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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF RADIO IN COUNTERING HATE SPEECH AND VIOLENCE IN BENUE AND DELTA STATES

Catherine Isioma NWOKORO

Introduction

All over the world, hate speech represents a form of threat to damage the lives of individuals and increase the sense of fear in entire communities (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016). Adibe (2015) states that hate speech is any speech that is used to demean persons based on their identifiers such as race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and predispose them to acts of violence. He went on further to state that, hate speech employs discriminatory epithets to insult and stigmatize others on the basis of their personal marks of distinction or the kind of groups they belonged to. Kukah (2015) holds similar views when he states that the term 'hate speech' is universally used to describe any communication that denigrate people (individuals or groups), based on attributes like their race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality and religion. Hate speech can be seen as any word or action that connotes racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, violence and intolerance towards others. As a result, such negative speech or fighting words as it is known in the United Kingdom, can generate stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are construed as different or inferior (Kukah, 2015).

Hate speech occurs in various forms ranging from speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display which could incite people to violence (Adibe, 2015). In the words of Justice Frank Murphy (1942 cited in Mrabure, 2015), a Supreme Court judge in the United States, 'hate speech includes the lewd and obscene, the profane, the libellous and the insulting or 'fighting' words- those which by their very utterances inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of peace and such should be punishable by law when an offender is found guilty'. According to Nessier, (1994) hate speech refers to all forms of communication whether verbal, written or symbolic, that insults a race, ethnic and political group either by suggesting that these people are inferior in some respect or by indicating that they are dispersed or not welcome for any other reason. He went on further to state that, apart from the danger of physical assault, hate speech risks violent reactions. In the same vein, Adibe, (2015) posit that, hate speech is often the gateway to discrimination,

harassment and violence as well as a precursor to serious criminal acts. This means that, it is doubtful if there will be hate -motivated attacks on any group or region without hate and the hatred it purveys (Adibe, 2015).

Violent acts or violence does not just take place without an influence of some sorts (Abimbola, August 31, 2017). European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2012) on a study conducted to ascertain if there is a relationship between hate speech and violence stated that, hate speech covers many expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred, violence and discrimination against a person for a variety of reasons. The world in general and Nigeria in particular have suffered from setbacks caused by hate- motivated forms of violence resulting from religious beliefs, racial superiority/ slurs, power sharing, regional clashes from inadequate mineral resources, communal clashes and land disputes. From shootings in Charleston, South Carolina racists Church shooting (2015, USA), discrimination and hate crime against Jews (2012), Tutsi/ moderate Hutu genocide (Rwanda 1994), the massacre of Bosnian Serb army during the 1992- 95 (Bosnian war) and Miss World pageant violence (Nigeria, 2002) to mention but a few, shows the negative influence hate speech and hate actions have on a people. ECRI states that, if hate speech and hate-motivated violence is left unaddressed, it can lead to acts of violence and conflicts on a wide scale.

Contextually speaking, radio as a medium of communication as proven by various authors in Mass communication field can be a good channel in talking to the people no matter the status of the person and as it also helps in fostering National cohesion (Asemah, 2011: 346). The focus of this study is to counteract hate speech by sensitizing the people of Benue and Delta states to avoid it from been a precursor to violence through the radio. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines violence as an act of aggression (as one against a person who resists). Also American Psychological Association (APA) defines violence as an extreme form of aggression such as assault, rape or murder. APA further stated that violence can be increased in a people through long exposure to violent media, violence experienced at home/ environment and insults and incitement from other sources. Violence is that unlawful overt or covert threats or destructive tendencies intended to cause damage or injury on a person or group targeted (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2013).

Nigeria in general, Benue and Delta states in particular have a history of diverse forms of violence whether perpetuated by ethnicity, religion, political or electoral causes, have had some traces of motivation from one form of hate speech at one time or another (Lai Muhammed, on a live NTAi broadcast, 2017). To support the above point, Neissier (1994) opines that, hate speech can spark or induce violent reactions from a people just like the case of the Apartheid movement in South Africa. In view of the above therefore, it is not out of place to notice the frustration and change of behaviour of a people incited through hate speech, from calmness to exhibition of aggression and violent acts by an inciter with some form of authority and influence on his/ her listeners. Hate speech is a national problem that needs to be tackled from all ramifications in other for it not to provoke people towards violence on the long run (ECRI, 2012). Hence the need for this study which is to carry out a survey on the people of Benue and Delta states, in other to ascertain if hate speech can provoke violence if not properly addressed or counteracted through the radio overtime.

Statement of the Problem

Hate speech has so far been perceived as a not- too- serious problem in Nigeria yet its influence on individuals 'speaks' volumes whether documented or not. Hate speech will not be a crime if it

does not lead to harm or hate violence of the victims and the communities at large (Neisser, 1994). According to Iganaski, (2015) 'hate violence results from forms of hate speeches and hate crimes of different sorts. Hate violence is accompanied by prejudice, bias or bigotry. Some hate violence involves fatal and other severe acts fuelled by extremist ideology, as in the case of the Charleston racists murders in the United States of America, but some involve non- fatal violence in the form of harassment with psychological impact and abuse committed not only by dedicated hate mongers, but by otherwise ordinary citizens'.

This statement boils down to the fact that hate speeches can be incited not only by hate mongers but also by anyone who is determined to encourage abuse, hatred and violence for one selfish reason or the other (Iganaski, 2015). In order not to allow hate speech to degenerate into violence in Benue and Delta States, it is necessary for certain measures to be put in place. Such measures could come in the form of providing for the people by the Government whether employed or not, as a way of reducing the level of poverty which is very high in these violence- prone states (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018), sensitizing and educating the people that all lives matter and it is also important to involve the people all the way in issues that revolve around their lives in the society (Dapo, 2018). These palliative measures that can help counteract hate speech becomes imperative because, if hate speech remains unaddressed in these two States in Nigeria, it may become a means for motivating the people towards exhibiting acts of violence overtime or even leading to anarchy (Ezeibe, 2015). Since hate speech often times is incited by a political head, a leader of a group or body or a role model (Okunna, 2018) it is important for the Nigerian Government to take the matter seriously, particularly having a keen eye on hate speeches emanating from violence- prone states because if left unchecked it can become an instrument to for negative mobilisation.

This leads to the question- how can people be educated or encouraged to shun hate speech thus preventing these from degenerating into violence? This task should not be left to the government alone. It requires people to be made aware of what constitutes hate speech, educated about the consequences of attitudes, utterances and actions, to the end that they are better able to recognise trigger points, thus quicker to contain the sequence of perilous events. These people could be individuals across the social spectrum from urban based professionals to peasants dwelling at the grassroots. Or they could belong to religious or political organisations, Trade Unions, or other groups). The process also involves the recognition and use of the right channels of communication. According to Asemah, radio is the channel of communication that is affordable to all classes of individuals in the country (Asemah, 2011: 346). This use of radio is prevalent for the fact that battery powered sets can function without electricity which is inadequate. Such communication is essential as people need to be aware of the problems that hate speech can breed. One of them is hate induced violence which can spiral causing more gruesome conditions that may be difficult to recover from (Nelson, 2013). It is therefore essential to find the best ways to stem hate speech.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore how to use radio to counteract hate speech and violence in violence- prone areas. Benue and Delta States, in Nigeria where the study is situated are peculiar for their ethnic diversity and assumed political marginalisation. More specifically, the study also sought:

1. To find out if (in Benue and Delta States) hate speech eventually provokes violence.
2. To ascertain the extent that hate speech gets before it degenerates to violence in the violence- prone area like Benue and Delta States.

3. To identify the ways radio has been used to counteract the degeneration of hate speech to violent behaviours over time in these two States.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Will hate speech eventually provoke violence (in Nigeria's Benue and Delta States)?
2. To what extent will the influence of hate speech get before violent behaviours become observable amongst the people of Nigeria's Benue and Delta states?
3. What measures can be taken through the radio to counteract the influence of hate speech preventing degeneration to violent behaviours?

Justification of the Study

Figures from a World Bank sponsored project reported by the National Bureau of Statistics, (2018), justifies the selection of area to be studied. Benue state (North- Central zone) and Delta state (South-South) are prone to conflicts and violence majorly arising from some of the following: farmers herders grazing clashes, pipeline vandalism, militancy, land disputes, religious and inter- tribal conflicts. Such volatile areas, with their experience of old and recent violent encounters, is well suited to a study of incitement caused by the use of hate speech. The study is thus a means of generating warning signals when it helps to outline pressure points, - factors which reflect hate and generate animosities among the people in the areas of study.

An Analysis of Hate Speech and Violence in Nigeria

Hate speech is any speech, conduct, gesture, writing or display which could incite people to violence or execute a prejudicial action. Essentially such speeches rob others of their dignity and sense of order (Mrabure, 2015). United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016) in its interpretation of the law, noted that hate speech offences include:

(a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on ground of their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or group on the grounds in (b) above and (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination and (e) participation in organization and activities which will promote and incite racial discrimination and violence. (CERD General Recommendation (GR) 35 Article 13: 2016)

As a term, hate speech can be said to have put down its roots in Nigeria since the 2015 electoral campaign, (Ezeibe, 2015). To be specific, the term seemed to have gained public attention in Nigeria after a documentary aired on Africa Independent Television (AIT) about an All Progressive Congress (APC) Presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari, for the 2015 Presidential election. Due to perceived hostility and partisanship from the transmitting station, the documentary was later described as a 'hate broadcast'. Hate speech seems mostly associated with power elites. Some utterances from political leaders, wealthy persons, religious heads and others who can be regarded as role mentors have been regarded as hate speeches. (Okunna, 2018). Some examples of such instances made by leaders in Nigeria and reported in the press, are as follows:

Instances of Hate Speech made by Some Nigerian Leaders

- **'Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yar'Adua, all former heads of state from the North West like, Buhari, had died in office'**

The Governor of Ekiti State, Peter Ayodele Fayose, January 19, 2015, This Day and other national dailies.

- **'Wetin him dey find again? Him dey drag with him pikin mate, old man wey no get brain, him brain don die pata pata - What else is he [Buhari] after, contesting with people young enough to be his children? Old man who lacks gumption; he is completely brain dead'.**

Former First Lady, Patience Jonathan, at a PDP political party rally in Kogi State, Reported by The Express New, 4 March, 2014

- **'God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood'.**

Presidential Candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, General Muhammadu Buhari, Reported by Lika Binniyat in Vanguard Newspaper on May 15th, 2012

The emphasis highlighted in bold merely indicate the depth of negative passion resentment for an individual which extended to his group, and the levity with which death as a mode of dismissal is taken. Yet such hate speech need media for wide spread circulation to gain prominence. Without the media, hate speech could fail to come alive (Sam, 2009). That said, it is important to understand determinants of hate speech.

Determinants of Hate Speech

Mrabure (2015) outlines several considerations to examine before use of abusive language can be considered hate speech. Hate speech can be identified by the following:

1. The severity of what is said, the severity of the harm advocated and the intensity of the communication.
2. Content of the speech including its tone requires the listeners to respond with certain actions and inactions.
3. The inciter of the hate speech must have authority and some level of influence over the audience. This is important because, the audience is already inclined or primed to take lead from the inciter.
4. For hate speech to be qualified as one, it must have occurred in a public space.

According to Ezeibe (2015), Nigeria is a country which is currently unstable. It has had a long history of corruption, tribalism/ ethnic crises, poverty, further compounded by religious conflicts involving the two world religions prevalent in the land. With such a negative profile, it is difficult to imagine the country within the comity of nations; its prospects of seeing better days, seems far-fetched (Ezeibe, 2015). So allowing acts of hate speech to be freely circulated is detrimental to the nation. The problem needs to be tackled head on, and violators made to face strict sanctions to serve as deterrents to others.

Violence is the other concept to be defined. There are different manifestations of violence, but something is common to them all. It is the deliberate alteration of existing balance of power to the advantage of one party at the expense of another. According to Fischer (2002) violence is any random or organised acts that seeks to determine, delay or otherwise influence a process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced 'protection', blackmail, destruction of property and assassination. With these broad parameters, it should not be surprising that violence may manifest in different ways. Its magnitude may be informed by the stakes held by the parties involved, the intensity of the passions expressed, both of which may be linked with antecedents of relationships and values attached to location of the parties involved. As with the news, the framing of the story determines how violence is seen to occur; its consequences is also informed by this.

Nigeria is divided into six geopolitical zones namely: North- West, North- East, North Central, South West, South East and South- South. The areas of study are North- Central (Benue State) and South- South (Delta State). Though the zones are contiguous, the actual states are separated by at least two states. Each is known for their exposure to conflict and crises at one time or the other. Historically speaking, Nigeria is no stranger to violence. Notable instances of violence include Aba Women's Riots of 1929. This was a result of what was seen as an unfair imposition of tax on traders by the British colonialist. This, along with other social and political grievances experienced in the current South East and South-South zones exemplify early known violence in the entity called Nigeria. Kano riot of 1953 was another pre-independence experience of violence captured in the national history. This occurred in the North West zone. The census crisis of 1962/63, and the 1966 military coup that led to high profile assassinations around the country and culminated in the civil war (1967-1970) mark the early history of Nigeria's first republic. The hostilities observed during the period following the annulment of June 12 1993 elections and subsequent disruptions of the third republic appear to have further escalated characterising the current political dispensation. In deed Nigerians are no strangers to all forms of violence.

Benue and Delta States have had more than their fair share. So intense was the breakdown that an amnesty programme had to be introduced by the federal government in Delta State. Even with the late President Shehu Musa Y'adua led Amnesty programme, Delta State is not yet rid of violent incidents such as youth unrest and pipeline vandalism. The levels of violence in Benue and Delta States are high and had doubled since 2010 and 2012. Incidents in Benue state became even higher between January-May 2017 according to the World Bank sponsored project on conflict prone states in Nigeria reported by the National Bureau of Statistics, (2018). The report went on to say that even Although the activities of these militants have reduced, other sources of conflicts like inter- ethnic crisis resulting from who will control the oil wealth, cultism and the use of armed bandits in the kidnapping of oil workers, lecturers, lawyers, religious heads, journalists and any political rivalry and the huge ransom that goes with the person's release is still on.

In addition, Aniekwe and Kushie (2011), surmise that, peaceful coexistence in Africa's' most populous nation may not be due to deep roots of intolerance evident in the inter-religious and ethnic divisions. With the incessant volume of hate speech in (mass) media content on both old and newer media forms (Sam, 2009), it is reasonable to expected that over time, violence may occur in these two states if inciters are taken in and take advantage. More so as stated in the National Bureau of Statistics, 2018 report, both Benue and Delta states were exposed to such high levels of disputes and conflicts. These ranged from kidnappings, cult wars, herder/ farmer clash, militancy and pipeline vandalism and land disputes. In such conflict prone states, hate

speech may lead to occurrence of violence on a wider scale (ECRI, 2012).

Nelson (2013) reiterates that, all over the world and not just in Nigeria, violence is a result of inordinate desires for political and economic advantage, ego-related problems and plain mischief, injustice and inequitable distribution of resources. It is pertinent to note that, violence is not just about the breaking of limbs and bones, spilling of blood and destruction of properties, other types of violence as identified by Nelson (2013) are as follows:

Types of Violence

1. Physical Violence- This is the violations of the various constitutional and civil rights of individuals/ groups.
2. Social Violence- This involves social inequity for example denial to the right of education
3. Environmental Violence such as production of noise, degradation, pollution in the environment
4. Economic Violence revolves around state -induced poverty.
5. Sexual Violence incidents of forced or unapproved sexual encounters; includes rape, and occurrence of weird sexual practices
6. Verbal Violence results from use of foul and aggressive language, curses and such
7. Cultural Violence involves unfair and discriminatory cultural practices.
8. Intellectual Violence includes plagiarism unacknowledged use of another's intellectual property; it also involves the oppressive use of one's intellect to the end that violence may be glorified.
9. Domestic Violence includes instances of violation within the home (a space in which individuals should otherwise be protected) such as child abuse, spouse battering.

The types of violence outlined in www.Britannica.com/violence under four main categories: (a) Homicide - killing of one human by another, sometimes legally justified (b) Assault - physically attacking another person with the intent of causing harm (c) Robbery - forcefully taking something from another (d) Rape- forcible sexual intercourse with another Others include (e) Child sexual abuse - engaging in sexual abuse with a child (f) Domestic violence - violent behaviour between relatives, usually spouses. No matter the type of violence exhibited, there is always a root cause or causes. Contextually speaking, some of the causes of violence in Nigeria are as outlined on <http://naijaquest.com/violence-Nigeria> discussed below.

Causes of Violence in Nigeria

- a. Tribalism: When ethnic groups disagree over mutual equality, claiming that one is superior to others.
- b. Corruption: The embezzlement of public funds by public officers and others including politicians. This is made worse when this is without due consideration for those who should have benefited from the funds, worse still when it is without proper punishment.
- c. Unemployment: Idle youths are often used as tools by certain individuals to carry out violence.
- d. Ignorance: Many people live in ignorance and do not bother to get clarification and prefer to act out at any slightest provocation.
- e. Poverty: For even meagre remuneration, the poor are lured to engage in violent acts sponsored by the privileged elite.
- f. Political instability- The failure of governments to deliver on required services and electoral promises breeds distrust and also leads to violence.

- g. Poor economy: When the economy is poor, and the level of poverty and unemployment on the increase, the rise in violence may be unavoidable.
- h. Religious sentiments: Violence is imminent when there is intolerance of opposing one religion claims to be a better way of worship. Such is common between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria.
- i. Inequity and injustice: Unfair treatment from the rich upon the poor is enough to incite violence.

Regardless of the cause(s), violence generally has a negative impact on those who experience or witness it. It is therefore imperative on Nigerians to take a closer look at violence in light of the aforementioned. After all, violence is a phenomenon that ails Nigeria in its entirety though Benue and Delta States in particular have lived with it for too long for the reasons outlined above. With the spate of conflicts in these two states, it is not out of place to regard hate speech as a means by which an inciter instigates others violence (who are already exposed to conflicts) to further (Adibe, 2015 & National Bureau of Statistics report, 2018).

Freedom of Speech versus Hate Speech

Defending freedom of speech means defending all speech equally, even when unfortunately such a speech may be regarded as offensive like hate speech (a former US Supreme court judge, Justice Frank Murphy, 1942). Examples of hate speech includes name-calling, racial slurs, reproach to gender equality, symbols but some symbols like swastika, burning crosses etc are still debated upon whether they are hate speech or not, especially depending on the context it was used. In America and the United Kingdom, citizens believe that freedom of speech when used too freely without checking what people say, could lead to hate speech/ 'fighting words'. This is because, people will be too free when expressing themselves. In other not to let people abuse freedom of speech, John Stuart Mill, a great defender of free speech said that some rules of conduct must be imposed as freedom of speech has become a loophole exploited with impunity by trolls, racists and ethnic cleansing advocates (The Guardiannews.com, March 22, 2018- an opinion on, Hate speech leads to violence, why would liberals defend it?).

Freedom of speech is the right to express opinion without Government restraint ([https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/freedom of speech](https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/freedom-of-speech), September 21, 2018). It is a democratic ideal that dates back to ancient Greece. The First Amendment which was adopted on 15 December 1791 to the American constitution guarantees free speech, but there are limits placed on this freedom in the USA, Nigeria as in other modern democracies. These limits are to prevent people from making statements that can be detrimental to the peaceful coexistence of members of the said community. Freedom can be restricted, if its exercise will cause direct and imminent harm on people ([https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/freedom of speech](https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/freedom-of-speech), September 21, 2018). The forms of speech that are not protected under the First Amendment include those that violate the physical, emotional and mental well-being of others especially children. Similarly, Freedom of Speech does not apply when intellectual property is in jeopardy. So Obscene materials like child pornography; Plagiarism of copyrighted material; Defamation (slander and libel); True threats; and Speeches inciting illegal action or soliciting others to commit crimes are not covered.

Olorunyomi (2018) states that when talking of freedom of speech principle, it is good to draw a line between responsible criticism and hate speech. He went on to state that, 'That we are defending freedom of speech does not mean people will express themselves without them knowing their boundaries so also is hate speech, therefore, responsible criticism on those in

power should not be seen as a form of hate speech'. This is not the case with the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria that sees hate speech as any insult, legitimate protests against government policies or comedic jibes with little regard as to why it is so (Abimbola, August 31, 2017). In addition, Professor Schauer cited in Shiffrin (1994) is of the opinion that, ' the free speech principle tends to favour those in power and tilts against those out of power or the governed'. This scenario is not far from the truth as to what takes place in Nigeria.

On the part of the mass media in general with particular reference to any programme that is put on air, they should be guided by what the law and Human Right organizations say about hate speech. This is to help the radio station prevent a lawsuit and not to be regarded as a 'hatist' station. In that regard therefore, in a 2001 joint statement, the UN, OSCE and OAS, specially mandated points on the right of freedom of speech, set out a number of conclusion to which hate speech must respect. They include:

- a. No one should be penalised/ sanctioned for the statement which are true
- b. No one should be penalized/ sanctioned for the dissemination of hate speech unless it has been shown and proven that they did so with the intention of inciting discrimination, hostility or violence.

In 1992, National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) conducted a survey to examine the role of Telecommunication including broadcast on radio and Television in advocating violent acts and hate crimes in the US. In the end it was gathered that, 'individuals have used telecommunications to disseminate messages of hate and bigotry to a wide audience'. Radio stations in Nigeria should help act as a means of checking the spread of hate speech and not act as promoters of hate speech in the society.

Radio as a medium for counteracting Hate Speech

With the increase in hate speech in the country, the Nigerian Government have directed the National Broadcasting Commission, (NBC) which regulates the electronic media in the country, not to spare any radio and Television station found culpable (Nicholas, 2017). In the same vein, during the 3rd annual Lecture Series of the NBC in August, the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed said' the NBC must ensure that broadcast stations must adhere strictly to the Nigerian Broadcasting code and errant stations should be sanctioned accordingly to deter others from allowing propagators of hate speech using their stations to spread incendiary messages (Nicholas, 2017).

Hate speech is hardly anything new in this world, but what is new and should be properly monitored is the ability for it to spread like wildfire through the mass media and remain anonymous (www.radioz.co.nz/audio/hatespeech). When we say mass media, we are concerned with Newspaper, radio, Television, motion pictures, sound recording, Books, Magazines and the Internet (Vivian, 2009:). This study does not hope to study all but to be concerned with the radio, particularly the nature of programmes that will help educate and sensitize the people in these violence prone states. Sam; (2009: 2) states that, 'Radio can be a double- edge sword, which means that it can used for a negative purpose for example: radio was used to encourage violence by propagating messages of intolerance, misinformation and manipulation of the people in Kenya in 2008'. At the same time, the radio channel of communication can positively serve as a source of hope for national cohesion through dissemination of messages that will aid the people of Benue and Delta states to shun hate speech so that it does not motivate them to tilt towards violence on the long run.

Bittner, (1989: 92) said that, 'radio is unique in both its portability and its ability to reach us while we do different things or even while consuming other media'. Asemah, (2011: 343-346) agrees by adding that, radio is generally available to Africans; as it is the most widespread, accessible and even the cheapest medium. He also adds that, where Television stops, that is where radio continues as regards the use of alternate source of energy to power where electricity is unavailable and such is prevalent in Nigeria. Radio as Sam (2009) puts it, is capable of communicating messages useful for the growth and development of the state/ country, because its programming is tailored towards the interest of the society. Radio has enhanced political and economic liberalization of the people with the development of local, community and commercial radio (Ansah, 1998). Radio according to Ojebode (2003) cited in Asemah, (2011) functions best as information dispersing and enlightenment medium in communities still lacking in modern technology.

In states like Benue and Delta, where the poverty line still holds firm, with 79% of households in Benue state using firewood as cooking fuel while 64% of the members of households in Delta state skip meals due to lack of money (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018) how best can messages that aims to mitigate hate speech from developing in to violence reach the people under such circumstances? In addition, how will the people learn about sanctions meted out on an offender be disseminated if not through the radio? The radio seems to be an acceptable medium of communication as a result of its affordability and the poor terrain that pervades Nigeria. Asemah, (2011: 343-346) reiterates that, radio has responsibility to the people which includes the three primary roles of the mass media as well as making sure that certain negative trends be curtailed in the society through its well designed programmes. Radio can perform this role well because, it has a specialized way of reaching its audience; using niche- format to deliver news and commentary, giving the news stories in briefs unlike Television, call in formats and talk shows/ discussion programmes to enlighten and involve the audience on any issue (Vivian, 2009).

These two states which are already exposed to conflicts and violence, triggering the people towards aggression and exhibition of violent acts with influence from any form of hate speech may not prove difficult by an inciter whose motive is to do so. It therefore means that, the bulk of the 'rehabilitation exercise' is on radio stations as regards the creation and airing of programmes that will penetrate the hearts and minds of the people in these violence- prone states.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Social responsibility and Framing theories of the media.

Social Responsibility Theory

This theory came to be after some distinguished media experts met in the mid- 1940s to consider the role of the free press in American society as it was introduced in the Libertarian principle developed by John Milton (1644) whose central focus was to for seek for freedom of the press from Government control. This body of experts was known as the Hutchins commission named after its chairman- Robert Hutchins, a Professor in University of Chicago. They produced a book length of report that outlined the purposes of the media due to the criticisms of the Press over its freedom to report 'anything'. The Social responsibility theory came to be after another group of scholars- Fred Peterson, Theodore Siebert and Wilbur Schramm came together in 1956 to analyze the purposes of the media as proscribed by the Hutchins commission.

According to these scholars cited in Rosenberry & Vicker (2009 p. 117), one of the purposes of the media as itemised by Hutchins commission in the 40s is that, 'the media should be a channel of keeping every member of the society informed and a forum for the exchange of comments and constructive criticism'. The import of this viewpoint made by the commission contextually speaking is that, the media should in every way possible be a channel through which information that will improve the lives of the members of the society be disseminated by encouraging constructive criticism and not hate speech whether overtly or covertly. McQuail & Windhal (1993) adds that, the goal of the social responsibility theory should be to develop a media system that would serve public interest. But while serving the public, the press should have checks or carry out proper fact checking on any article, news or opinion that they report, in other to avoid been used as tool/ channel by hate mongers in these violence prone states.

Framing Theory

Framing refers to a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives on how individuals, groups and societies organize, perceive and communicate about reality. Framing theory explains the inevitable process of selective influence over the individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. Framing involves the organization of information or messages to give a predetermined focus, as frames gives thematic account of events and issues.

According to Gamson & Modigliani (1987, p. 143) argue that 'frames are the central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning. Frames are the central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue'. The general idea is that frames is an ever present discursive device that channels the audience as it constructs the meaning of particular communication acts (Dunu, Ukwueze & Ekwugha, 2015; pg. 195-196). Entman (1993, p.52) offered a more detailed explanation of how the mass media provide audience with schemas for interpreting events and issues. For him essential factors are selection and salience: 'To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/ treatment recommendation'

The framing and presentation of events, news and issues in the mass media can systematically affect how recipients of the news, trends and issues come to understand these events (Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1995, p. 4). The mass media's salience on hate speech could overtime lead to a major source of violence as inciters could it to motivate the people towards violent acts. This is more so as the mass media have the power to set an agenda that the people will follow (Elihu Katz; 1973 cited in Dunu, Ukwueze & Ekwugha, 2015; 196 & Entman (1993, p.52).

The concept of framing suggests how something that is presented (the frame) influences the choices people make. Thus, framing theory centres on how the media draws public attention to certain topics, as it decides what people think about by selecting topics and presenting them, using a particular language, tone and setting to convey a particular meaning. Framing has always been associated with news and political discourse- the way news reports are selected and presented is also determined by the media, thereby influencing the perception of the news reports/ issues presented to the audience. The media should therefore 'frame' news stories/ analysis and trendy issues that will suit their audience perception in a way as to 'teach' them to shun hate speech so that it does not eventually develop as purveyors of acts of violence.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used survey research design. The choice of this research design was informed by the fact that survey allow for the study of people's opinion on a given issue of public interest (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The purpose is usually to describe systematically the facts, qualities/ characteristics of a given population, events or areas of interest concerning the problem under investigation.

Population of Study

The Population of Study for this research was drawn from Benue and Delta states. These two states were selected from the states in North- Central and South- South zones due to reports that they are violence prone states (www.icirnigeria.org & National Bureau of Statistics reports). According to National Population Commission statistics, 2016, the population of Benue and Delta states stood at: 5,741,800 and 5,663,400 million respectively.

Sampling Technique

The sampling techniques used for this research were the purposive and stratified techniques. The purposive sampling technique was used so as to ensure that listeners of FM radio stations (with no particular preference of FM station(s) that any respondent listens to in these two states) who had informed views or opinions about hate speech in Benue and Delta states were selected and not those without such knowledge. The stratified sampling technique was also used in order to give room for equal representation of respondents in the two states. After the determination of the sample size totalling 800 through Taro Yamene formula, 400 respondents in each state were administered the questionnaire from 18 years and above.

Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection. The questionnaire comprised three socio-demographic and twelve psychographic questions- fifteen questions in all. The psychographic questions were made up of seven close ended and five open ended questions, constructed in simple and clear language to ease comprehension. Copies of these questionnaires were administered with the help of research assistants.

The data gathered from the returned copies of the questionnaire were presented using simple frequency and percentage tables while the analysis was done quantitatively and qualitatively for utmost interpretation and understanding.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Of the 800 persons administered questionnaires across Benue and Delta states for this research, 780 copies of questionnaires were returned indicating a return rate of ninety- eight percent (98%) as it is an area generating concern from the members of the public. It was on the basis of 780 copies of the questionnaire that the analysis was carried out for this study.

Research question 1: Will hate speech eventually provoke violence in Benue and Delta states?

The research question was designed to find out if hate speech can provoke violence in Benue and Delta states. To answer this research question, responses to questions 12 and 13 on the questionnaire were analysed and the result presented in the table below:

Table 1: Perception about whether hate speech can provoke violence in Benue and Delta states

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	780	100%
No	0	0
Total	780	100%

Source : field work, 2018

The table 2 above shows that all respondents believe that hate speech can provoke violence in Benue and Delta states.

Table 2: Perception about how hate speech can provoke violence in Benue and Delta states

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Inciting done through speech	497	63.7%
Through write- ups filled with hatred	110	14.1%
Discrimination/ insults	105	13.5%
Demeaning conducts	68	8.7%
Total	780	100%

Source: Field work, 2018

Table 2 indicates that out of the 780 respondents, four hundred and ninety- seven (497) representing (63.7%) respondents are of the opinion that hate speech can provoke violence through inciting persons through speech, one hundred and ten (110) representing (14.1%) respondents stated that hate speech can provoke violence in Benue and Delta states through write- ups that are filled with hatred. One hundred and five (105) representing (13.5%) respondents and sixty eight (68) representing (8.7%) respondents said that hate speech can provoke violence in the people through discrimination/ insults and through demeaning conducts respectively.

Research question 2: To what extent will hate speech influence get to before violent behaviours can develop in the people of Benue and Delta states?

To ascertain the extent hate speech can get to before it motivates violent behaviours in Benue and Delta states, question 14 on the questionnaire was analysed.

Table 3: Perception about the extent to which hate speech accumulate in an individual before violent behaviour is developed and exhibited

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Over a long period of time	401	51.4%
Within a short period of time	379	48.6%
Total	780	100%

Source: Field work, 2018

The above table 3 shows that four hundred and one (401) representing (51.4%) of the respondents stated that hate speech can motivate violent behaviour in an individual after a long period of time while three hundred and seventy- nine (379) representing (48.6%) of the respondents said that violent behaviour can develop in a short time. The reason for this may be due to the fact that human beings react differently.

Research question 3: What measures can be done through the radio in order to counteract hate speech from developing as a precursor for violent behaviours?

In order to identify the measures that can be done through the radio to counteract hate speech from developing as a precursor for violence in these two states, question 9 on the questionnaire was analysed.

Table 4: Suggestions on how radio can be used to counteract hate speech from developing as a gateway to violence

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Airing carefully selected programmes that will not incite hatred	205	26.3%
For informing the people about penalties and sanctions placed on offenders of hate speech	201	25.8%
For sensitization and mobilization of the people of Benue and Delta state towards creating and joining peace- based initiatives that will encourage unity	123	15.8%
For educating the people on the need to shun hate speech and violence	147	18.8%
Production and dissemination of some programmes on the radio through local dialects in order to involve all classes of people thereby promoting dialogue and peaceful coexistence.	104	13.3%
Total	780	100%

Source: Field work, 2018

Table 4 indicates that radio can be used to counteract hate speech from motivating violence through careful selection of radio programmes, to ensure that its channels will not incite hatred. This was mentioned by 205 respondents (26.3%). Another 201 respondents (25.8%) preferred that radio should be used to inform the people about the penalties and sanctions placed on offenders of hate speech, perhaps to serve as a deterrent. One hundred and forty seven (147) respondents (18.8%) said radio should be used for educating the people on the need to shun hate speech and violence. Another 123 (15.8%) were of the opinion that radio be used to sensitize and mobilize the people of Benue and Delta states towards creating and joining peace initiatives that will encourage unity.

As many as 104 respondents (13.3%) stated that the use of local dialects in radio programmes to foster inclusivity and dialogue amongst all strata of society is a measure that will help promote peaceful coexistence.

Discussion of Findings

This study was based on counteracting hate speech and violence in violence-prone states through the radio with particular emphasis on a futuristic perspective of Benue and Delta states as case study. The findings reveal that hate speech will eventually provoke violence in Benue and Delta states. The findings also indicate that, the extent to which hate speech can accumulate before violence is developed and exhibited depends on the individual's temperament. More of the respondents are of the view that, such can take a long time while the remaining number of respondents said violent behaviour is developed and exhibited within a short period of time.

That said one can infer from the responses in Table 4, that respondents are of the view that what people know is likely to determine their support for violence or not. Whether by persuasion through education (18.8), or by fostering dialogues that are inclusive (13.3), deliberate promotion of peace initiatives (15.8), or even caution in radio programming (26.3), there vast majority (74.2%) seemed to be concerned about developing an informed population as a means of pre-empting violence. These seek to promote positive behaviours. Yet as many as 1 in 4 (25.8) which supported awareness of punishments for hate speech. These seek to prevent the negative behaviour. In any case, they all sought to forestall violence through exchange of appropriate knowledge.

This study thus suggests that radio be used to counter hate speech by preventing its development or dissemination. The following are recommended measure to be taken:

1. Air carefully selected programmes that will not incite hatred.
2. Inform the people about penalties and sanctions for breaching guidelines regarding hate speech.
3. Sensitize and mobilize people in crisis prone areas (of Benue and Delta states) to create or join initiatives that foster peace and encourage unity.
4. Educate the people on the need to shun hate speech and violence.
5. Produce and disseminate programmes in the local dialects, especially those that foster access of people across social strata in order to promote inclusive dialogues and peaceful coexistence.

Conclusion

The Freedom of Speech principle works well in modern democratic political dispensations but if left unchecked, it can lead to abuse of this freedom. With such abuse, hate speech tends to get

rampant and restraint is lost. Hate speech is bad as it can provoke an otherwise peaceful people into engaging in acts of violence or other aggressive tendencies. It is worse if used deliberately to disrupt the peaceful state of a place.

As noted, hate speech is any speech, conduct, gesture, writing or display which could incite people to violence or execute a prejudicial action (Ezeibe, 2015). Such speeches rob others of their dignity and sense of order (Mrabure, 2015). It is a phenomenon which has attracted the concern of the international community, Federal Government of Nigeria, Professionals and experts in communication and political fields and the mass media.

There are things to be done to counter hate speech, even preventing it from becoming a gateway to violence. Radio can be used to sensitize and educate the people on the need to shun hate speech while mobilizing them towards embracing peaceful coexistence that will breed positive developments in areas which have experienced violence like Nigeria's Benue and Delta states.

This study recommends that airing carefully selected programmes on radio that will not incite hatred. This will help to counter hate speech especially when such programme(s) positioned with the right 'frame' and are aired regularly to inculcate positive cultures over time. When this is done, meaningful dialogues can that will promote mutual understanding and avert situations that warrant hate speech can be had.

People everywhere, especially those in violence prone areas should learn what constitutes hate speech. They should learn to exercise caution and where breaches occur, people must be held accountable for every speech made especially hate speech or 'fighting words' uttered.

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