

# Media and Peacebuilding in Zamfara State of North-West Nigeria: A Study of an Armed Bandit Conflict

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## Abstract

This paper examined the ways radio contributed to peacebuilding and promotion using the case of armed banditry and cattle rustling in Zamfara State. The study was guided by four specific objectives: to find out whether radio can be used as a mechanism of peacebuilding; to find out if the intervention by radio programs have influenced the escalation or de-escalation of armed bandits' conflict in Zamfara; to examine the extent to which the people of Zamfara use radio as a mechanism of peacebuilding; and finally to survey the perceptions of people of Zamfara towards the use of radio in peacebuilding. The study used survey research design and data were gathered through a questionnaire administered to 338 respondents. The data were thematically analyzed by classifying major issues and recurrent themes. Then they were presented in narrative form. The findings of the study showed that radio served as an appropriate, cheap and easily accessible medium of passing peace messages; contributed considerably to the de-escalation of conflict; and reduced the frequency of conflict in the state. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (98%) agreed that radio has been the best medium for promoting peacebuilding. In conclusion, radio proves to be effective in dousing tensions and disseminating information on what needs to be done. Finally, the paper recommended that the government should formulate policies that make it possible to involve radio in conflict resolution efforts since it is cheap and easily accessible to many people.

## Keywords

radio, peacebuilding, media, conflict resolution, Zamfara

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## Introduction

Media, whether government or privately owned, plays an extremely important role in society. As no society is conflict free, peacebuilding is necessary. Information and insight can impact on public discourse. This way, perceptions can be changed because of access to media. Different types of media are utilized globally to distribute knowledge and ideally, free mass media is a tool of and signpost for democracy. The attention of the media on issues of banditry conflict gets heightened because of the level of violence involved, the number of people killed, and the styles used to launch attacks. Additional factors include displacement of people, efforts of the security forces, uncertainty and threat to law and order, lack of security and safety, and disturbance to peace. Conflict situations provide the media with news materials and issues and events to be analyzed or commented on. But banditry or insurgency, as much as it offers news materials to the media, also puts journalists and media houses in danger. In discussing the challenges of media and peacebuilding, it is important to examine discourse on media and peacebuilding or banditry as a challenge which is covered in some relevant literature. At this juncture, it is important to clarify some key concepts that would be useful in the discussion in this paper.

The concept of peacebuilding has been an issue of concern and interest of many scholars and practitioners (Ismail, 2006; Radda, 2006; and peace projects (Radio for Peacebuilding in Africa)) especially in Africa where conflict has become part of the culture of the people.

Peacebuilding is associated with efforts aimed at the prevention of violent conflicts, reconciliation, transitional justice, education for peace, and communication for peace. It requires people to promote conditions of non-violence, equity, justice and human rights of all people to build democratic institutions and trust and enhance communication among people in a way that contentious issues can be resolved without violence.

However, it is unfortunate that media is among the causative agents of conflict in Africa as evidenced in the case of Congo and Burundi. Media institutions played provocative roles in the society before, during and after the occurrence of the conflicts. In a heterogeneous society like Nigeria where insecurity is always a subject of discussion as a result of banditry, terrorism, ethnic, religious and political unrest, media can play a role in minimizing such tensions. Pate (2018) advocates that media is supposed to be the agents of maintaining peace or mechanisms of managing and resolving conflicts. However, the opposite has frequently been the case. Due to this, some people accuse media of escalating conflicts despite its potential to de-escalate tensions and contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Zamfara State, in northwestern Nigeria, has had a significant conflict over the issue of cattle rustling which eventually grew to armed conflict. The crisis is far removed from religious, political or ethnic clashes, which is normally the case in many parts of the country. There is an argument on whether the media is escalating the crisis or promoting peacebuilding in the state. Many scholars (Malam cited in Maikaba, 2006; Ya'u cited in Batta, 2009) lament that in some places in Africa, media, instead of helping to curb violence, aids in exacerbating the situations. As such, the need for a study to examine the role of media in peacebuilding is imperative. This

need is supported by Malam (2006) who claims that there are relatively inadequate studies on the role of media in peacebuilding. Mass media, especially radio, can play a vital role in easing tensions during conflict and serving as mechanisms to build peace in society. Several scholars (Bratic, Manoff, and Rueben as cited in Malakwen, 2014) contend that if media can support in fueling crisis in societies, it can also assist in building peace. This confirms the assertion that media is a two-edged sword. The purpose of this paper is thus to examine the role of radio in building peace among the people of Zamfara State.

## **Social Context**

Zamfara, with its motto as the “Farmers’ Pride”, was once one of the most peaceful states in Nigeria. Neither the introduction of Sharia law in 1999 nor the post-election violence in 2007 and 2011 that affected almost all the northern states. However, the state has now become a no-go area and a haven for bandits who frequently killed and kidnapped hundreds of people for ransom. Illegal mining has been ongoing for a very long time and several experts have warned the government against the practice although nothing has been done until lately. In 2010, lead poison killed several children in their homes through contaminated food and dust in the air that resulted from illicit mining. This took the lives of over 300 people including children and women in the state.

Killing in the state started in 2014 as part of cattle rustling activity. However, it got much worse in early 2016 when bandits started killing the miners. Foreigners also operated in the state, some licensed, while others were not and this has endangered the lives of the villagers in areas where the mining activities took place.

The media, in term of a broad-based information sharing capacity, has remained one of the fundamental means of salvaging violent crisis situations. While there is no argument about the importance of the media in peacebuilding, its role has often remained contentious among scholars and practitioners and this revolved around whether the media escalates or de-escalates conflicts and crises (Salawu, 2009; Omenugha and Ukwueze, 2011; Vladislavljevic, 2014; Pointer, Bosch, Chuma & Wasserman, 2016). Adam and Holguin (2003) argued that for conflict resolvers, the media is usually seen as a threat — keen to pounce on any indiscreet or conciliatory remarks by the negotiators and publish them without any thought of the consequences.

Media as a social institution is involved in conflicts in the society either as harbinger, channel of information and analysis of the conflicts or as part of the escalation or resolution of the conflicts (Salawu, 2009, p.75). Ownership pattern, pressures, political influence and other factors continue to challenge the media’s consistent and committed role in peacebuilding in a nation, making it increasingly impossible for it to live up to the expected role in peacebuilding.

According to Best (2013), peacebuilding is a collective process to end or mitigate conflict, rebuild and reconcile post-conflict, and foster conditions that avoid conflict in the first place. Studies

in peace-making or peacebuilding propose that in resolving civil conflict more is needed than merely negative peace, that is, absence of violence (Lodge, 2018).

Unfortunately, people, especially the youth are always at the forefront when conflict arises. For this, Batta (2009) and Ismail (2006) corroborated that majority of the conflicts in Nigeria were aggravated by idle youth who served as rebels whether sponsored for political, economic or sectarian interests. However, some scholars (Maikaba, 2006) believed that media especially radio was expected to remind people of the importance of peace in society. Similarly, Nwodu and Agbanu (2015) posited that radio could be the most effective medium for disseminating to the people information on various social change programmes (peacebuilding included) from government and other institutions (media for example). Thus, this paper intends to investigate the role of radio in building peace among the people of Zamfara State.

## Literature Review

Peacebuilding is one of the processes of managing conflict and radio has a vital role to play in achieving that. According to Malakwen (2014), by using its role of gatekeeping, radio can play a significant role in fostering peace, building confidence, advocating for the protection of human lives, and promoting and mobilizing public support. Unfortunately, media, as captured by Ya'u (cited in Batta, 2009) is not doing that in many cases. Rather than deescalating conflicts, media helped in escalating them. This buttresses the assertion that media can mar make.

Adejo (2014) studied radio as a tool for promoting peacebuilding and solving conflict in Koko and Opuama in the Niger Delta region. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents (87%) relied on radio stations for information on conflict while others (8% and 5%) counted on the internet and newspaper as their major source of news on conflict and peacebuilding in the region.

Best (2011) examined the role of radio and mobile phones in post-conflict resolution in Liberia. The key findings revealed that radio was central to the lives of the interviewees being by far the most used source of information. Victims of violence and conflict depended on radio. Nearly all the interviewees (99%) mentioned that they listened to the radio during the 2008 conflict and relied on it for key information.

Bosch (2011) investigated the role of Talk Radio in promoting peacebuilding and sustaining democracy and citizenship in Zimbabwe. Findings showed that radio helps in sustaining democracy and promoting peacebuilding. Seventy-two percent of the respondents agreed that radio was the best medium for promoting peace while 17% believed that television was a suitable medium because of its audio-visual capacity. The remaining 11% argued that newspapers were the best medium in terms of promoting peacebuilding in Zimbabwe.

A study by Malakwen (2014) revealed that 58.5% of the respondents believed radio had an impact on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This relates to Batta's (2009) finding that media occupies a central position in society as a major agent of socialization contributing to

peacebuilding by educating members of the public about its importance. However, this could not be achieved without objective reporting and coverage as outlined by Maikaba (2006). Despite the role that radio can play in creating awareness and educating people about the importance of peace, especially during conflict, Malakwen (2014) lamented that peacebuilding had been left to security forces, elders, and village heads.

Kombol (2009) examined the impact of mobile phones in multi-ethnic communities in Benue State. Findings indicated that all respondents used mobile phones and they believed that mobile phones could ensure and sustain peacebuilding as they helped them to express themselves. This finding was similar to that of Best (2011) which showed that people in Liberia clung to their mobile phones as a tool for security and safety. They used them to combat crime, sexual violence, and to help in medical emergencies.

## **Theoretical Framework**

As this paper investigated audiences' uses, beliefs and perceptions of radio as a mechanism of peacebuilding, the uses and gratifications theory (U&G) guided the discussion of responses secured from participants in the study. Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008) and Asemah (2011) corroborated that uses and gratification theory was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974. The theory emerged to address the shortcomings of media effect theories and the major argument of uses and gratifications is what people do with the media rather than what media does to them. It perceives media audience as active rather than passive as the media has a very limited effect on them. Furthermore, Wimmer and Dominic (as cited in Asemah, 2011, p.170) contended that:

Uses and Gratifications Theory centers on the audience views of media. It examines how people use the media and the gratification they seek to and derive from their media behaviours. Mass media researchers that employ U&G theory assume that media audiences are aware of and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media contents. It propounds the fact that people choose what they want to watch, read or listen.

McQuail (2010) posits that people use media for various needs (surveillance, cognitive) and reasons (information). People can use radio, for example, to acquire knowledge and find information about relevant events and conditions happening in or outside their immediate environment which will in turn allow them to gain some sense of peace and security especially during or after the occurrence of an unfortunate situation. As such, the theory posits that people use media for different reasons. Therefore, this study intends to find out if respondents in this study used radio for peacebuilding.

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## Materials and methods

This section adopts a quantitative survey method (see Creswell & Poth, 2017). Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique and 400 copies of a questionnaire were equally distributed among the eight most affected local governments (50 for each) in Zamfara State. The local governments included Zurmi, Anka, Birnin Magaji, Maradun, Tsafe, Shinkafi, Maru and Gusau

This study used a 5-point Likert scale that included Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Furthermore, Yes/No options and scales that included Very Great Extent, Great Extent, Little Extent and No Extent were used to gather respondents' opinions on the use of radio as a mechanism of peacebuilding. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2014), Likert scale or summated rating is the most popularly used questioning technique in mass media research. Furthermore, Bhattacharjee (2012) added that "Likert scale is a very popular rating scale for measuring ordinal data in social science research" in which this study was rooted. All the questions were structured (close-ended). Respondents' views were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 tabulated in the form of frequency and percentage.

## Results and Discussions

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 338 were returned successfully. Before analysis of the data, a reliability test was conducted to test the validity of the questionnaire. The result showed the following.

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<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.530	24

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As far as gender is concerned, 73.1% (n=247) of the respondents were males while 26.9% (n=91) were females. Age distribution showed that 51.5% (n=174) of the respondents were between 18 and 26, 33.7% (n=114) were between 27 and 34, 12.1% (n=41) were between 35 and 42 and 2.7% (n=9) were between 43 and 50. With regard to education, 52.1% (n=176) attended higher institutions of learning, 42.6% (n=144) attended secondary education and the remaining 5.3% (n=18) attended primary education. Employment-wise, 79.6% (n=269) of the respondents were self-employed, 14.8% (n=50) were employed and 5.6% (n=19) were unemployed.

## Radio Usage

**Table 1:** Whether or not respondents listened to the radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	338	100	100	100

As shown in Table 1 above, respondents were asked if they listened to the radio and the data showed that all of them (100%) did.

**Table 2:** Frequency of respondents' listening to the radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Most often	60	17.8	17.8	17.8
	Very often	226	66.9	66.9	84.6
<b>Valid</b>	Often	47	13.9	13.9	98.5
	Rarely	5	1.5	1.5	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Respondents were asked how often they listened to the radio. Table 2 above indicates that 17.8% (n=60) and 66.9% (n=226) of them respectively used radio most often and very often while 13.9% (n=47) and 1.5% (n=5) respectively used it often and rarely. This shows that majority of the respondents (84.7%) frequently used radio.

**Table 3:** Means that respondents used to listen to the radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Using radio set	120	35.5	35.5	35.5
	Using mobile phones	207	61.2	61.2	96.7
<b>Valid</b>	Using the internet	9	2.7	2.7	99.4
	No answer	2	0.6	0.6	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 3 above presents how respondents listened to the radio. The data revealed that 61.2% (n=207) of them listened to the radio via mobile phones while 35.5% (n=120) did it using radio sets, Only 2.7% (n=9) used the internet to listen to the radio.

**Table 4:** Places where respondents listened to the radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Home	140	41.4	41.4	41.4
	Car	57	16.9	16.9	58.3
	Office	60	17.8	17.8	76.0
	Anywhere	81	24.0	24.0	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 4 presents places where the respondents listened to the radio. Result from the table showed that 41.4% (n=140) listened to the radio in their homes while 24.0% (n=81) did it anywhere. Others listened to it in offices (17.8%) and cars (16.9). This reveals that a significant number of the respondents (41.4%) listened to the radio in their homes.

**Table 5:** Reasons for the respondents to listen to the radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Information	176	52.1	52.1	52.1
	Education	96	28.4	28.4	80.5
	Surveillance	52	15.4	15.4	95.9
	Tension release	14	4.1	4.1	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 5 above shows the reasons why respondents listened to the radio. Results indicate that 52.1% (n=176) looked for information and 24.4% (n=96) did it for education purpose. 15.4 (n=52) listened to the radio for surveillance purpose.

**Table 6:** The kind of news media respondents usually turned to during conflicts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Radio	201	59.5	59.5	59.5
	Newspaper	47	13.9	13.9	73.4
	Television	6	1.8	1.8	75.1
	Internet	83	24.6	24.6	99.7
	None	1	0.3	0.3	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 6 presents the kind of media that respondents resorted to during times of conflict. Results showed that 59.5% (n=201) used radio while 24.6% (n=83) utilized the internet. This indicates that majority of the respondents (59.5%) relied on radio for information at times of conflict.

**Table 7:** The extent to which respondents considered radio as

**Table 7:** The extent to which respondents considered radio as a means of peacebuilding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Great extent	168	49.7	49.7	49.7
	Much extent	83	24.6	24.6	74.3
	An extent	71	21.0	21.0	95.3
	Little extent	15	4.4	4.4	99.7
	No extent	1	0.3	0.3	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 7 above shows the extent to which respondents considered radio as a means of peacebuilding instrument. It is seen from the table that 49.7% (n=168) considered to a great extent that radio is a means to build peace while 4.4% (n=15) believed only to a little extent that radio could assist in peacebuilding. This shows that majority of the respondents (49.7%) believe to a great extent that radio can be used as a tool for peacebuilding.

**Table 8:** Respondents' view on whether radio creates awareness on the importance of peace

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Strongly Agree	297	87.9	87.9	87.9
	Agree	27	8.0	8.0	95.9
	Neutral	10	3.0	3.0	98.8
	Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.9	0.9	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 8 above presents respondents' view on whether or not they agreed to the idea that radio creates awareness on the importance of peace. We understand from the table that 87.9% (n=297) strongly agreed and 8% (n=27) agreed, i.e., a clear majority of 95.9% believed that radio creates awareness on the importance of peace. Only 0.9% (n=3) strongly disagreed. There are relatively few respondents (11) between the two extremes.

**Table 9:** Respondents' view on whether radio programme enhances their understanding of peacebuilding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Strongly Agree	307	90.8	90.8	90.8
	Agree	21	6.2	6.2	97.0
	Neutral	9	2.7	2.7	99.7
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 9 above presents data on respondents' view of whether radio programme enhances their understanding of peacebuilding. It is seen from the table that 90.8% (n=307) of the respondents strongly agreed and 6.2% (n=21) agreed that radio programme enhances their understanding of peacebuilding while only 0.3% (n=1) disagreed to the idea. This means that the large majority (97%) realizes the value of radio programmes.

**Table 10:** Respondents' view on whether radio is an important source of news and information on peacebuilding

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	297	87.9	87.9	87.9
Agree	25	7.4	7.4	95.3
Neutral	8	2.4	2.4	97.6
Disagree	5	1.5	1.5	99.1
Strongly Disagree	3	0.9	0.9	100
Total	338	100	100	

Table 10 above presents data on respondents' opinions as related to the importance of radio as a source of news and information on peacebuilding. It can be seen from the table that 87.9% (n=297) of the respondents strongly agreed and 7.4% (n=25) agreed that radio is an important source of news and information on peacebuilding while only 0.9% (n=3) strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents (95.3%) believed that radio is an important source of news and information on peacebuilding.

**Table 11:** Respondents' opinions on whether radio contributes to resolving armed banditry conflicts and enhances peacebuilding

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	294	87.0	87.0	87.0
Agree	37	10.9	10.9	97.9
Neutral	2	0.6	0.6	98.5
Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	99.1
Strongly Disagree	3	0.9	0.9	100
Total	338	100	100	

Table 11 above reflects respondents' opinions with regard to the contribution of radio to the resolution of armed banditry conflicts and enhancement of peacebuilding. The table reveals that 87.0% (n=294) of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.9% (n=37) agreed to the fact that radio contributes to the resolution of armed banditry conflicts and enhancement of peacebuilding while 0.9% (n=3) strongly disagreed. This means that the majority of respondents (97.9%) concurred that

radio is of paramount importance in solving problems of armed banditry and alleviating violence.

**Table 12:** Respondents' opinions on whether radio programmes help in rebuilding peace after conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	275	81.4	81.4	81.4
Agree	41	12.1	12.1	93.5
Neutral	13	3.8	3.8	97.3
Disagree	5	1.5	1.5	98.8
Strongly Disagree	4	1.2	1.2	100
Total	338	100	100	

Table 12 above presents respondents' opinions on whether radio programmes help in rebuilding peace after conflict. Results indicate that 81.4% (n=275) of the respondents strongly agreed and 12.1% (n=41) agreed that radio programmes help in rebuilding peace after conflict while only 1.2% (n=4) strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents (93.5%) believed radio programmes assist in rebuilding peace after conflict.

**Table 13:** Respondents' opinions on whether they always like listening to radio for peace programmes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Strongly Agree	282	83.4	83.4
	Agree	35	10.4	93.8
	Neutral	8	2.4	96.2
	Disagree	1	0.3	96.4
	Strongly Disagree	12	3.6	100
	Total	338	100	100

Table 13 above presents respondents' opinions on whether they always like listening to radio for peace programmes. The table shows that 83.4% (n=282) of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.4% (n=35) agreed that they like listening to radio for peace programmes while 3.6% (n=12) strongly disagreed. The figures clearly show that majority of the respondents (93.8%) like listening to radio for peace programmes.

**Table 14:** Respondents' beliefs on whether radio peace programmes help in saving lives and property

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Strongly Agree	285	84.3	84.3
	Agree	35	10.4	94.7
	Neutral	9	2.7	97.3
	Disagree	7	2.1	99.4
	Strongly Disagree	2	0.6	100
	Total	338	100	100

Table 14 above presents respondents' beliefs on whether radio peace programmes help in saving lives and property. Results show that 84.3% (n=285) of them strongly agreed and 10.4% (n=35)

agreed that radio peace programmes help in saving lives and property. Only 0.6% (n=2) strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents (94.7%) believed radio peace programmes assist in saving lives and property.

**Table 15:** Respondents' opinions on whether they always listen to the radio at times of conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	266	78.7	78.7	78.7
Agree	53	15.7	15.7	94.4
Neutral	8	2.4	2.4	96.7
<b>Valid</b> Disagree	9	2.7	2.7	99.4
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	99.7
No response	1	0.3	0.3	100
Total	338	100	100	

Table 15 enquired whether respondents always listened to the radio at times of conflict. Results revealed that 78.7% (n=266) strongly agreed and 15.7% (n=53) agreed that they always listened to radio at times of conflict while only 0.6% (n=2) strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents (94.4%) always listened to radio whenever there was a conflict.

**Table 16:** Respondents' beliefs on whether radio is the best medium for promoting peacebuilding

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	295	87.3	87.3	87.3
Agree	36	10.7	10.7	97.9
Neutral	3	0.9	0.9	98.8
<b>Valid</b> Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	99.4
Strongly Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	100
Total	338	100	100	

Table 16 presents respondents' opinions on whether radio is the best medium for promoting peacebuilding. It is seen from the table that 87.3% (n=295) of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.7% (n=36) agreed that radio is the best medium for promoting peacebuilding while only 0.6% (n=2) disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents (98%) believed radio is the best medium for promoting peacebuilding.

**Table 17:** Respondents' beliefs on whether radio is an effective mechanism for peacebuilding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Agree	294	87.0	87.0	87.0
	Agree	36	10.7	10.7	97.6
	Neutral	2	0.6	0.6	98.2
<b>Valid</b>	Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	98.8
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.9	0.9	99.7
	No response	1	0.3	0.3	100
	Total	338	100	100	

Table 17 shows respondents' opinions on whether radio is an effective mechanism for peacebuilding. It is understood from the table that 87.0% (n=294) of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.7% (n=36) agreed that radio is an effective mechanism for peacebuilding. Only 0.9% (n=3) strongly disagreed to it. It is thus clear that majority of the respondents (97.7%) had the conviction that radio is an effective mechanism for peacebuilding.

## Discussion

This paper investigated the role of media, particularly radio, in peacebuilding in Zamfara State of Northwestern Nigeria. Although all the respondents listened to the radio for different purposes, it has been found out that 52.1% did it to get information. This concurs with findings by Adejo (2014) that showed majority of his respondents relied on radio for information. This study further discovered that majority of the respondents (94.4%) turned to radio at times of conflict and this coincided with the finding by Best (2011). Moreover, the majority of the respondents (98%) believed that radio is the best medium for promoting peacebuilding. This goes in compliance with findings by Bosch (2011) that showed radio was the best medium in terms of promoting peacebuilding in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, majority of respondents in this study (94.7%) had the conviction that radio peace programmes help in saving lives and property. Kombol (2009) and Malakwen (2014) buttressed that radio and mobile phones are capable of preventing conflicts, and ensuring and sustaining peacebuilding.

## **Conclusion**

The paper discussed respondents' perceptions of radio as a mechanism for peacebuilding. The paper discovered that radio plays positive roles in peacebuilding in society. Radio played significant roles before, during and after conflicts in many places. It is the most popular news media in creating awareness on the importance of peacebuilding and rebuilding peace in Zamfara State. The findings of this paper contributed to the theoretical framework of the study in that respondents preferred listening to the radio for many reasons including during conflict situation.

The paper is useful and relevant to decision makers when looking for appropriate techniques and mechanism for solving problems after a conflict situation. Radio proves to be effective in dousing tensions and disseminating information on what needs to be done as the findings of this study discovered.

## **Recommendations**

The paper recommends that the government should formulate policies that make it possible to involve radio in conflict resolution efforts since radio is cheap and easily accessible to many people. It also recommends that media organizations should come up with broadcasting policies that give more prominence to issues of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, especially with regard to the frequency of peace and conflict resolution programming. In addition, the media should design programmes that allow audience participation since issues of conflict touch all people.

## **About the Author**

Idris Mohammed is a lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication at Usmanu Danfodio University Il Sokoto and an investigative journalist on violent extremism and terrorism. His area of research covers media and peacebuilding, terrorism, journalism, mental health and democratic governance in Africa. He has over 5 years' experience in promoting democracy, peacebuilding and dialogue, human rights and justice in Nigeria. He led projects on security and governance with the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), served as a Program Officer on elections and governance with YIAGA Africa. He is currently a Peace Facilitator and Data Enumerator with United State Institute of Peace (USIP). Idris has participated in several research studies on addressing conflict through non-kinetic approaches and democratic governance in Nigeria.

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