MEDIA SELECTION AND USE IN OVERCOMING ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

By

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Abstract
A recurring problem in the African continent is the resort to violence by aggrieved communities, groups or bodies against one another. This problem has persisted partly because the media have not been sufficiently pro-active rather, the media have often courted the peace process when crisis unfolds. Against this backdrop, the paper opines that careful selection and use of the media based on perception of trouble spots in the African continent may nip the problem in the bud. Therefore, in discussing media selection and use, identified likely and crisis prone areas may be well suited to certain media use and or a blend of media selection. While suggesting the use of any of these forms: traditional media as expressed in songs, dances, drama, stories and mime; newspaper; television; and radio, the paper discusses the peculiar characteristics of the different media and how these can be properly used in a pro-active manner. The paper further identifies religion, politics, land issues, leadership tussle as factors that continually play up ethnic crisis and that only a media that is well guided can properly fit this role assignment. The paper notes that the crises in violence prone areas such as between Morocco and the Polisario independence movement in the Western Sahara; ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria, Ghana and other African countries can indeed be overcome by the proactive use of the media. It therefore recommends that the continental body-the African union, governments in Africa, the different communities, opinion leaders,and the identified mass media in this study should collaborate toovercome ethnic conflicts in Africa.

Key words: Ethnicity, ethnic violence, conflict, development communication, media selection, use of media.

Introduction

A major reason for underdevelopment and stunted growth in Africa is ethnic conflict or violence. Conflict and violence are used interchangeably in this work because conflict often manifests in violence or violence is the result of conflict. The character of the African state is such that the diverse groups and ethnic cultures which are expressed in diverse forms make the continent one that accommodates different cultures, beliefs, opinions, likes and dislikes. In recent years, the Human Development Report recognizes that people must lead the kind of life they choose and providing them with the tools and opportunities to make those choices. The 2004 report provides a powerful argument for finding ways to delight in our differences. The report makes a case for respecting diversity and building more inclusive societies by adopting policies that explicitly recognize cultural differences-multicultural policies:

- Cultural liberty is a vital part of human development because being able to choose one's identity is important in leading a full life;
- Cultural liberty allows people to live the lives they value without being excluded from other choices important to them such as education, health or job opportunities;
- Several emerging models of multi-cultural democracy provide effective mechanisms for power sharing between cultural diverse groups;
- Power sharing arrangements have broadly proven to be critical in resolving tensions; and
- Multicultural policies that recognize differences between groups are needed to address injustices historically rooted and socially entrenched.

However, this recognition of diversity has tended to also create varying problems. In clear terms therefore, conflict takes more deep-seated forms when it manifests in regional forms thereby inflicting deep wounds on African societies through dislocations caused by untold hardships, death, deprivations and unbridled reprisals. Thus, conflict has a close bearing with ethnicity because most conflicts emanate from ethnic alliances.

According to Okemiri (2000), ethnicity is the consciousness of somebody relative to the storms and values of his or her culture, of which other peoplessocio-cultural background may be deemed to be inferior. Offiong (2001 ;3 0) submits that ethnicity is a situation whereby people of a given territory shared a common belief, religion, culture, language, dressing, historical background, which may be different from others. To understand ethnic conflict, it is necessary to conceptualize the term, ethnic. Ethnic means a group of class of people sharing the same beliefs, customs, tradition, belief system, interests, ideologies, way of life, way of thinking etcetera.

Omu (2008:89) says of ethnic group: In the past, it was the concept of "tribalism" which found favour with European writers in defining the same social reality. In recent times however, the universality of ethnicity has come to be increasingly recognized such that we now hear about ethnic Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda as well as ethnic Greeks, Albanians, Serbs and Croats in Eastern Europe.

The term ethnic group conjures up the image of a long-established and homogenous entity but although some groups may answer to this description, there are many others that do not.

Ende (2005) note that ethnic groups are variously tagged as "a multitude of ethnic groups" (Imoaghene, 1990, P ix), disparate ethnic nationalities" (Bayagbon, 2001,p. 14), "diverse cultures" (Emeh, 2003, P.35) and "competing separatist identities" (Abdullahi, 2003, P.56).

It is from the word ethnic that ethnicity has evolved although it is a complex phenomenon that applies to the feeling of oneness.

On the other hand, conflict is a situation or absence of peace in a society. Conflict generally refers to a condition in which one identifiable group of human being (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, social, economic, political or others) is engaged in conflict opposition to one or more groups because these groups are pursuing what are, or appear to be incompatible interest (Dougherty, 1981). Francis (2004:20) observes that conflict has an ontological basis in human need and it is the denial which causes violent conflicts, or causes resolvable differences to degenerate into armed conflict. Each conflict has its dynamics characterized as Shedrach (1997: 65) cited in Shedrack (2004:65) notes that conflict is not a static phenomenon, but is expressive, dynamic and dialectical.

Shedrach cited in Obaye (2008:351) outlined five stages of conflict as identified by Simon Fisher et al (2000) as follows.

1. The first is the pre-conflict stage, a period when goals between parties are incompatible, which could lead to openconflict. At this stage the conflict is not well known because parties try to hide it from public view but communication is undermined between them.
2. The second stage is that of stagnation, at which point the conflict becomes open or manifest. This is characterized by occasional fighting, low levels of violence, search for allies by parties, mobilization of resources, strained relations and polarization.
3. The third stage is the stage of crises which represents the peak of the conflict. In violent conflict, this is the stage of war and intense fighting, leading to killings, injuries, large scale population displacements and the use of small arms and light weapons, etcetera.
4. The fourth is believed to be outcome stage. There is an assumption that all conflicts will pass through this stage one way or the other. Either one side wins and another loses, or a ceasefire may be declared, one may surrender or the government or other third party intervening forces stronger than the warring parties intervene to impose a solution.
5. The fifth is the post-conflict stage. At this stage, violence has either ended or significantly reduced, and the parties have gone past this crisis stage. This is the stage to address the underlying causes of the conflict in the first instance, such as the needs and fear of the parties. If they are not tackled at this stage, the conflict cycle may be re-enacted and a return to the pre-conflict stage, with consequent re-eruption of violence a possibility.

Dimensions of Conflicts In Africa

The African continent presents a good focus in our study of the concept of development communization especially as we attempt to theorize strategies through the use of the media to overcome ethnic conflicts or violence in Africa. The reasons are threefold:

1. The issue of ethnic violence in Africa is endemic.
2. Africa presents deep rooted communities with diverse cultures, background and beliefs) systems which tend to be at variance with those of adjoining or faraway communities.
3. Many African peoples and communities are not well informed to be able to appreciate the peace factor as a necessary panacea for growth.

When ethnic conflicts erupt in Africa, a number of problems usually result from such conflicts (Akapule 2010). In today's world there are more than 25 million internally displaced people, over 15 million of whom are Africans. In West Africa, the Liberian Civil War alone displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The Ghanaian media has reported that many people sought refuge in the neighbouring countries including Burkina Faso and Togo thereby putting pressure on their limited resources.

Akapule (2010) further gives reasons for ethnic conflict:

1. Historically, it has been proved that colonialism in Africa carried within itself the seed of ethnic conflict. The arbitrary demarcation of boundaries fragmented Africa into smaller/weaker status without giving much attention to the prevailing socio-cultural peculiarities of the people.
2. The infamous policy of separate development in certain parts of Africa and the policy of indirect rule through which the colonial Authorities were able to govern by using minority groups accounted for some of the inter-ethnic conflicts in the continent. A case in point is

that of Burundi and Rwanda. These two groups find their origin in the colonial policy of indirect rule where the Tutsi minorities were imposed on the majority Hutus.

3. Another cause of ethnic conflict is the challenge associated with political tension especially in the nations that are emerging from one party and dictatorial regimes into democracy. Several nations are faced with the opposition fighting to dislodge incumbent regimes that have unyielding commitment to remain in power. In such cases, elections are staged and managed to offer a front to legitimize the stay of the already entrenched ruler. In such cases, as in Kenya and Zimbabwe just to mention a few such leaders have already succeeded in creating situations in which out of despair, aggrieved opponents organized rebellions based on ethnic backgrounds against the incumbent.

Nwammuo (2012:216-218) cited Thomas and Kilmann (1976:3) as having developed five basic ways of addressing conflicts. They are as follows:

1. Accommodation: This means surrendering ones own needs and wishes to accommodate the other party.
2. Avoidance: It refers to the act of postponing or avoiding conflicts by ignoring it or changing the subject. It can be useful as a temporary measure to buy time or as an expedient means of dealing with very minor, non-re-curring conflicts. In more severe cases, conflict avoidance can involve saving a relationship or leaving a group.
3. Collaboration: This means working together to find a mutually beneficial solution. While the Thomas Kilmann grid views collaboration as the only win-win solution to conflicts, collaboration can also be time-intensive and inappropriate when there is no enough trust, respect or communication among participants for successful collaboration to occur.
4. Compromise: By this, Thomas Kilmann means bringing the problem into the open and having the third person present. The aim of conflict resolution is to reach agreement and most often, this will mean compromise.
5. Competition: This refers to the ability of asserting one's viewpoint at the potential expense of another. It can be useful when achieving one's objective outweighs one's concern for the relationship.

Thomas and Kilmann (1976:8) further developed three methods through whichconflicts can be resolved as follows:

1. Negotiation: This is the process whereby mandated representatives of groups in a conflict situation come together in order to resolve their differences and to reach agreement. It is a deliberate process conducted by representatives of groups, designed to reconcile differences and to reach agreements by consensus. The outcome is often dependent on the power relationship between the groups. Negotiation often involves compromise-one group may win one of their demands and give up on another. In work places, Unions and management representatives usually use negotiation to solve conflicts. Political and community groups also use this method.
2. Mediation: When negotiation fail or get stuck, parties often call in independent mediator. This person or group will try to facilitate settlement of the conflict. The mediator plays an active part in the process, advises both or all groups, acts as an intermediary and suggests possible solutions. In contrast to arbitration, mediators act only in an advisory capacity. They have no decision-making powers and cannot impose a settlement on the conflicting parties. Skilled mediators are able to gain trust and confidence from the conflicting groups or individuals.
3. Arbitration: This refers to the appointment of an independent person to act as an adjudicator or a judge in a dispute to decide on the terms of a settlement. Both parties have to agree about

who the arbitrator should be and that the decision of the arbitrator will be binding. Arbitration differs from mediation and negotiation which do not promote the continuation of collective bargaining. The arbitrator listens to and investigates the demands and counter demands and assumes the role of a decision maker.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by conflict theory which emanates as a result of struggle between individuals, groups and associations. This theory is therefore based on the existence of one form of conflict, be it political, ethnic, religious or whether it is a potential or actual conflict.

Wright Mills has given further insight into modern conflict theory which he claims holds that social structures are created through conflict between people with different interests and resources in the society. Individuals and resources are in turn influenced by the structures and by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the society. Mills posited that the interest of the elite in the society were opposed to that of the common people. This made him to theorise that the politics of the power elite would result in "Increased escalation of conflict, production of weapons of mass destruction and possibly, the annihilation of the human race, Swami (1992:3) cited by (Nwammuo, 2012:219).

From all that have been said so far it is necessary to now provide remedial measures that can be applied in solving the conflicts in the three troubled spots of Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana. We start on a general premise by looking at development communication.

Development Communication

Our approach to understanding development communication will be first to establish the historical premise. Leaner (1958), Pye (1963) and Rogers (1963) posit that development communication is a high technology communication, with little regard to social structures and message content. Ngugi (1995) citing Jayaweera, has described it as the desire to "generate the psychic ambiance within which economic and productive activity occurred". Ngugi further says that development communication is a:

Systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate and train rural populations mainly at the grassroots level.

Furthermore, Mercado (1992:16) says it is a subsystem of the larger system of communication with emphasis on the planned use of communication resources to gain multisectoral support in attaining and sustaining national development goals.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1987) says "Development Communication is a social process designed to seek a common understanding or consensus among all the participants of a development initiative, and leading to joint action"Anaeto and Anaeto (2010, P.34) say the term "Development Communication" was coined by Nora C. Quebral in 1972 and she defines it thus:

Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from a state of poverty to a more dynamic state of economic growth which make possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potentials (Quebral, 1975).

Moemeka (1991) defines development communication as the application of the process of communication to the development process, while Boafo (2006)refers to development communication as the planned and systematic application of communication resources, channels, approaches and strategies to support the goals of socio-economic, political and cultural development.

The implication of the last definition is that the progress of society is anchored on communication resources, channels and their application. It is from this perspective we begin to look at the blend of media for use in overcoming ethnic conflicts in Africa.

Media Selection and Use

In proposing development communication with the use of media, our choice of media is based on the following predeterminants in Africa.

1. Perceived flashpoints of crisis based on the watchdog role of the media in its surveillance function of scanning the environment.
2. Strength of each media i.e. its ability to reach far and wide.
3. Culture and characteristics of those the development support programme is aimed at.

1. Traditional Media

Traditional media in this paper are made up of songs, dances, drama, stories and town crier. A common characteristic of the identified forms is that they can be used in the context of local expression. First, songs according to Anaeto and Anaeto (2010:140) convey meanings that relate to the cultural norms and values among the rural people. The songs are either meant to warn, entertain or simply inform. Songs have potentials to pass across corrective measures. The rural people also use songs to describe situations. In their words, songs can be rendered in native language.

Second, dances can be performed in native forms and can be used not only for entertainment purposes but also to pass on useful messages. Third, drama sketches depict true to life experiences and can be used to re-enact events and issues in local settings that need attention of all. These drama forms could come in tragic, comic relief or satirical forms. Fourth, stories can be recited to create the effect of influencing the people to act in certain ways as the information given in a storytelling is of paramount importance. Fifth, the town crier in the village can use the gong to communicate message to the people, as it has been widely acknowledged by all that the town crier is often the message bearer attached to the Kings Palace or the representative of the community.

2. Newspaper

The universal acceptance of newspaper makes it possible to be used in diverse situations. We have the daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers. Newspapers cater for diverse groups of people. Despite the obvious bias of newspapers for the educated elite minority, it can be designed, formatted and packaged for development purposes across cultures and languages. It can be used to perform advocacy role of sensitisation and conscientisation of development-friendly initiatives among people. As watchdog, the newspaper should make policy makers accountable to the people, it should be pro-development in orientation by making use of skills of journalists and

resoruces to promote developmental issues. For strict development purpose, also, a newspaper can wear a new garb of being rural or local community newspaper, situated in local communities, owned and run, partially or fully by the local people, written largely in the language of the local community for the core purpose of promoting the interest of people in the local community. (Soola 2003).

3. Television

The potential of television to beam pictures or events as they occur is of a critical nature in development communication. Television involves sight and sound, in other words, it is an audio-visual channel of communication and because it has the power, it can be used in a direction/form to pass on useful information and messages that are development oriented in nature.

4. Radio

Radio is an audio means of communication. Anaeto and Anaeto (2010:126) lists the peculiar characteristics of radio to include:

- Radio sets are relatively cheap and can be bought by many people.
- Radio programmes are easy and cheap to produce
- It does not require literacy on the part of the listener.
- It reaches audience in far and remote places where other media may not be able to reach; and
- Listening to radio is convenient, radio does not interfere with the listener's activities; it can be listened to while doing other things.

Forms of Media to Address the Peculiarities ofthe Conflict Spots

The paper has thus far been able to identify land issues/tussle, ethno-religious and political issues as some of the underlying problems facing the African continent. Having therefore identified the media for selection and use, a natural question that arises ishow the media can be used in a pro-active manner to identify likely flashpoints of violence in Africa. The answer to this quite important question is not far to seek.

First, by performing the watchdog role of surveillance in the environment, the media are able to fit into this role assignment and detect likely flashpoints of conflicts. This surveillance role is a customary function of the media. It is in this role assignment that newshound come in handy in their roving assignments. Second, by (media) keeping tabs on opinion leaders in societies and communities, it would be able to get adequate information that would lead to unraveling identified crisis-prone areas. Third, the use of research is of much importance to finding out which areas in society constitute likely trouble points. Research could involve journalists conducting regular public opinion survey, and reading through research materials in the library and internet for up-to-date information about localities and how they co-exist with others. Fourth, by media engaging the services of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) as collaborative partner in the quest for information. Fifth, as the "Fourth Estate of the Realm", the media has a duty to work closely with government.

However, we look at the African problem from three African countries. These are Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana Our resort to periscope these three African countries is not to suggest that they are the only countries with these problems but to use them as examples to buttress the point being made about the unfolding issues of ethnic conflict in Africa.

First, the age long problem between Morocco and Polisaio which has prolonged the Western Sahara dispute for years. The Polisario independence movement and Morocco have often rejected each other's proposals on the future of Western Sahara at talks overshadowed by violence in the territory. But the long-standing foes agreed to pursue limited confidence building measures and to step up the pace of their meetings. Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony in Northwest Africa that was annexed by Morocco in 1975, sparking a rebellion by the Polisario front. The United Nations brokered a cease fire in 1991, but a political settlement to Africa's longest running territorial dispute has eluded negotiators. The territory erupted into violence on (Monday November 8th, 2010) when Moroccan Security Forces broke up a protest camp near Western Sahara's main city, Laayoune, Polisario said 11 civilians died while Morocco said eight of its Security forces were killed.

Morocco has proposed that Western Sahara become an autonomous region of Morocco. Polisario has insisted on a referendum among Sahrawis-as the desert territory's inhabitants are known in which full independence would be one option.

Many Sahrawi families are divided between those who still live in the territory and those living in camps across the border in Algeria which backs Polisario. New clashes erupted in the Western Sahara between Morroco Security forces and local people seeking independence for the west resource-rich desert region. People in the regional capital used rocks and sticks in street battles with Moroccan Police conducting house-to-house searches.

A starting point is to provide approaches to understanding the use of the media in conflict resolution in each of the countries-Morocco, Nigeria, and Ghana. The pigeonholes created for the types of media vis-a-vis development needs; Mode of communication and nature of communication would suffice for the three countries, this is because the experiences in Africa in the conflict sphere are similar in nature. However, the slight departure points would be the application of the media as would be seen from the unfolding discussion hereunder.

There are a number of media which can be used to resolve conflict between Morocco and Polisario and in Western Sahara. In our discussion of the approach stated hereunder, our theoretical proof is that all behaviours are communicative and therefore susceptible to amendment.

African Traditional Alternative Dispute Resolution(ADR)

This is a process according to Ikpe,(2012:81), used in the traditional African society. It is a mediational approach that is indigenous to African social system carried on principally using African traditional communication system.

The African ADR has three major stages, namely: Exploration, setting and process(Yakubu,1996). The Exploratory stage handles shuttle diplomacy for fact-finding and the willingness of the parties to accept mediation. The setting explores the acceptance of the venue and mediators (Traditional consultants) and the date of meeting. The process consists of all the African traditional adjudication approaches with oath swearing, stating the case, witnessing, cross examination and the final decision. The African ADR can be used to broker peace between Morocco and the Polisario.

We now look at the pigeonholes of media schema and their application in conflict resolution. For the traditional media, the development needs for Morocco and the Polisario would emphasise peace which would in turn require the use of songs as mode of communication, with entertainment as the nature of communication.

Also, Intra-ethnic harmony is required as a development need through dances as mode of communication, with information as the nature of communication. Lastly, inter-ethnic harmony as a development need would require drama, storiesand the use of town-crier as mode of communication while the nature of communication would be education.

From all that have been said so far of the traditional media, an essential aspect that would form the core of the strategic use is what is referred to as the emphasis on "Cultural affinities" in the development process through development communication. By "cultural affinities" in this paper, we mean the recognition of the way of lives/behaviours of the Moroccan and polisario people. These cultural affinities would therefore take into cognizance the following traits of the people: Language; group norms; group solidarity; organizational ability of different groups; Psychological position of the people; and above all, willingness and relational attitude to imbibe the spirit of unity.

For the newspapers. The development needs would be: Harmony; unity; political ideas; and land issues. The mode of communication would be through news stories; editorials; feature articles; opinion articles; cartoons; and letters to the editor; while the nature of communication would be : Information; Entertainment and education.

Indigenous newspapers should be established through the effort of the people Moroccans/Polisario and these should be published daily and weekly. Because of the relative cheapness of the newspaper it has the potential to reach the grassroots. The strategy here would be likened to the establishment of indigenous newspapers in the development process of creating peace.

For television, the development needs would be creating religious harmony; ethnic unity; political ideas; and land issues, while the mode of communication would be; news broadcast; talk shows; discussion programmes; drama; and native magazine programmes. The nature of communication would be information, education and entertainment. For instance, a 30-minute discussion programme on unity of the Moroccans/Polisario could be telecast, preferring ways through which peace can be achieved. This telecast should be sustained.

For radio, the development needs are religious harmony; ethnic unity; political ideals and land issues. The mode of communication would be news bulletin; phone-in programmes; discussion programmes; and drama. The nature of communication would be information; education; and entertainment. For instance, a special 15-minute drama that can run on local radio with emphasis on unity that would not only be informative but also educative to the people.

Nigeria with a population of 140 million people is made up of different ethnic groups who speak different languages. The major ethnic groups, however, are the Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani.

Batta (2009, P. 164) cited Gaye (1999) by giving an insight into some of the ethnic clashes that have tended to cast aspersion on the avowed unity of Nigeria as one indivisible and cohesive nation and people:

- The ancient town of Warri exploded in violence between hitherto co-existing communities. This explosion left scars, corpses and burnt out homes. This was the outcome of clashes between ethnic groups that make up Warri, the Ijaws, Urhobos and the Itsekiris. The scale and ferocity of the destruction were alarming with hundreds of lives and property lost.
- In Ondo State, Ijaws and Ilajes went for each other's throat with the consequent loss of hundreds of lives and property. In most cases, whole villages were razed.
- In the farming communities of Aguleri and Umuleri, Anambra State, wars were fought in 1933. 1964 and 1995. The 1999 case assumed dangerous proportion with thousands of lives and property destroyed with very sophisticated weapons.

Of course, there are other cases not mentioned above. However, the lingeringethno-religious conflict in Jos Plateau State between the Hausa/Fulani and the natives is a case in point which has been very disturbing because of its unending nature and the frequent unpredictable nature of the crisis.

Democratic Consultative Decision Making (DCDM) In Dispute And Conflict Management.
This approach is based on the principles of African traditional communication. This approach was developed by Ikpe in 2005. He labels it as an African alternative approach to dispute and conflict management. According to Ikpe(2005:100), democratic consultative decision making is a process or technique that seeks to strengthen the capacity of rural and urban communities, institutions and organisations to manage conflict and effect a change through peaceful democratic negotiations. It is an innovation over the consultative decision making model. Consultative decision making is as old as most African societies since it has names in some African languages. The process is known as "odu" in Ibibio language, and "inwe Mkpebi" in Ibo language, both of South Eastern Nigeria. The yorubas of Nigeria label the ad hoc council for conflict resolution as "egbe maje kobaje", while a permanent committee for conflict management known as "Igbimo in atun-ilu-to" The Hausas of Northern Nigeria and beyond refer to consultative decision making as "siri" which means formal, confidential, secret talk or discussion (Ikpe, 2005:100) In east Africa, they have a peace mobilization word- "Harambe", which translates to coming together. Such traditional mobilization brings aboutreconciliation, peace, unity and solidarity. This can be used as peace slogan during meetings.

The strategies and use of media in Nigeria would also cover the same areas of traditional media; newspapers; television and radio, as in the case of Morocco. The highlights of development needs; mode of communication and nature of communication are also included. However, a clear departure would be the specific application for Nigeria as suggested in this part of the paper.

The pluralistic nature of Nigeria made up of multi-linguistic diversities has deepened the nature of the ethnic conflicts in the country. It has therefore become necessary, for example, to use the traditional media of town crier to inform and educate the people on the need for unity. The town crier should be seen as an agent in the development process. In other words, he should not only, be engaged by the community, he should be trained by the community, on basic skills of communicating. Such training can be acquired within the village or elsewhere " in special education and communication training centres" established by the community or other credible

and accredited institutes to enhance effective skill of communication in the local setting. Moemeka(2000:149) has stressed the importance of the traditional media when he said:

The findings of a survey to determine which of seven media(traditional and modern)-Social forums, town crier, village, market, village school, newspaper, radio and television-the rural population in Bendel state of Nigeria depended upon in their response to three development projects-Operation Feed the Nation, Local Government Reforms and Universal Primary Education-show clearly the superiority of traditional media.

Local English language and indigenous language newspapers should be established, alongside the national newspapers, to, for instance, delve on issues of religious harmony. Arising from the above, what can be referred to as , "local and indigenous language press" can be established by communities to tackle the problem of disunity which emanate especially at the grassroot level.

In a similar vein, local and indigenous television stations can be established to tackle issues of disunity that have often played up crisis in the country. A point of note, however, is that the agents of change should be trained in communication institutions by communities that are interested in establishing these stations.

For radio, community radio stations should be established to, for instance, highlight issues of political unity through discussion programmes. Such programme which should run for one hour could be titled, "our political agenda".

In Ghana, we have witnessed the Kusasis and Mamprosis ethnic conflicts in Bawka in the Upper East Region and that of the Konkombas and Dagombas in the Northern Region.

Ubuntu as An African Concept of Peace and Conflict Resolution

Derived from the Bantu language of East, Central and Southern Africa, Ubuntu is not only an African concept but also a cultural worldview, which tries to capture and convey the meaning and essence of what it means to be human(Ekpa,2004). The author describes Ubuntu as a principle or a spirit which spells out an attitude of togetherness in spirit and humanness. It can also be seen as African philosophy which emphasizes openness, acknowledges obligations, seeks harmony, balance and equilibrium. Francis(2005:12) quoting Desmond Tutu observes that:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a western language. It speaks to every essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone, we say... nobuntu, he or she has Ubuntu. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs, we belong to a bundle of life. We say "a person is a person through other people", (in xhosa Ubuntu ungamanutu ngabanye). I am human because I belong. I participate. I share. A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self- assurance that conies with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Thus Ubuntu is aimed at promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and mutual development. These goals project Ubuntu as a conflict prevention and peace building strategy, solidly grounded on the principles of reciprocity, and a sense of shared destiny between

peoples and communities. Furthermore, Ubuntu is practically oriented to preach and support reconciliation and peace building in divided communities, and to promote democratic participation (Ekpa, 2004). An assessment of the conflicts in Ghana reveals that there are issues of marginalization, deprivation, injustice, et cetera. A campaign should be developed based on Ubuntu directed at the Ghanian conflicts.

In Ghana, the traditional media can emphasise peace through songs as a mode of communication. Songs are capable of uniting people and this can be explored by the Ghanian people for living in co-existence.

National and Local/regional English language newspapers can be established in Ghana to cater for the diverse interests of the people in the area of land issues, for instance. Such publications should emphasis the use of editorials.

Both national and local television stations should also be established to emphasize issues of unity through talk shows. For instance, a talk show on "unity in Ghanian homes", should go a long way in impacting positively on the Ghanian society.

For radio, community radio should play a major part in settling ethnic conflicts. A major reason for the establishment of such stations would be part of the peace and unity agenda. Journalists should be trained to effectively carry out this role assignment in the aforementioned community radio stations.

Conclusion

We have taken a broad view of the place of the media, with particular reference to the unending ethnic conflicts in Africa and the fact has been established that, indeed, Africa is made up of Multi-ethnic and multi-cultural differences and that these differences can indeed be harnessed into a whole to forge a united Africa. This position is explicitly recognized, especially with the 2004 Human Development Report which we highlighted and which specified five key planks of cultural differences-multicultural policies that can form the basis for a cohesive Africa.

To effectively underscore the issue at hand we examined the concepts of ethnicity and conflict from various dimensions and provided clear platforms of contextualization in the paper. We noted that ethnicity is a phenomenon that implies a feeling of oneness and that conflict is often expressed in stages.

It was stated that our resort to using three African countries of Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana was merely to underscore the dimensions of conflicts in the African Region and that the use of these countries was in no way to suggest that there are no other flash-points of crisis-prone areas in Africa. Three reasons accounted for the need to use the media to overcome the unending conflicts in Africa and these reasons range from the endemic nature of the conflicts to the deep rooted communities with diverse cultures and the fact that many African people are not well informed.

The Morocco and Polisario conflict in Western Sahara, the unpredictable and unending conflicts in Nigeria and those in Ghana call for serious concern and ethnic communities should be encouraged to mend fences with a view to using their multicultural diversities to create harmony in the continent.

The paper next emphasized the import of development communication as a panacea to solving the unending conflicts in Africa and it was observed that the progress of Africa is anchored on communication resources, channels and their application. It also opined that the following media-traditional media, newspapers, television and radio will serve the purpose of channels in the use of development communication to promote ethnic conflict resolution in Africa.
It is on this score that strategies were proffered. This then lead us to a schema for media use in overcoming ethnic conflicts in Africa. The strategies put in place will however amount to mere strategies if there are no concerted efforts to ensure that these strategies are implemented faithfully. This would therefore lead us to the point of making recommendations.

Recommendations

This paper makes recommendations to aid the implementation of strategies from the five areas. These are: The African Union, governments, communities, opinion leaders, and the mass media identified in this paper: We therefore make the following recommendations:

1. The African Union (AU) should ensure that the aims and aspirations of the continental body are achieved. Part of this aim is to foster unity and peace on the African continent. This indeed should be the driving force in the renamed continental body, African union (AU). The body should set up a "functional committee" made up of leaders of some African countries to constantly liaise with the identified media in this paper with a view to nipping in the bud conflicts in the African continent.
2. Different governments in African countries should ensure that the ministry of internal affairs collaborate with bodies established for conflict resolution and the media to ensure that issues that border on ethnic conflicts are resolved amicably.
3. The different African communities have a crucial role to play by constantly meeting to look at likely areas of disagreement between different communities. The place of the media in their meetings should be recognized with a view to co-opting the media in their peace plans and initiatives.
4. Opinion leaders in the different communities should endeavour to promote contacts with a view to serving as viable linkages between their communities and the media in order to providing the leeway to curtailing likely incidents of conflicts in communities.
5. Operators of the mass media of communication identified in this paper should ensure that adequate coverage is given to issues relating to conflict in the African region. This it can do by focusing more on ethnic issues and highlighting such in the media.

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