**Keywords:** Conflict, Nigeria, Mass Media, Peace Journalism, Sustainable Peace

## **Introduction**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups. However, there is no peaceful co-existence as a result of cultural and religious differences which is responsible for the persistent conflict and violence between one ethnic-group and another over the years. Conflict is an unavoidable issue all over the world, as there is no society without cases of conflict. Nsude & Elem (2020) averred that Nigeria is a country of many tribes with peculiar culture, religion and economic interests to protect as reflected in the more than 250 ethnic groups, many of which have no meaningful relationship with one another.

Conflict refers to disagreement, or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Conflict is also seen as a fight, struggle, a disagreement between people with different ideas or beliefs to be in opposition or disagreement over a matter or an issue. Moge kwu (2011) argued that, conflict is a clash between hostile and opposing elements, ideas, or forces. Basically, conflict occurs at all levels of human interactions; at homes, institutions, and among groups. At some levels, these kinds of conflict are usually taken for granted and, most of the time, go unreported unless they have a bizarre nature to them. In Nigeria, for example, conflict exists between the herders and farmers, religious crisis, communal clashes just to mention a few.

Nigeria, like every other developing nation or third world country, is faced with the problem of conflict as a result of the differences in cultural and religious backgrounds of the over 250 ethnic groups in the country. Osaghae & Suberu (2005) identified cases of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria to include: the Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis that occurred in the 1980s, the Sharia riots of 2000 and the Jos crisis in the year 2010 that led to the loss of lives and destruction of properties in the affected communities. Corroborating this, scholars like Haldun & Odukoya (2016) in a study on “Ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria: A specific analysis upon identities (1999-2013)” identified the Orocultists clash in Sagamu that led to the

loss of lives and destruction of properties as another good example of ethno-religious conflict that had rocked Nigeria in 1999.

Communal clashes have become regular occurrences in Nigeria. Examples of communal clashes in Nigeria include: the Tiv and Jukun clashes in Taraba and Benue states, Ife and Modakeke communal clashes, the clashes between communities in Cross River and Ebonyi states, and boundary disputes between Enugu and Kogi states in the past, which resulted in loss of lives as well as destruction of properties worth millions across communities in Nigeria.

The EndSARS protest in 2020 which is still fresh is another form of conflict in Nigeria. In October 2020, Youths in Nigerians embarked on the #EndSARS protest against police brutality of innocent citizens, with a view that the Special Anti-Robbery (SARS) unit of the Policeforce bedisbanded as well as the reformation of the entire Police Force for a better society. A report by the Amnesty International revealed that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) over the years had enjoyed impunity for the use of torture and other ill-treatment to execute, punish and extract information from suspects. A video went viral on October 4th showing SARS officers dragging two men from a hotel and later killed one of them. This incident fueled the #EndSARS protest across Nigeria, while the Nigerian army violently repressed a peaceful protest at the Lekki toll gate as they opened gunfire on unarmed protesters where at least 12 persons were reported killed by the military.

In most instances, these clashes resulted in loss of lives and destruction of properties coupled with the displacement of thousands of people. For instance, the herdsmen attack on the people of Guma and Logo local government areas left over 70 people dead in Benue state, thousands displaced and properties destroyed. Scholars like Audu & Yibeikas (2018) argued that the violent conflict between nomadic herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria is an age-long recurrence which often results in loss of lives and destruction of properties year in, year out. The constant crisis portends threat to the unity and corporate existence of the Nigerian nation as it slows down economic activities, worsens food crisis as well as increases unemployment and poverty respectively.

Efforts by stakeholders, like the government, opinion leaders, traditional rulers, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), in resolving incessant cases of conflicts over the years for peaceful co-existence have not been effective. However, it has been argued that the media has the capacity to intervene and prevent conflicts either from the latent or escalating stage. This means the media has the potential to resolve conflicts in the society to enhance peaceful co-existence. John (1997) opined that the

media plays a crucial role in integrating members of the society. Thus, in times of conflict, being it religious or political conflict, the media can de-escalate or escalate the conflict by preaching peace for the parties involved in conflict to embrace peace or otherwise to escalate the situation. This view is supported by Danaan (2019)'s submission that there is a strong consensus among communication scholars that the media plays a significant role in conflict resolution and their capacity to escalate or de-escalate conflict in the society over the years has received adequate attention in media research.

This feat is achieved through peace journalism, which explores the root causes of conflict in order to create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Peace journalism gives voice to the parties involved in conflict, empathy, understanding and sees conflict/crisis as a problem; hence it is proactive: preventing any form of conflict in the society for peaceful co-existence. Peace Journalism has been hugely debated with regards to Libya, and, even more strongly, Syria to further promote peace journalism as an analytical tool for conflict reporting and for questioning the necessity and effectiveness of military force whilst reporting accurately. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the role of peace journalism as a strategy for creating sustainable peace in Nigeria.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To find out the role of peace journalism as a strategy for creating sustainable peace in Nigeria.
2. To determine the relevance of peace journalism in creating sustainable peace in Nigeria.
3. To identify the challenges of peace journalism in creating sustainable peace in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Peace Journalism**

To everything, there is a season and a time for every purpose or action under the heaven; there is a season and time for war and a time for peace (Ecclesiastes, 3 v 1 & 8). Recognizing the importance of this Biblical injunction, reporters, journalists and editors in the course of reporting conflicts identify the cause of conflict and report such issues in a manner that would not trigger further conflict or violence in the society.

The word *peace* originated from the Latin word *pax* which means pact, control or an agreement to end war or any dispute and conflict between two people, ethnic groups, two nations or two antagonistic groups of people. The American military history posited that peace is the absence

of war. Based on the Military history, war is a tool to win peace or use of force to maintain peace. In military paradigms, peace is as an ultimate or ideal goal rather than a means to an end (Ven, 1995).

Peace journalism is therefore a form of journalism aimed at exploring the root causes of conflict in order to “create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The concept of peace journalism is also concerned with the form of journalism which strives to prevent conflict from growing, from the latent to a manifest stage as part of efforts to avoid the violence that is often the main characteristic of manifest conflict. It also applies some fundamentals of traditional journalism.

Scholars like McGoldrick & Lynch (2000) opined that peace journalism (PJ) uses conflict analysis and transformation to update the concept of balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting. The peace journalism approach provides a new road map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their reporting the ethics of journalistic intervention. It opens up a literacy of non-violence and creativity as applied to the practical job of everyday reporting. In the words of Professor Johan Galtung, “Peace Journalism makes audible and visible subjugated aspects of reality”.

In essence, peace journalism has to do with the use of radio, television and print media to disseminate truthful information or alternate viewpoints that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict. Generally, journalists or reporters of peace journalism are expected to be balanced and unbiased in the face of describing the parties involved in the conflict situation irrespective of who is involved in the conflict, avoid being neutral and passive when it comes to depicting peace as the most acceptable way of resolving conflicts elsewhere in the society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is premised on the tenets of the Social Responsibility theory. The Social Responsibility theory originated from the Hutchins Commission of 1947. The social responsibility theory is based on the assumption that the media serve essential functions in society. Therefore, it should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society. These obligations are to be met by setting high professional standards in communication of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance. In accepting and discharging these obligations, the media should be self-regulatory within the framework of law and established institutions (Hasan, 2016).

The social responsibility theory encourages total freedom of the press without censorship, but encourages the press to be regulated according to social responsibilities and external controls. Content is also filtered through

public obligation and interference. McQuail (2005) in Ineji, Nkanu & Okoi (2018) summarized the tenets of the social responsibility theory as follows:

1. Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society.
2. These obligations should be met by setting high or professional standards of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity as well as balance respectively.
3. The media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions following the acceptance and application of these obligations.
4. The media should avoid offensive content triggering crime, violence or civil disorder or harm to minority groups.
5. The media as a whole should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society giving access to various points of views and rights of reply.
6. The Society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance, and intervention can be justified to secure the public good.
7. Journalists and media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to employers and the market.

The Social Responsibility is an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic responsibility and the actions of an individual must be beneficial to the society for a balance between economic growth and the welfare of society and the environment. The social responsibility theory demands that the media should act responsibly by realizing that they have certain obligations to the public's rational decisions. The Social Responsibility theory is relevant to this study because the theory spells out themoral obligations for journalists to consider the overall needs of society when reporting conflicts in order to promote peace in the society with a view to producing the greatest good for the society.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The methodology for this study is secondary data. Based on this, the relevant data available in textbooks, journals and online sources were relied upon for analysis.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **History of Peace Journalism**

Like every other concept, peace journalism did not emerge from the moon. The history of peace journalism is traced to the 1970s, when a

renowned Austrian scholar, Johan Galtung first coined the term 'peace journalism' (PJ). Johan Galtung, a Professor of Peace and Director of the TRANSCEND Peace and Development Network, first used the term "Peace Journalism" in the 1970s following the observation that part of War Journalism was based on the same assumptions as Sports Journalism. There was a focus on 'winning as the only thing' in a zero-sum game of two parties.

Galtung suggested that peace journalism would be more like health journalism. A good health correspondent would describe a patient's battle against cancerous cells eating away the body. But he or she would also tell us about the causes of cancer, such as lifestyles, environment, genetic use of make-up, etc. as well as the possible cures and preventive measures. Working with Galtung himself, Conflict and Peace Forums (CPF), with Director Indra Adnan, based near London, England, took up his original model and developed it through creative dialogues with journalists and other professionals, mainly in a series of annual conferences at Taplow Court.

The concept of peace journalism has a long history of news publication, particularly in non-sectarian Christian peace movements and societies of the early 19th century, which published periodicals. Sectarian organizations' publications focused on peace as part of their proselytizing in the 19th century, as did utopian communities of the period. From the 20th century, a prominent example of sectarian journalism focused on peace was Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker*.

A Norwegian Sociologist, peace researcher and practitioner, Johan Galtung proposed the idea of peace journalism in the 1970s for journalists as part of efforts to show how a value bias towards violence can be avoided when reporting war and conflict in the society. The idea behind peace journalism is to identify the structural and cultural causes of violence, as they impact upon the lives of people in a conflict areas as part of the explanation for violence in the society. Furthermore, peace journalism also designed to frame conflicts as an activity which consists of many parties pursuing many goals other than a simple dichotomy.

### **Stakeholders in Conflict Resolution/ Sustainable Peace in Nigeria**

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** NGOs is an acronym for Non-Governmental Organizations. Basically, these are organizations that are not of government, they operate as private bodies. Non-Governmental Organizations refers to organizations that are independent of government involvement are known as non-governmental organizations or

non-government organizations, with NGO as an acronym (Rapporteur, 2019, Horowitz, 2017 & Claiborne, 2004).

**Security Agencies:** Security agencies refers to government organizations that are saddled with the responsibility of conducting intelligence activities for the purpose of internal security of a particular country or nation. Security agencies are said to be domestic cousins of foreign intelligence agencies which carry out counterintelligence activities to thwart the efforts of other countries' foreign intelligence. A good example of security agencies in Nigeria include the Directorate of State Service and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

**Traditional Rulers:** A traditional ruler is an individual whose ascension to the throne is based on inheritance, lineage and appointment to a chieftaincy position by the council of elders or government of the day under the customary law, while the appointment must be approved by the approving authorities. Example of traditional rulers in Nigeria include: Sultan of Sokoto, Tor Tiv, Ochi'Idoma and the Ooni of Ife, etc.

**Community Based Organizations (CBOs):** Community Based Organizations in simple terms are charitable organizations, which represent community needs and work assiduously to enable them achieve these needs. Community organization or Community Based Organization refers to organizations with the aim of making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning. These organizations are considered to include churches, unions, schools, health care agencies, social-service groups, fraternities, and clubs. They are frequently advocacy-oriented and depend on community-organizing strategies to accomplish their goals.

**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** A civil society organization (CSO) is said to be a group of people that operates in the community in a manner that is distinct from both government and business.

**Opinion Leaders:** An opinion leader is said to be an individual who exerts unequal amount of influence on the decision of others. Kombol (2010) argues that opinion leaders could either be monomorphic or polymorphic. Monomorphic opinion leaders are experts in a particular field while polymorphic opinion leaders are experts in a variety of fields, not just one area. Opinion leaders are important in the process of change and are found in many communities in Africa. A good example of opinion leaders



include: traditional rulers, religious leaders, medicine men, etc who have a laudable voice in their respective communities.

It has been established from this review that the various stakeholders in conflict resolution towards creating sustainable peace in Nigeria range from non-governmental organizations, security agencies, traditional rulers, community-based organizations to opinion leaders. These stakeholders, in an event of conflict, do everything possible to resolve the conflict and bring about sustainable peace in the society.

### **The Media and Conflict Reporting in Nigeria**

The media plays a significant role in fueling or escalating conflict in the society. For example, Radio-Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) was used in Rwanda to demonize the Tutsi, lay the groundwork as it aided the killings during the genocide (UN official cited in Betz, 2018). Radio Television Libre des Milles fueled the genocide in Rwanda by a way of urging listeners to use weapons on the streets and ‘kill the cockroaches’ (Bratic & Schirch, 2007). Scholars like Bratic & Schirch (2007) posited that the broadcast media in the Balkans polarized local communities to the point that violence was accepted as a useful tool for addressing grievances among the inhabitants of these communities. The media also played a crucial role in escalating the 2011 crisis in Jos, Plateau State.

For the media to become a veritable tool and further perform this transformative role in a deeply conflict prone society like Nigeria, it is important that the media undergo a paradigm shift from its current posture and selective exposure of social and conflict reportage in the country. In other words, the media must be seen as helping to report issues and conflict as they occur without selective coverage. This shift must provide a place for peace media orientation and operation with a view to reducing the tendencies for violent manifestations of conflicts in the various communities (Akpan, Erring & Adeoye, 2013).

The media has the ability to manipulate positively and otherwise, regardless of place and time. This explains why media-conflict study has gained global attention. The role of the media in conflict prevention, resolution and escalation has become a global concern to both peace and conflict scholars and public policy makers particularly in developing nations of the world, such as Nigeria that is faced with various forms of conflicts occasioned by ethno-religious activities, farmer-herder crisis, communal crisis and the #ENDSARS protest in October, 2020.

In most cases, the media wittingly or unwittingly incited the public to violence, with attendant and avoidable loss of lives and property. The kind of information the media disseminate in times of conflict or crisis is critical to sustaining peace and harmony in society and vice versa. Arising from

the above scenario, the practice of peace journalism tasksthe media present itself as the direct mirror- image of the society, particularly at this historical point when conflicts, especially violent conflicts and crimes, are prevalent. The media must develop the capacity to help in the reduction of violence in the society as well as develop a thorough understanding of the conflict and convey that understanding to their audiences in a way that reflects the truth of the conflict in all its complexity.

The media can also serve as a driver of peace. Betz & Williams (2017) averred that the role of the media in conflict prevention and peacebuilding includes bridge builder, improved governance, increased knowledge of complex issues, providing early warning, serve as a channel to express emotions and a motivator for peace:

1. The media is a bridge builder – The argument is that the media can be used to build relationships as well as support peaceful co-existence and understanding between people who consider themselves different from one another.
2. The media improves transparency in governance – Fact-based, independent, transparent, accountable and accurate and balance reporting is crucial for holdinggovernment officials accountable; this is a sure way to make public administrators more transparent and accountable to the people. The media has the capacity to mobilize citizens to understandgovernment policies as well as use the information provided to exercise their human rights, as this is critical for conflict prevention respectively.
3. The media increases knowledge of complex issues – Complex societal issues, like corruption, political injustice, marginalization, lack of economic opportunity and struggles with identity that may drive violent extremism are taken into cognizance.
- 4.The media provides early warning of potential conflicts as well as create a platform to address the conflict for a peaceful society.
5. The media also serves as a channel or platform to express emotions – The media provides a platform for people to express their fears, frustration and share experiences and advice with others. It can also link people with power holders, enabling open communication and dialogue.
6. The media is a motivator for peace – The media has the capacity to motivate citizens in conflict-prone communities through news reportage and other programmes to embrace peace.

### **Role of Peace Journalism as a Strategy for Creating Sustainable Peace in Nigeria**

Peace is said to be the absence of war, fear, threat, anxiety, suffering and violence. Nsude (2016) in a study on “Peace Journalism, Panacea for Boko

Haram Insurgency in Nigeria” argues that peace has to do with activities which bring about sustainable development in the society either directly or indirectly. Peace is a value and necessary ingredient of security of life, property and meaningful development. Lynch (2017) stated that peace journalism refers to the form of journalism where editors and reporters make choices about what to report, and how to report with a view to creating opportunities for the parties involved in conflict and the society to consider as well as value non-violent responses to conflict.

It is important to note that when news consumers and audience members are furnished with such opportunities, but still decide they prefer war to peace, there is nothing more journalism can do in this respect. Lynch further argued that there is no matching commitment to ensuring a fair hearing for violent responses as they seldom struggle for a place on the news agenda. As a strategic tool to supplement the news conventions to give peace a chance, peace journalism:

1. Explore the backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation, presenting causes and options on every side (not just both sides)- this implies that peace journalism examines the context in which the dispute evolved and explain what caused the conflict in the first instance.
2. Gives voice to the views of all rival parties, from all levels;
3. Peace journalism provides creative ideas for conflict resolution, development, peacemaking and peacekeeping;
4. Exposes lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides, and reveals excesses committed by, and suffering inflicted on, peoples of all parties;
5. Peace journalism pays attention to peace stories and post-war developments.

It is worthy to note that peace journalism can also play an important role in positively shaping society. For instance, Hachten (2005) posited that during the apartheid regime, the persistent reporting by the international media facilitated political change in South Africa. He further noted that this form of report helps the international community formed opinion which led to actions by concerned nations. Again, the persistent American and European press coverage of the civil war in Bosnia and the growing evidence of genocide by Bosnian Serbs pushed Bill Clinton of the US administration and NATO respectively to intervene and impose a military truce, which ultimately led to peace in that troubled nation. Military truce is a period in which there is no fight due to an agreement between the parties involved in conflict or an agreement between opposed parties in which they pledge to cease fire for a limited time.

It is obvious from the review that the role of peace journalism as a strategy for creating sustainable peace in Nigeria involve the exploring the backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation, causes and options on every side, giving a voice to the views of all rival parties to be heard, creating creative ideas for conflict resolution as well as exposing lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on both sides as well as reveal the damages caused by both parties.

### **The Relevance of Peace Journalism in Creating Sustainable Peace in Nigeria**

Over the years, Nigeria as a country has experienced different forms of crisis, violence, insecurity and various conflicts such as ethno-religious crisis, communal clashes, Boko-Haram, Farmers /Herders crisis, post-election violence and most recently, the 2020 #ENDSARS protest which tend to disrupt the peaceful co-existence in the society as lives and properties were lost.

The need for restoration of peace in the society is, therefore, imperative however, the manner in which conflict issues are reported in the media goes a long way to escalate or de-escalate further violence among the citizens. Peace Journalism is the major concern of the mass media now that restoration of peace has become a dire need of the public in the crises areas. It is common sense that development would continue to crawl in a society where crises and insecurity take the place of peace and security. Peace Journalism borders on the practice of media reports of crises, violence, or other related activities that are most likely to disrupt peaceful coexistence of the inhabitants in a way that will lessen both its immediate and aftermath effects.

Galtung (1998) in a study on “High Road, Low Road: Charting the Course for Peace Journalism” opined that the concern of a peace journalist is not to highlight how a disease is overcome except by violence means as the disease itself. Similarly, the concern of peace journalists is not only to resolve crises but to guide their reports towards preventing crises and ensuring reconciliation for development. According to Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) in a study on “Peace Journalism” noted that peace journalism preaches impartiality and objectivity as a route toward peace building.

In the words of Lynch (2008), peace journalism proposes a set of principles in the reporting of conflicts, as well as a workable set of methods for editors and reporters to employ, based on an awareness of these distinction, in mainstream news and current affairs. This form of Journalism has created very good platform for the entire society to consider and value non-violent, developmental responses as the best approach

towards peace. Peace journalism has been developed from research which indicates that oftentimes, news about conflict has a value bias toward violence. Peace journalism therefore aims to correct this form of bias in the media with a view to create opportunity for the society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict in the society. The mass media is a powerful tool of communication in peace and conflict situations as it can be used positively to promote peace and resolve conflicts at appropriate times.

Peace journalists employ the model of conflict analysis and transformation to update concepts of balance, fairness, and accuracy in reporting; and provides a link between journalists, their sources, the stories they report and the consequences on the society. In the process peace journalism creates awareness about non-violence and creativity in the practical job of everyday activities of a journalist and by extension the practice of journalism.

The main feature of peace journalism is its ability to frame stories in ways that provide society with enough information with which to respond non-violently to conflict or conflict situations (Hyde-Clarke, 2011). Furthermore, peace journalism is not only relevant in conflict situations; it can also find relevance in attempts at maintaining peace in society by providing varied viewpoints that will help a large section of the citizenry make informed decisions about issues that concern them. This places enormous responsibilities on the media as society's watchdogs.

Scholars like Bratic, Ross & Kang-Graham (2008) opined that peace journalism aims to correct the negative consequences of journalism in the society. According to them, the practice of traditional journalism is more likely to foster violent conflict than encourage peace; because it does not present society with alternatives that encourage peace. For example, the news media was accused of both helping the allies further their goals in World War II, and (in Germany) overtly persuading the German masses into believing that Jews were a lesser race (Stout, 2011).

The media, in many instances contributed to reshaping the course of events in a peaceful direction. For instance, the media usually point out the advantages of peace building, promote individuals and groups involved in peace initiatives as well as balance the views of the actors respectively. Peace Journalism is based on the proposition that the choices journalists make when reporting conflict situations tend to either expand or contract the space available for society at large to imagine and work towards peaceful outcomes.

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices about the type of stories to report as well as how to report them in a manner that creates opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent

responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Lynch & McGoldrick further identified four practical distinctions of peace journalism to include the following:

1. Peace journalism takes an analytical approach to conflict, seeking opportunities to identify parties, goals, needs and interests.
2. Peace journalism projects a multi-party conflict model, rather than a Manichean ‘tug-of-war’
3. Peace journalism finds room for perspectives from beyond the usual ‘official sources’
4. Lastly, peace journalism seeks out peace initiatives as well as ‘pegs’ (or opportunities) to report on them.

It is evident from the review that peace journalism is relevant in co-creating sustainable peace in Nigeria for peaceful co-existence in the face of Boko-Haram, Farmers /Herders crisis, which has disrupted peace in the country.

### **Challenges of Peace journalism in Creating Sustainable Peace in Nigeria**

The media serves as a driver of peace in different way, such as building bridges between people and groups, improving governance, increasing knowledge of complex issues, providing early warning of potential conflicts; as an outlet to express emotions; and as a motivator for action to promote peace. Despite the role of peace journalism in promoting peace in the society, Idris (2020) averred that the practice of peace journalism is challenged by the following:

1. **Lack of readership/viewership for peace stories:** This is a challenge in peace journalism because the audience members (readers/viewers) are not interested in peace stories compared to those on violence and conflict.
2. **Reluctance by Journalists on the Ground that the Media should be objective:** Objectivity which is the hallmark of journalism has to do with the state of being truthful, unbiased and not influenced by emotions or personal prejudices. However, some journalists in Nigeria are not willing to be objective on conflict issues as often reflected in their reportage.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Most media houses are constrained by financial resources to send reporters to conflict areas. As part of efforts to ensure the safety of a journalist reporting conflicts, media organizations with the financial muscle to use helicopter and drones however, media organizations with meager resources cannot do same.
4. **Safety of Journalists is not guaranteed:** The safety of peace journalists is not always guaranteed especially during crisis as the parties involved sometimes vent their anger on them. This challenge has made practising journalists to shy away from peace journalism.

5. **Hostile Sources:** In the face of conflict or violence, most people expected to provide credible information on the causes and damages caused by the crisis are not willing to speak to the press for security reasons and out of the fear of reprisal attack.

Drawing from the above, the challenges of peace journalism range from lack of readership/viewership for peace stories, reluctance by journalists on the grounds that the media should be objective, resource constraints, safety of peace journalists is not guaranteed to hostile sources as they affect the practice of peace journalism for peaceful co-existence.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that Nigeria as a country currently faced with issues of Boko -Haram, farmer-herder clashes, bandits' activities and kidnapping on daily basis, the need to restore peace is imperative hence the relevance of peace journalism to achieve this purpose. Peace journalism in this case will explore the root causes of conflict with a view to "create opportunities for Nigerians to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict for sustainable peace in the country.

### **Recommendations**

From the analysis, the study, among others, recommends that:

1. Peace journalism should be encouraged among media houses in Nigeriato enhance peaceful-co-existence even in the face of security challenges in the country
2. Media houses in Nigeria should organize workshops with a view to reminding practising journalists to see objectivity as the hallmark of journalism
3. Media houses in Nigeria should acquire drones to enhance the practice of peace journalism as this would further ensure the safety of peace journalists on the field
4. In the event of conflict or violence, sources with credible information should be persuaded to speak on condition of anonymity since most sources are not always willing to speak to the press for security reasons or fear of reprisalattacks.
5. Journalists should be taught the tenets of peace journalism to enable them discharge their duties effectively.

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