

MEDIA AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A STUDY OF TELEVISION COVERAGE OF OGBAKIRI COMMUNAL CRISIS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study titled Media and Social Responsibility: A Study Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis. The study is centred on the interrogation of the role played by the media in the communal crisis that engulfed the Ogbakiri community of Rivers State between 1997-2002. It is aimed at assessing the extent the media played the role of social responsibility during the crisis. The study is anchored on three theories namely: social responsibility theory, structural functional theory and third party intervention theory. The study adopted mixed research methods namely: quantitative and qualitative research methods. The study as well adopted descriptive and historical analysis of research design in the investigation of the phenomenon under study. Findings of the study among others were that: the excessive quest for return on investment by the television stations negated Article 12 of the Code of Ethics of Media Practitioners in Nigeria hence affecting the level of media social responsibility in the coverage of the communal crisis. Again, the media practitioners were more interested in making news rather than mitigating the communal crisis. Also, lack of crisis mediation and arbitration programmes by television stations did not help in the de-escalation of the communal crisis. The study recommends among others that: the media industry particularly television stations should see peace advocacy campaign, peace keeping, peace building, peace enforcement, promotion and rendering of humanitarian services to the vulnerable and helpless in the war-torn communities as part of their corporate social responsibility to the society rather than mere coverage of the crisis. Furthermore, the media practitioners and their employers should see crisis mediation and arbitration as a sacred service to God and humanity as this will help in scaling up their social responsibility to the society.

INTRODUCTION

This research is a study of the role of television in the coverage of the Ogbakiri communal crisis. Ogbakiri is a community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State with six villages: Oduoha, Okporowo, Ahai, Rumuoro, Rumuokani and Rumuada. Ogbakiri is bounded in the North by Emohua community in Emohua Local Government Area and in the South by Rumuolumini community in Obio Akpor Local Government Area in the East by Tombia community in Degema Local Area and in the West by Ogbogoro community in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area. The major occupation of the people of Ogbakiri are farming and fishing. The Ogbakiri communal crisis began as an intra village crisis in Oduoha Ogbakiri village occasioned by alleged misappropriation and embezzlement of community funds derived from sale of sand deposit dredged by Tariah Construction Company Nigeria Limited in early 1980s during the construction of Ogbakiri highway road awarded by the then Federal Government under the Alhaji Shehu Shagari led administration. This allegation generated accusations and counter accusations leading to internal crisis in Oduoha village in Emohua Local Area of Rivers State. Consequently, some houses belonging to the members of the CDC were partially destroyed by the aggrieved youths of the community leading to self-exile of some supporters of the Chairman of the CDC, Chief Emmanuel Acheru. This incident made some of the close associates of Chief Acheru to embark on self-exile themselves in Rumuoro Ogbakiri awaiting the reconciliation of the matter. The crisis was further escalated on January 1, 2000 when the indigenes of Oduoha were displaying their annual masquerade festival across Rumuoro Ogbakiri. One of the self-exiled persons, known as Mr. Ricky Agbagbue rode his motorbike through the centre of the youths dancing.

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

This act angered the masquerading youths who saw the action of Mr. Ricky as uncivil and not cultural leading to seizing of his motorbike and later destroying it. This action of the Oduoha youths against their brother residing in Rumuoro greatly angered the people of Rumuoro leading to the destruction of a CocaCola warehouse owned by an Oduoha indigene known as Mr. Mike Okoro located in their village. To douse the tension, the Oduoha Chiefs and Elders quickly carried an olive branch and virgin palm front as it is customary to Rumuoro village symbolizing peace in Ogbakiri culture and tradition.

To this end, Rumuoro people pronounced a fine of Seventy Four Thousand (#74,000.00) Naira against the Oduoha people for beating their tenant and destroying his motorbike. This fine was spontaneously paid to the Rumuoro village to facilitate dialogue. Incidentally, this did not help in the quelling the emerging crisis as the youths of Rumuoro continued the seizing of motorbikes belonging to Oduoha indigenes. This led to the beginning of verbal attacks and throwing of stones at each other. This continued for days before the parading of war arsenal began with the two communities leading to the first casualty, Mr. Hycient Egbuajor of Rumuoro village in 2000. The death of this man was the flashpoint and the immediate cause of a full blown inter village communal crisis between Oduoha and Rumuoro villages in Ogbakiri. This crisis between the two villages later spread to other villages such as Okporowo, Ahai, Rumuokani and Rumuada who were accused of overtly or covertly supporting either Rumuoro or Oduoha in the crisis leading to the attack and counter attack of other villages hitherto not in crisis. During this communal crisis, the media were agog with the reportage of the crisis. This research therefore, is geared towards interrogating the role of television (NTA and AIT) in the coverage and reportage of the communal crisis with respect to social responsibility.

Statement of Problem

The Okrika communal crisis, Ibaa communal crisis, Abonima 2019 election crisis, Rumuekpe oil politics crisis, Niger Delta militancy crisis, the Ogbakiri communal crisis among other crises in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have been reported differently by media organizations. The role of the media in crisis has continued to generate a lot of debate and vitriolic criticisms among the public especially the critics of the media and crisis mediators and arbitrators. Most media practitioners especially crisis and wartime reporters both in the print and broadcast media often see themselves merely as observers and chroniclers of newsworthy events in crisis period.

In the same vein, many media houses have argued that there coverage and reportage of any crisis in society is usually driven by the 4Ps of Media Practice: Professionalism, Productivity, Profitability and Patriotism. But to what degree did the media organizations especially television stations (NTA and AIT) engage the dogma of Professionalism and Patriotism in the coverage and reportage of Ogbakiri communal crisis of 1997 and 2002 in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State?

However, studies have been carried out hitherto on Ogbakiri communal crisis and other communal crises in Rivers State without adequate attention to investigating the amount of media social responsibility engaged by television stations in the coverage of Ogbkiri communal crisis of 1997 to 2002. This lacuna created by previous studies is what this study strives to cover,

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Determine the role the media played in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis in relation to social responsibility?
- 2) Ascertain the public perception of the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as regards social responsibility.
- 3) Examine the kind of media coverage model adopted by the media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility.
- 4) Identify the constraints the media practitioners faced especially in television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis which impeded their social responsibility.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What role did the media (NTA and AIT) play in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis in relation to social responsibility?
- 2) What is the public perception of the role of the media (NTA and AIT) in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis regarding social responsibility?
- 3) What kind of media coverage model was adopted by the media practitioners especially in television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility?
- 4) What were the constraints media practitioners especially in television stations faced in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis which impeded their social responsibility?

Significance of the Study

This study will awaken the dying spirit of crisis management among crisis mediators and arbitrators in Rivers State who are often lacadaisical in intervening in crisis torn communities in the state in order to enhance their social responsibility obligation to the society.

This study will equally champion the advocacy campaign for a paradigm shift in the crisis coverage model most media organizations adopt in the coverage of communal crisis in Rivers State.

This study will enrich the bank of knowledge and literature on media and social responsibility especially in areas of crisis coverage and management. It is expected to serve as a wakeup call on media and crisis mediation and arbitration professionals to scale up their social responsibility obligation to the society vis-a-vis crisis coverage and management.

This study will as well identify some constraints limiting the effectiveness of the coverage of communal crisis by the media professionals using Ogbakiri communal crisis as a case in point. This study will help in documentation of the historic account of Ogbakiri communal crises of 1997 to 2002.

This research will as well reinvent the dying spirit of Articles 11 and 12 of the Ethics of Nigerian Media Practitioners which are "public interest and social responsibility" in the coverage of communal crisis in Rivers State in particular and Nigerian nation at large.

It will proffer solutions to the problems under investigation through its recommendations on how crisis can be covered and reported bearing in mind the public interest and social responsibility to avoid misrepresentation of the media by the public.

This study equally aimed to stimulate the agenda-setting role of the media with a sense of public interest and social responsibility using television programmes as a rendezvous for coming together of parties in the crisis to think together and brainstorm on how to resolve their differences in the interest of the society.

Again, the study will equally stimulate crisis mediators and arbitrators to develop and recommend reliable and sustainable crisis management paradigms and peaceful mechanisms for crisis management in Rivers State considering the peculiarities of the state using the media as the popularizers of the paradigms as Alternative to Dispute Resolution (ADR) rather than the ongoing use of AK-47 gun, grenade, dynamite and other arms and ammunition.

Similarly, the study will serve as a source of motivation for television and stations managers to see crisis management programmes as part of their corporate social responsibility. This study also hopes to popularize the use of Extra Mundan as an Alternative to Dispute Resolution (ADR) using the media as the rendezvous of the campaign.

Scope of the Study

The study concentrated on the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis of 1997 to 2002 as covered by Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and African Independent Television (AIT) because of their wide reach, public acceptability, accessibility, objectivity, editorial policies and modus operandi of the broadcast stations. Geographically, the study restricted itself to NTA and AIT Port Harcourt to allow for an in-depth study of the phenomenon under study.

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Social Responsibility Theory of the Media. According to Baran (2004, p.449) social responsibility theory is a normative theory. That is, it explains how media should ideally operate in a given system of social values, and it is now the media standard in United States of America and other developed and developing nations like Nigeria. Baran further states that social responsibility theory asserts that media must remain free of government control but in exchange must serve the public responsibly. The core assumptions of this theory according to McQuail (1987) as cited in Baran (2004) are a cross between libertarian principles of freedom and practical admission of the need for some form of control on the media which are:

- i. Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society.
- ii. Media can meet these obligations by setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity.
- iii. Media should be self regulatory within the framework of the law.
- iv. Media should avoid disseminating materials that lead to civil disobedience, violent conflict or that might offend minority groups.
- v. Media professional should be accountable to society as well as to their employers and the market.
- vi. The media should as a whole be pluralistic, reflect the diversity of the culture in which they operate and give access to various points of view and rights of reply.
- vii. The public has a right to expect high standards of performance and official intervention can be justified to ensure the public good.

In like manner, Ndolo (2006) opines that social responsibility theory owes its origin to an American initiative of freedom of press in coverage of societal issues with concomitant commitment to peace, tranquility and national cohesion and avoid promotion of issues that are socially harmful can to the society.

Therefore, the media must accept certain obligations to the society if they must enjoy freedom in the cause of carrying out their roles. The media should underplay the news or programmes which might lead to crisis, crime and social tension or cause offence to ethnic or religious conflict in the society.

According to Okoye, (2007), social responsibility theory accepts the principles of libertarian theory with responsibility. Among others, the press should be free to seek truth. Social responsibility theory also sees the media as so powerful and so important to the survival of the society. Okon further states that the mass media owe the society obligation to maintain peace and order in the society.

Okoye argues that:

Freedom without responsibility is dangerous and can lead to anarchy. The social responsibility theorists therefore recommended that the press should not place personal interest above public good. Personal interest should not short change the public good or interest in the disclosure of information.

According to (Pasqua, et al., 1970, p. 262 in Okoye, 2007; Ekwelie, 2006; Ndolo, 2006), one of the greatest boosts to the social responsibility theory was the Hutchin's Commission in the United States of America at the end of Second World War. The Commission was headed by Robert M. Hutchin, then the President of the University of Chicago and funded by Time Magazine, the co-founder, Henry Luce. The Committee was to seek ways in which the mass media could contribute to the socio-economic and political development of the United States of America. The Commission's main report titled: "A free and responsible media" and published in 1947. This report calls for greater responsibility of the media.

Hasan (2013) discussing the principles of social responsibility theory states that it is the responsibility of the media to uphold conflict resolution through dialogue and discussion in the society. He further posits that media should avoid dramatization of violent conflict news or reportage that may glorify crisis, religious and tribal jingoism in the society but emphasize on how to mediate and arbitrate in crisis situation.

Hasan further opines that:

The social responsible theory is based on the assumption that media play essential roles in the society. Therefore, should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society; these obligations are to be met by setting high standards in communication of information, truly, accuracy, objectively and balance (p.40).

Hasan also avers that social responsibility theory is an extension of the libertarian theory in that the media recognize that they have a responsibility to the society to carry out their constitutional mandate or functions. Hasan further submits that under the social responsibility theory, the media are expected to:

Provide information, set agenda for discussion on topical issues, debate on public affairs, instruct and inform the public of societal newsworthy events responsibly, protect the rights of the individuals against government, individuals and other anti developmental tendencies .

Furthermore, media scholars like (Ndolo, 2006; Ekwelie, 2006; Okoye, 20007; Hasan, 2013) are in consensus that media should be allowed to carry out their roles in the society with a substantial amount of freedom and social responsibility to the society. The interest of the public or society should be placed above personal interest and profit making for media entrepreneurs or media owners. This means profit making or return on investment (ROI) should not come before public interest or social responsibility. The media in this case must be willing to accept responsibility in reporting societal issues and happenings with concomitant commitment to national cohesion, unity, peace and avoid reportage that will lead the society to crisis or war.

Under social responsibility theory, the media are supposed to serve as a watchdog of the society and ombudsman in order to have a virile and egalitarian society. In this case, mass media channels such as television, cinema, film, radio, newspaper, magazine, books, etc., should serve as agents of development and as antidotes to anti developmental issues such as crisis, crime, terrorism, militancy, cultism, kidnapping, extra judicial, banditry among other social vices.

From the foregoing, we can say that the use of social responsibility theory as the anchor theory for this theory is justified. The theorists of social responsibility theory are Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm whose work led to theorization of social responsibility theory.

Some Victims of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

Among others, the underlisted persons lost their lives in the aforementioned crisis:

1. Dadaeji Wejor Wutobor Echonwere
2. Bubor Wali
3. Seniorman Woke
4. Promise Wodi
5. Ndidi Oyekwere
6. Musicman Etekochay
7. Sparko Echomgbe
8. Best Awuse
9. Achinike Oyekwere
11. Scenty Emesiobi

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

13. Ismeal Ihunwo Worlukalama Akwa
 14. Inkanwon Elenwo
 15. Achinike Nyekwere
 16. Eze Nyekwere
 17. Keke Ndala
 18. Ben Keke Ndala
 19. Chimankpam Keke Ndala
 20. Hycent Egbulajor,
 21. Juju Nyeawha
 22. Tony Innoma Agwor
 23. Chief C. Okwu
 24. Zuru Okwu,
 25. Toughman Egbulajor
 26. Oluowhor Okugba
 27. Agnes Okugba (Oluowhor Okugba's mother)
 28. Ada Ejire (Nee Foby)
 29. Wosty Adala Ichendu
 30. Happiness Amadi
 31. Pele Mekwa Wisky Abe
 32. Chibuofor Abe
 33. Monday Okoro
 34. Orlu Owakwe
 35. Monday Amadi Junior Akawhor
 36. Monday Amadi Senior Akawhor
 37. Wada Worlu Ogelem
 38. Nweri Ebulu
 39. Billd Nhekere Nyeche
 40. Oge Kennison
 41. Hamilton Awuse
 42. Baby Nta Awuse
 43. Felicia Awuse
 44. Chinyere Awuse
 45. Njoyo Ekwa
- Sources: (Chigor, Iyala & Onyenke, 2019)

Historic Visuals (Plates) of Relics of Destroyed Houses in Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

Plate 1: Relic of Chief



Plate 2: Back View of Chief Micheal Worukwo's 2-Storey Building



Plate 3: Faith Tarbanacle Church, Okporowo Ogbakiri



Plate 4: Relic of Refectory at Community Girls' Secondary School, Okporowo Ogbakiri



Plate 5: Relic of Hostel at Community Girls' Secondary School, Okporowo Ogbakiri

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

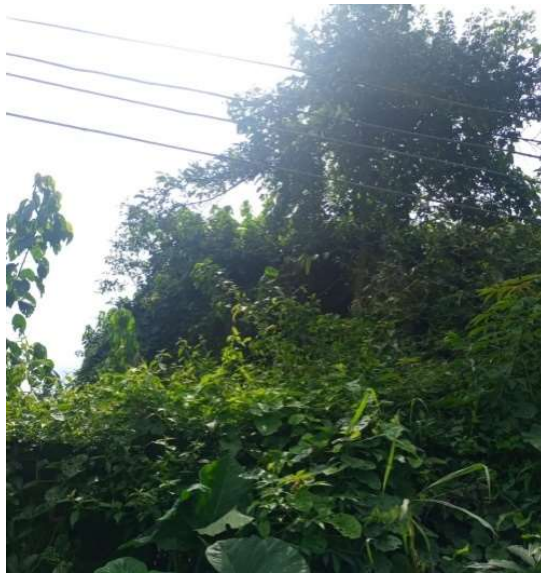


Plate 6: A Section of Woha's Family overgrown with Bushes before the return of Peace to Ogbakiri

Consequently, many people were left homeless while others abandoned the community for the neighbouring communities of Emohua, Ogbogoro, Choba, Kalabari, etc. The pains of that communal crisis are still fresh in the hearts of many Ogbakiri indigenes till date despite the fragile and relative peace currently existing in the community as observed in this study.

At that time of crisis, it was easy to look through the newspaper headlines and broadcast media commentaries and news bulletins to predict who the media were supporting and the position taken by them. It was equally easy to identify the kind of model of media crisis coverage the media industry in Rivers State was adopting in the coverage and reportage of the crisis in Ogbakiri. During that time, Ogbakiri was the flashpoint of crisis in Rivers State and the major provider of crisis oriented news stories for many media houses in the state particularly the local tabloids and broadcast stations.

The way the media houses both the print and the electronic media covered, reported or presented the crisis on pages of newspapers and on the airwaves calls for public evaluation and investigation. For example, The Beacon Newspaper, The Independent Monitor, The Sunrise Newspaper, The Port Harcourt Telegraph, etc were busy casting headlines which read:

Ogbakiri Boils Again

Ogbakiri Destroys Ogbakiri

Ogbakiri on Fire

More Die in Ogbakiri

Ogbakiri Turns Refugees

We Shall Kill More ... Ogbakiri Charles Taylor

No More Peace in Ogbakiri says, The Forest

War of Vendetta in Ogbakiri

Forty killed in Ogbakiri

Why we are to Kill More in Ogbakiri says, Who-No-Go-Die

Thirty Toddlers Confirmed Dead in Ogbakiri

These are few among banner headlines the media particularly the print media used in marketing their merchandise or media consumables during the inglorious Ogbakiri communal crisis. Similarly, most of the radio and television jingles on the communal crisis were commercialized in favour of one party or the other hence did not help in managing and resolution of the crisis. Skeptics often

argue that this kind of crisis coverage or representation can hardly help in de-escalation or mitigating of crisis but rather heightens the crisis under the watch of the media.

Similarly, cynics of Nigeria media argued that television stations like African Independent Television (AIT), Rivers State Television (RSTV) and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) gave airtime as commercials to some parties in the crisis to ventilate their views and jingles on the crisis. This however, angered some critics of media industry leading to the accusation against the media as hyping the crisis and helping one party against the other parties.

According to crisis mediators and arbitrators, the society expects the media to carry out their surveillance and correlation roles in the coverage and reportage of every crisis with concomitant social responsibility to avoid been seen as dysfunctional in society. Any media coverage of crisis that lacks appreciable social responsibility no matter the amount of objectivity that underpins the coverage is widely seen as anti development to the concept and theory of development media and against the doctrine of social responsibility theory of the media. Mediation and arbitration professionals have often argued that the society expects the media to carry out their role in crisis period with a sense of patriotism, social justice and public interest in order to be counted as socially responsibility to the society.

Development experts now see television as a catalyst for national development and antidote to solving societal problems if used properly. For them, television can be engaged and used as a research tool to identify the yearnings and aspirations of people in the society and, make them known to the government for possible action via its agenda-setting and status conferral roles using its avalanche of programmes such as muckraking, documentary and other development oriented programmes. This development advocacy by development experts can hardly be achieved in the state of crisis, rancour and acrimony. Therefore, peace is a sine qua non for socio-economic development of any state, nation or society.

Television is also seen indispensable tool crisis management by crisis managers. It has the capacity and capability to douse tension, restore peace and foster harmonious living in the society through well-thought out messages if designed strategically and directed at parties involved in crisis with a concomitant social responsibility and professionalism. Peace and dialogue are expected to be emphasized by television programmes planners, designers and directors while violence and hostility are strongly condemned (Hasan, 2013).

This is because in the time of crisis or even at war, human beings are the actors and the victims of the quagmire hence adequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor and panacea for crisis management and de-escalation of the troublesome and worrisome situation which often leads to destruction of lives and property. Peace advocates often posit that television can provide platform for purging grievances among the parties in crisis if engaged professionally, ethically and objectively in crisis situation.

Critics of media industry often argue that television programmes in Nigeria such as the Bridges, Focus Nigeria, Tuesday Live, Point Blank, Nigeria People and Politics, Community Forum, Kakaaki, My Environment and I, Community Watch, Discussion, Talk-shows and Exclusive Interview programmes of the free-to-air and pay-as-you go television stations can help to tune down the level of crisis particularly when the parties in the crisis are brought to a live programme to dialogue and brainstorm on how to resolve their differences. Many peace advocates and crisis mediators and arbitrators have often argued that Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT), Television Continental (TVC) and other stations can be used to promote peace campaign, peace keeping, peace building and peace enforcement in crisis period if supported by media gatekeepers.

Against this backdrop, crisis mediators and arbitrators have argued that television as a chronicler of societal happenings can set agenda for crisis mediation and arbitration in the society using the aforementioned programmes rather than mere coverage of crisis. But to what extent did television play this role in Ogbakiri communal crisis?

According to Nyeruka (2006) and Wezina Ogbakiri Council of Chiefs (2007), the media reportage of Ogbakiri communal crisis was more of dysfunctional than positive hence did not help the parties

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

in resolving their differences leading to unpredictable loss of lives and property in the community. Nyeruka further notes that the crisis was unabated in spite of plethora of calls for peace from different interest groups such as Christian Association of Nigeria, Ogbakor Ikwerre Cultural Organisation Worldwide, Ikwerre Women Association, Neighbours without Borders, Association of Justices of Peace, Peace Ambassadors of Nigeria, Crisis Mediators and Arbitrators of Nigeria among others.

Nyema (2017) observed that the adoption of extra mundane by Ikwerre Supreme Traditional Rulers and Chiefs-in-Council brought relative peace to the warring community. According to Nyema, the rituals and the invocation of the gods, goddesses, jujus and ancestors of the land served as a catalyst for changing the negative narrative of Ogbakiri communal crisis. Nyema further opined that relative peace returned to the community after the rituals which triggered the acceptance of truce on 18th May, 2002 at Ogbakiri Health Centre by the six villages that make up Ogbakiri community and witnessed by the then Governor of Rivers State, Sir Peter Odili. In the wisdom of Nyema, "what the idigenes of Ogbakiri need now is peace building programmes, intercultural festival and inter-community marriages" to sustain the relative peace in the community.

Overview of Crisis

Nwanegbo (2005) observes that period of crisis is likened to period of destruction, savagery and carnage. Apart from crisis masterminds, innocent civilians are equally subjected to torture and killing as in Nigeria, 1966-1970 civil war, Liberia war, Rwanda genocide, Somalia war, Sudan war, etc which were the extreme cases of crises. Nwanegbo further posits that crisis has political, economic, social and religious consequences. It heightens anxiety, leads to unemployment and disrupts social amenities like hospital, electricity and water supply, sanitation management, educational activity, development projects and programmes, etc., are greatly affected in the time of crisis. Crisis like other events makes news in media world. It is a major news value and determinant of news worthiness in media practice. The world has become increasingly a difficult place to live in. Daily human beings are reported in the media to be in crisis with one another as individuals, groups, nations or groups (Wilson, 2007).

According to Wilson (2007):

Almost every day, throws up new challenges to an increasingly paranoid and crisis prone world. Again, it is needless to ask why crisis exists in human society. What is important now is the efforts human beings have made to effectively manage crisis that has become a common phenomenon. Crisis is a term tied to negative things hence it has become a hate world. Many people particularly leaders avoid it like a plague or disease (p.13).

According to Wilson, crisis is a human phenomenon that has been with humanity since the creation of man and woman. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, he had Eve to blame for his disobedience. It was their human crisis that started crisis on earth according to the Bible. Many scholars believe that crisis is inevitable in human society. It is a basic characteristic of man's environment (p.14).

Anyadike (2009) holds that crisis is a recurring natural phenomenon which is inherent in every socio-cultural, economic and political settings. However, depending on how it is handled, it could be destructive and progress-driven. Anyadike further posits that at whatever level crisis occurs, it does not fail to unleash its concomitant effects on the society.

Dukes (1996) cited in Anyadike (2009) states that crisis is a potentially useful aspect of the society and the basis for social change. This by extension means that crisis serves as a medium through which people express divergent views which leads to divergent solutions. Again, Ejumodu (2008)

in Anyadike (2009) sees crisis as having the capacity to present stagnation or stimulate development since it is a medium through which problems are aired and solutions proffered.

Ifedi (2005, p.21) quoted in Anyadike (2009) opines that:

Crisis in our society can be functional or dysfunctional. Functional crisis has to do with healthy disagreement between two or more people while dysfunctional crisis is highly emotional and involves destructive tendencies. From the foregoing, crisis is not completely condemnable since there is good part of it if handled properly.

In our society today especially in Rivers State, there are issues that give rise to crisis. Among which are religious jingoism, political jingoism, tribal jingoism, economic deprivation, boundary disputes, cultism, violent agitation of resource control, bad governance, oil politics, chieftaincy dispute, herdsmen versus farmers' dispute, political impasse, hunger, etc. The media which are carrier of public messages find such aforementioned issues newsworthy for public consumption hence their frequent presence on television and other channels of the mass media.

Wilson (2007) earlier citing Watershed Partnership sees crisis as a natural or man-made disagreement between individuals or groups that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. It can also originate from past rivalries and personality differences. Harvard Business Review as cited in Center and Jackson (2007) holds that crisis is a situation that has reached a critical phase for which dramatic and extraordinary intervention is necessary to avoid catastrophic effects on the society. Center and Jackson further opined that crisis is a turning point for good or bad.

Also American Institute for Crisis Management defines crisis as a significant business disruption that stimulates extensive news media coverage. The resultant effects usually have an adverse effect on the society and people. Business and humans suffer in every crisis ravaged area or society (Center & Jackson, 2007).

American Crisis Management Institute identifies four basic causes of crisis:

- i) Acts of God crisis
- ii) Man made crisis or Human error crisis
- iii) Mechanical crisis
- iv) Management decision and policy crisis

the society.

Writing further on the good side of crisis, Burgoon and Ruffner (1978) argue that crisis is beneficial to the society. They note that societies have advanced to the level when crisis has been recognized as an inevitable human endeavour and sometimes triggers positive development in the society.

Again, Burgoon and Ruffner averred that:

Crisis is almost indispensable in human society. There is no day without news of crisis in the local, national and international media. Crisis remains a core element that often brings fear, worry, frustration, and anxiety, destruction of lives and property and devastation among the inhabitants of a given society including other emotional and psychological traumatic effects. Where there is crisis, destruction of lives and property becomes almost the norm while development, peace, serenity, unity and harmonious coexistence become almost impossible among people of the same or different tribe, race, religion, ideology, etc.

Besides, Ashong (2010,) states that crisis is in two distinct ways or perspectives. He notes that crisis has two schools of thought which are the pluralists and the human- religionists. The pluralists hold that crisis is an inevitable and desirable part of human relations and can foster human and societal development if properly managed while the human-religionists theorized that crisis

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

signifies a disorder, hostility, breakdown of peace and unhealthy relationship and communication among the warring parties hence is not needed in human society (p.17).

Media and Coverage of Crisis

Crisis usually provides newsworthy materials for television stations and other mass media houses. Crisis is the bread and butter of television journalism in spite of the growing advocacy for peace-building. Nwosu (2014) warns that modern television in particular, due to its visual and auditory impact on the audiences, can play both a positive and or negative role in crisis management if not properly managed.

Adeyanwu further holds that there is need for a high sense of social responsibility when handling religious, political, inter-ethnic, inter-communal crises and other civil disorders because of the extreme reactions that on the spot coverage of crisis can attract from the public. In crisis situations, the audience expects the whole truth, including updates on the crisis and how it affects them (p.56).

Obot (2014, p.31) appraising the role of television in reportage of crisis states:

Warns that telling the truth in news reportage about ethnic or religious crises, especially the number of deaths, if it is high, extent of destruction and how the carnage was carried out, might be dysfunctional. This is because it can trigger retaliatory reactions from the aggrieved segments of the society or those sympathetic to the victims(p.31).

Obor (2010) observes that live coverage of crisis or civil disorder by television can spur participation and inflame the riots even at the extent of transforming them into a sort of show, in which case, the television assumes the role of a participant in the riots rather than a mere observer, thereby influencing the outcome of the real event.

Bassey (2017) accuses television of inflaming and exacerbating crisis. He argues that the presence of television cameras frequently transmits a potentially violent situation into an actual violent one and that mischief makers often show their most troublesome selves at the sight of television crew. He further warns that:

Television pictures of looting, wanton destruction and mayhem create a contagion effects which often heighten crisis situation. On the positive side, some have argued that the presence of the television on the scene is obtrusive because the awareness on the part of the participants that the whole world is watching them may well have positive effect rather than negative results.

Television has an important role to play in managing crisis, breaking stereotypes, misperception and misrepresentations that lead to societal, communal or corporate organizational crisis. Television journalists and crisis videographers who report societal events generally must see themselves first as crisis managers, mediators and arbitrators in crisis period (Olawale, 2001).

Olawale further posits:

That crisis reporters in television stations and other media houses should cultivate the attitude and behaviour of reporting what can unite the warring parties rather than what divide the people through the style of their of coverage and reportage of crisis in the society. The method use in reporting crisis situation must not be inflammatory and partisan but geared towards crisis management and resolution (p.139).

According to Olawale, journalists covering and reporting crisis situation should not just report objectively but with a concomitant social responsibility and possibly make recommendations on

issues that can mitigate the remote and immediate cause of the crisis they covering and reporting in their television stations.

Besides, Olawale suggests that television programmes presenters and crisis beat reporters should look beyond the position of their sources; they should unearth the interests, needs, fears of each party in the crisis. Where the reporters are not sure of what happened, the news must reflect thus. Rumours must not be transmitted to the audience as facts according to Olawale.

According to Ndimele and Kasarachi(2006) it took only one broadcast message to begin the Rwanda genocide in which one million Tutsis and Hutus were killed. The slogan in the media then was: "cut the tall trees down." The tall trees in this crisis were the Tutsis who naturally are tall and lanky in nature. Therefore, television programme handlers, the warring parties or parties in crisis must avoid inflammatory language, provocative statement, uncomplimentary language and negative narratives that make one party the loser while the other the winner.

Alumuku (2006) holds that such media coverage and reportage led to the genocide in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994 through the use of Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines which promoted hate campaign, violence and coordinated the massacre of Tutsis tribe of Rwanda. In this crisis, as observed by Alumuku, the Hutus and Tutsi in Rwanda did not dialogue with each other because the national radio and television stations were controlled by one party in the crisis which promoted hate campaign and genocide against the other until Studio Ijambo was established in 1995 by an American NGO known as "Search for Common Ground in Bujumbura.

Alumoku points out that: "The goal of this independent radio station was to promote peace and national reconciliation programmes in Rwanda. Without mincing words, the radio station achieved its set out goals through its peace building programmes."

Mass media especially television has the capacity to deescalate and escalate crisis depending on how it is engaged in crisis situation. Through its reports, it can inflame crisis or deescalate it. In line with this, Nwosu (2004) notes that television can be perceived as an institution in society that contributes to peaceful resolution of crisis but in reality, we often find that television programmes manager either consciously or unconsciously contributes to escalation of crisis through its manner of presentation of such event. Nwosu further argues that:

Television is like a double-edged sword. In the wrong hands, it can cause more havoc in crisis situation either by paying too much attention or not paying attention at all and on the other hand, it can be a medium or platform for crisis mediation or arbitration in society (p.6).

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods which involved a descriptive-survey and historical analysis of the Ogbakiri communal crisis. The use of the above mentioned research designs are found by the researcher to be appropriate for the study because of the nature of the study.

Population of the Study

The population of this study covered eighteen thousand, six hundred (18,600) people who are literate adults who participated directly or indirectly in the Ogbakiri communal crisis from the six (6) villages that make up the community. The villages are:

1. Okporowo
2. Oduoha
3. Rumuoro
4. Ahai
5. Rumuokani
6. Rumuada

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

Sample Size and Techniques

The sample size of this study was four hundred and eight (408) respondents drawn from the six (6) villages of Ogbakiri community. Each of the villages had sixty-eight (68) respondents. The researcher adopted a purposeful and convenience sampling techniques in order to have some characteristics that will help in answering the research questions and provide accurate and manageable sample size for the study. Again, convenience sampling gives the researcher the opportunity to sample people who are easy to contact or reach in the course of a study because they are convenient to him.

The research also for a balance in the choice of the television stations has gone for one private and one public television station. Again, considering the exigencies of time to cover all the television stations in Rivers State, the study strategically and purposively chose the aforementioned television stations as part of the locations of this study to allow for an in-depth study of the problem under investigation.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection in this study was questionnaire. Questionnaire was the primary source of data collection in this study. The study made use of open-ended and close-ended questionnaire structure in eliciting primary data from the respondents. The researcher formulated twenty (25) items in the questionnaire and distributed to four hundred and eight respondents (408) respondents based on the research topic and research questions. Respondents were instructed to indicate their opinion by ticking their preferred options therein and make submission of their views where necessary. However, the study relied on professional books, academic journal, previous studies carried out, conferences and seminars papers for its secondary data.

Research Instrument Administration Procedure

The research instrument (questionnaire) was administered to the respondents by the researcher and his research assistants after subjecting the questionnaire to serious scrutiny by the research supervisors, crisis management experts and broadcast media practitioners to ascertain the suitability of the instrument based on the subject matter under investigation. Thereafter, the data collected were collated and presented according to the research questions. The data were analysed using simple percentages.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The content and face validity of the research instrument were carried out and reviewed by the project supervisors and media practitioners who validated the instrument of this study.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To test the reliability of the research instrument of this study, the researcher carried out a pre-test on few members of the population of this study to ascertain its reliability, coherence, suitability, comprehensiveness, goals realization and the capacity to elicit responses from the respondents before it was administered to the overall population of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis Method

The data gathered in this study were collated, presented in tables, analyzed and interpreted using descriptive and simple percentages statistical method based on the frequency of responses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. To achieve these goals, some items in the research instrument (questionnaire) were seen as very potent to tackle the research questions presented in the chapter one of this study. Consequently, research question 1 was tackled by

items 17 and 18 in the questionnaire and research question 2 was handled by items 19 and 20 in the questionnaire. Similarly, research 3 was addressed by item 21 in the research instrument. Again, research question 4 was tackled by item 22 in the research instrument.

All these items were contained in a 25-point questionnaire and distributed to the population sample of four hundred and eight (408) persons, out of which three hundred and ninety six (396) copies of the questionnaire were returned by the respondents. Therefore, the percentage level of the research instrument returned was 97% and upon which the actual data presentation and analysis were carried out. The frequencies of responses to the questions raised in the questionnaire were collated and computed in tables and calculated using simple percentages. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as appendix in this study.

Presentation of Data

As mentioned earlier, some items in the questionnaire were seen as very potent and had the capacity to tackle or address the research questions. To this end, four hundred and eight (408) copies of the questionnaire as noted earlier were distributed to the respondents but 396 copies were returned. This is further shown in the data presentation and analysis tables below.

Research Question 1: What role did the media play in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility? To tackle the above research question, items 17 and 18 in the questionnaire were effectively engaged. The items in the questionnaire read:

- i) What role did the media play in the Ogbakiri communal crisis?
- ii) Did the media play commendable role in the Ogbakiri communal crisis?

The answers to the questions were presented in the tables 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

SN	Options	Okporowo	Oduoha	Ahai	Rumuokani	Rumuoro	Rumuada	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	News Role	50	42	35	37	38	20	222	56
2.	Agenda Setting Role	35	30	35	20	15	21	156	40
3.	Mediation and Arbitration Role	1	2	3	1	1	2	10	2
4.	Undecided	1	1	2	2	1	1	8	2
Total		87	75	75	60	55	44	396	100

Table 4.1.1: Media Role in Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

The table above shows that 222 respondents representing 56% said that the role the media played in Ogbakiri communal crisis was the "news role" meaning they were more interested in making news out of the crisis situation while 156 respondents representing 40% said the role the media played in the aforementioned crisis was the "agenda-setting role" of the media. Again, 10 respondents representing 2% said the role the media played in the above mentioned crisis was the "mediation and arbitration role" but 8 respondents representing 2% were indecisive. Based on the result of the data analysis here, the respondents that subscribed to "news role" polled the highest respondents (222) and percentage (56%) hence has answered the research question one (1) of this study.

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Options	Okporowo	Oduoha	Ahai	Rumuokani	Rumuoro	Rumuada	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Yes	18	12	30	28	32	30	150	38
2.	No	58	60	26	40	30	26	240	61
3.	Undecidd	1	1	2	1	1	0	6	1
Total		77	73	58	69	63	56	396	100

Table 4.1.2: Public Commendation of Media Role in the Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

The table above shows that 150 respondents representing 38% answered "Yes" to the question raised in the questionnaire while 240 respondents polling a percentage of 61% expressed displeasure by answering "No" to the question but 6 respondents polling 1% were indecisive. Based on the result of the data analysis, the respondents that answered "No" polled the highest respondents (240) and percentage (61%). Therefore has given impetus to the answer to the research question one (1). The result of the data analysis here shows that the public could not commend the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis because of their emphasis on news creation out of the crisis situation rather than thinking outside the box on how to mitigate the crisis. The finding again shows that the role the media played in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis was not the utmost desire of the public hence could not have been commended.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of the public on the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility? To tackle the above stated research question, items 19 and 20 in the questionnaire were gainfully engaged. The items in the questionnaire read:

- i) Are you satisfied with the level of social responsibility exhibited by the media industry particularly television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis?
- ii) How would you rate the level of media social responsibility in their coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis? The answers to the questions were presented in tables 4.1.3 and 4.1.4.

S/N	Option	Okporowo	Oduoha	Rumuoro	Rumuokani	Ahai	Rumuada	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Yes	16	24	52	48	20	26	186	47
2.	No	56	44	10	30	35	35	210	53
Total		72	68	62	78	55	61	396	100

Table 4.1.3 Public Satisfaction of Media Role in the Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

The table above shows that 186 respondents polling a percentage of 47% were satisfied with the role the media played in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis by answering "Yes" to the question while 210 respondents polling 53% were dissatisfied by answering "No" to the question. Based on the result of the data analysis here, the respondents that answered "No" polled the highest respondents (210) and percentage (53%). Therefore has answered the research question

two (2) of this study. This result shows that the respondents or the public were not satisfied with the manner in which the media handled the communal crisis in terms of the coverage.

S/N	Options	Okporowo	Oduoha	Rumuoro	Rumuokani	Ahai	Rumuada	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Very commendable	16	14	16	20	28	20	114	29
2.	Commendable	20	14	18	20	28	20	120	30
3.	Not commendable	32	24	28	22	31	25	162	41
Total		68	52	62	62	87	65	396	100

Table 4.1.4: Public Rating of Media Social Responsibility in the Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

The table above shows that 114 respondents representing 29% rated the level of media social responsibility in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as "very commendable" while 120 respondents polling 30% rated the amount of media social responsibility exhibited in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as "commendable." Similarly, 162 respondents polling 41% rated the level of media social responsibility in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as "not commendable." Sequel to the result of the data analysis here, the respondents that rated the level of media social responsibility in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as "not commendable" polled the highest respondents (162) and percentage (41%) hence has answered the research question two (2) of this study.

Research Question 3: What kind of media coverage model adopted by media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility? To handle the above research question, item 21 in the questionnaire was profitably engaged. The item in the questionnaire reads: "What kind of media coverage model adopted by the media practitioners particularly in television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis?"

The answer to the question was presented in table 4.1.5.

S/N	Options	Okporowo	Oduoha	Rumuoro	Ahai	Rumuokani	Rumuada	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Media Objectivity Model	5	5	4	6	6	4	30	8
2.	Media Detachment Model	32	30	35	30	23	20	170	43
3.	Media Attachment Model	2	1	—	—	1	1	5	1
4.	Media By Stander Model	40	40	28	20	32	30	190	48
Total		79	76	68	56	62	55	396	100

Table 4.1.5: Media Coverage Model Adopted by Media Practitioners in the Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

The table above shows that 30 respondents representing 8% submitted that the kind of media coverage model adopted by the media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis was "media objectivity model" while 170 respondents representing 43% said that the media practitioners adopted "media detachment model" in the coverage of the crisis. But 5 respondents representing 1% subscribed to "media attachment model" whereas 190 respondents polling 48% subscribed to "media by-stander model". Again, one (1) respondent representing 0% subscribed to "media peace-keeping and peace-building model" as the kind of media coverage model adopted by the media practitioners especially in the television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis. From the result of the data analysis, the respondents that subscribed to "media by stander model" polled the highest respondents (190) and percentage (48%). Therefore has answered the research question three (3) of this study.

Research Question 4: What were the constraints the media practitioners faced in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis which impeded their level of social responsibility?

To tackle the above stated research question, item 22 in the questionnaire was effectively engage. The item in the questionnaire reads: What were the challenges faced by media practitioners especially in the television stations in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis? The answer to the question was presented in table 4.1.6.

Items	Okporowo	Oduoha	Rumuokani	Ahai	Rumuoro	Rumuada	Total	Percentage %
Lack of security of media practitioners and weak editorial policy	45	55	10	12	15	15	152	38
Lack of motivation and absence of life assurance policy for media practitioners	26	20	12	15	5	8	86	22
Quest for return on investment and fear of loss advertisement patronage	55	45	20	8	20	10	158	40
Total	126	120	42	35	40	33	396	100

Table 4.1.6: Constraints the Media Practitioners faced in the Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis

The table above shows that one hundred and fifty two (152) respondents representing 38% of the respondents submitted that the constraints the media practitioners faced in the course of coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis was "lack of security of media practitioners and editorial policy" of media industry while eighty six (86) respondents representing 22% submitted that "lack of motivation and absence of life assurance policy for media practitioners" in the coverage of the communal crisis but 158 respondents representing (40%) subscribed to "quest on return on investment and fear of loss of advertisement patronage" as the constraints faced by the media practitioners in the coverage of the Ogbakiri communal crisis. Based on the result of the data analyzed, the respondents that subscribed to "quest for return on investment and fear of loss of advertisement patronage" polled the highest respondents (158) and percentage (40%) hence has answered the research question four (4) of this study.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings in this study is based on the results of the data presentation and analysis using the four (4) research questions presented in the chapter one of this study as a guide.

Consequently, **Research Question 1** which reads: What role did the media play in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility? This question was designed to ascertain the specific role the media played in the coverage of the Ogbakiri communal crisis. The answer to the above mentioned research question was presented in tables 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 respectively in the data analysis of this study. The result of the data analysis shows that the media were merely interested in making news out of the crisis situation. Again, the greater number of the respondents said they were not satisfied with the role the media played in the aforementioned crisis. This finding is against the Clause 11 and 12 of the Code of Ethics of Nigeria Media Practitioners/ Nigeria Union of Journalists which emphasized on public interest and social responsibility of the media particularly in the time of civil disorder in order to promote peace, national unity, public good, universal principles of fundamental human rights, justice, equity, etc. Similarly, the finding also negates the prescription of social responsibility theory of the press which holds that the media should at all time carry out their role in the society with the utmost desire to promote peace and unity in the society. The theory further holds that the media should place public interest over and above the business interest of their investors and as well promote peace and tranquility in the society at all time irrespective of whose ox is gored.

Research Question 2 reads: What is the perception of the public on the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as regards social responsibility? The above research question was designed to ascertain the public perception of the role of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis. The answer to this question was presented in tables 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 which showed the public or respondents were dissatisfied with the manner the media handled the Ogbakiri communal crisis hence could not commend the media industry generally. According to the result of the data analysis, the amount of social responsibility exhibited by the media in the coverage of the crisis was not commendable afterall.

Research Question 3: What kind of media coverage model adopted by media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis with respect to social responsibility? The aforementioned research question was primarily aimed at identifying the media coverage model adopted by the media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis.

The answer to the research question was presented in table 4.1.5 of the data analysis of this study. The result of the data analysis showed that the respondents that subscribed to "media-by-stander coverage model" polled the highest respondents and percentage as noted earlier meaning that the media were lukewarm or lackadaisical in mitigating the crisis via media peace keeping and peace building advocacy campaign in the coverage of the aforementioned crisis. This again means that media practitioners were more or less detached from the crisis hence failed to draw government, religious leaders, crisis mediators and arbitrators' attention to the quagmire on time leading to massive destruction of lives and property in the warring community, Ogbakiri. This kind of media coverage in crisis period can hardly stimulate peace because it does not seek ways in which the media can be engaged to de-escalating or managing a crisis situation. Bell (1999) as cited in Chukwuma, Diri and Oginibo (2015) advocates for "media attachment coverage model" in the coverage of crisis situations rather than adopting "media detachment model or media objective model". She further opines that media peace-keeping and peace-building model can lead to relative peace in wartorn area. In the same vein, a reknown Cable Network News (CNN) war-time reporter, Christian Amanpour and her colleague, Ed Vulliany (1996) revealed that they adopted "media-peace-keeping and peace-building model" in the coverage of Bosnia war. According to them, this helped in stimulating dialogue and acceptance of truce among the warring parties in the Bosnia war. Therefore, advocate for media peace-keeping and peace-building model in the coverage of violent crisis in any nation.

They further argued that media practitioner can be objective by giving all sides a fair hearing in crisis period but they do not have to be neutral and treat all sides equally in the crisis if they must be socially responsible. Media crisis attachment model will not remain on the fence or neutral in the time of injustice, violation of human rights or destruction of lives and property especially when the perpetrators of the crime against humanity are known (Amanpour& Ed Vulliany, 1996).

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

Research Question 4: What were the constraints media practitioners faced in the convergence of Ogbakiri communal crisis which impeded their level of social responsibility to the society? The above stated research question was designed to identify the major constraints affected the media practitioners in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis. The answer to the above stated research question was presented in table 4.1.6 of the data analysis of this study. The result of the data analysis shows that the respondents that subscribed to "quest for return on investment and fear of loss advertisement patronage" polled the highest respondents and percentage as noted earlier meaning that media industry especially television stations in Rivers State emphasized much on making profit for their owners and investors rather than giving the desired attention to media advocacy campaign on peace-keeping, peace-building and peace enforcement programmes which could have been driven by some television programmes such as My Environment and I, Security Watch, The Bridges, The Point Blank, Discussions, Talk Shows, Interviews, Kakaaki and some infotainment and edutainment programmes. This finding negates social responsibility theory of the media which holds among others that the utmost responsibility of the media is to promote peace, healthy, virile and egalitarian society irrespective of whose ox is gored.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study examined media and social responsibility of television (NTA and AIT) coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis of 1997 and 2002. The study drew its strength from three relevant theories to give the work a sound theoretical framework: social responsibility theory of the media, structural functional theory and third-party interventional theory. These theories are seen by the researcher as relevant to the study hence their adoption in this study. However, social responsibility theory of the media is the flagship theory underpinning this study because its prescription of Freedom of Press with concomitant obligation of social responsibility. This is further supported by Article 12 in the Code of Ethics of Nigerian Media Practitioners/Nigeria Union of Journalists. The assumption of the theory was juxtaposed with the style of media coverage and reportage of the Ogbakiri communal crisis especially television stations (NTA and AIT) in Rivers State.

Again, some related concepts were reviewed to add value to the literature review. This study adopted descriptive-survey and historic analysis of research designs. Consequently, the study revealed that there were primary, secondary and tertiary parties in the crisis who fanned the ember of the crisis. Most of the members of the parties in the crisis were more of crisis entrepreneurs than advocates of peaceful coexistence among the warring communities during the crisis period hence heightened and elongated the period of the crisis under investigation. The outcome of the crisis was catastrophic on the people of Ogbakiri. Many lives were lost and property worth billions of naira went to drain. The study found out that there is no victor, no vanquish in the crisis after all. It revealed that all the parties in the crisis are victims of self-afflicted pains. The work has been able to unearth the cause of Ogbakiri communal crisis bringing the historic account of the communal crisis to bear.

The findings of this study show that no person and no village in the six villages that make up Ogbakiri community: Okporowo, Oduoha, Rumuoro, Ahai, Rumuokani and Rumuada are innocent of the communal crisis as every one contributed directly or indirectly. Therefore, the present echoes and reechoes of drums of war and sounds of grenade, dynamite and AK 47 should be condemned and urgently put to stop because "a stitch in time saves nine."

CONCLUSION

The exploration of media and social responsibility role of television in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis of 1997 to 2002 in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State revealed that more needs to be done by media content handlers in television stations in terms of adherence to social responsibility theory of the media and Clause 12 of Nigeria Union of Journalists Code of Ethics which covers all the media practitioners in Nigeria. The Clause emphasizes among others,

the social responsibility role of the media practitioners especially in area of promotion of peace and tranquility in society at all time irrespective of whose ox is gored. Again, the findings of this study has revealed that media practitioners and their employers need to scale up their level of social responsibility role towards the society in time of crisis particularly to the warring communities since crisis is part of human society in order to save lives and property.

Similarly, it is the position of this study that media houses particularly television stations should consider agenda-setting on crisis mediation and arbitration as a sacred service to God and humanity hence should volunteer airtime for parties in crisis to meet with crisis mediators and arbitrators on live television programme with a view of sitting together, talking together and brainstorming on how to developing peaceful mechanisms for resolution of the crisis bedeviling them.

Similarly, the findings made by this study will serve as a clarion call to media practitioners in various television stations in Rivers State in particular and Nigerian nation at large to be socially responsible to the society by not just covering and reporting crisis situations but see their role as a call for promotion of peace and order in the society via conceptualization of peace-driven-programmes and programming in their stations.

The revelation made by this study will also serve as a lesson to Ogbakiri community to learn how to settle their problems internally before it snowball into a violent crisis to avoid external intrusion which heightened the 1997 to 2002 communal crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are:

- 1) Media content handlers should give proper attention to crisis mediation and arbitration programmes in the time of communal crisis rather than mere coverage of the crisis as part of their media corporate social responsibility.
- 2) Let Them Pay (LTP) programmes should be minimized during crisis coverage in order to attract the affected communities or parties in crisis to a live programme for conflict mediation and arbitration purposes.
- 3) Media industry should emphasize on what can stimulate a sense of peaceful co-existence and brotherhood among communities in crisis rather than mere coverage of the crisis situations in order to be seen as being socially responsible to the society.
- 4) Media practitioners particularly in television stations should adopt media attachment coverage model and muckraking media practice in the course of coverage of crisis in the society in order to unearth the immediate and remote cause of the crisis and possibly proffer solutions on how to mitigate the crisis.
- 5) There is need for media industry especially television stations to rethink programme models and evolve programmes that can stimulate harmonious relationship among the warring communities through advocacy campaign for intercultural festivals, inter-marriages and inter-football competitions to encourage peace keeping and peace building in the communities bedeviled with communal crises to scale up their media and corporate social responsibility.
- 6) This study also recommends media advocacy campaign on peace education, peacekeeping, peace building, peace enforcement and the promotion of humanitarian services to the vulnerable and helpless in the warring communities rather than mere coverage of crisis.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study has exposed the insensitivity of the media in the coverage of Ogbakiri communal crisis as against the prescriptions of Clause 11 and 12 of Code of Ethics of Nigeria Media Practitioners/ Nigeria Union of Journalists which emphasized on public interest and social responsibility of the media as the utmost responsibility of the media industry especially in the time of crisis or civil disorder.

Media And Social Responsibility: A Study of Television Coverage of Ogbakiri Communal Crisis in Rivers State, Nigeria

The study has equally brought to the fore the use of "ROPPIE and Extra Mundane Models" as an Alternative to Dispute Resolution (ADR) rather than the use of court litigation and Ak-47 guns as currently used in this part of the world in crisis period.

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