

# PEACE JOURNALISM PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHEAST OF NIGERIA: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH SOME MEMBERS OF NTA<sup>1</sup> CORRESPONDENTS' DAMATURU, YOBE STATE

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## Introduction

In the present times, people have witnessed a lot of conflict and crises all over the world. These include the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, between Lebanon and Israel and Pakistan its neighbours. And here in Nigeria is the lingering Boko Haram insurgency and the Niger Delta Avengers. These wars and conflicts have left millions of people killed and many wounded, towns, settlements and infrastructures have been destroyed.

Conflict is said to be inevitable in every society (Adedogun 2006, 90) but all segments of society are expected to find ways of resolving them. The mass media are expected to contribute immensely to the resolution of conflicts in our society “because of the central place of media in disseminating information to the people ... they have power to aggravate and minimize issues depending on the way they report” (Sandra, 2008, 42). Mass media play a vital role in conflict prevention, resolution and transformation. They are thus essential not only for systems growth but also for peace building and stability.

Evidence suggests that media are not a mere conduit for information dissemination; they also frame and interpret events, which in turn shape

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individual and collective perceptions of conflict events. This presumption therefore confers on the media the ability to either escalate or deescalate conflict situations Umar (op cit Gani and Mu'azu 2009).

Thus, in order to achieve the objective of this study, the paper adopts Social Responsibility Theory as a theoretical discourse. Likewise, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is applied as a methodological approach in data gathering among some selected members of NTA correspondents' Damaturu, Yobe State.

## **Development News Reporting and Professionalism in the Media**

The mass media in Nigeria are filled with stories on development at various levels in the country-federal, state, and local government areas. Nwabueze (2009) states that development journalism was popularised as a result of the guest by developing nations of the world to change western media perception of news, especially about developing nations as the negative and odd-wars, famines, natural disaster, fraud etc. these nations chose to define and stress news from the perspective of the coverage of development issues in the society – road construction, building bridges, health development campaigns, provision of social amenities, and progress made in the various sectors of the society. Nigeria was among the nations that spearheaded this course in the 1960s and 1970s during the agitation for the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

Since that time, the Nigeria media have made palpable efforts to bring development news to the people. Nwabueze (2009) notes that the government owned media organizations seem to be at the forefront of development journalism in a bid to amplify the efforts of their employer (state or federal government) to the people. But the problem here is that the government owned media tend to concentrate on the commissioning of projects, flagging-off of development campaigns-immunization, family planning, agricultural programmes use of press releases on development policies and programmes. Most of these media hardly focus searchlight on stories about embezzlement of funds for development projects, supply of inferior materials for projects, substandard development projects done by contractors etc. This is more so if government officials are involved in the scam. This type of reporting apparently led critics of development reporting to describe this branch of journalism as “hand out” journalism which replicates “half-truths put out by official information agencies” and reports only “positive news, to the exclusion of the negative or unflattering news”

(Shrivastava 2003, 175).

However, the privately owned media houses in the country do a great job in amplifying the good and exposing the bad stories of development related issues in the societies. Both privately owned print and electronic media are involved in this objective reporting of development news in the country. However, the competition posed by the privately owned electronic media since their emergence in 1992, has made some government owned broadcast media especially some Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) stations to also wake up to the challenges of reporting the two side of the issue in development journalism. The numerous probe panels set up by the federal government to investigate allegations of frauds in certain sectors of the nation are products of development journalism-oriented investigative reports. For instance, the probe panel set up to look into allegations of fraud in the oil sector specifically the fuel subsidy scandal that involved some of the staff of Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and other officials, largely came about due to the development news reports which made the public aware of the measure put in place to ensure the judicious utilisation of the revenue that will accrue from fuel subsidy.

Development news reporting is thriving in Nigeria. Some newspapers, for instance have spaces where they publish rural development news stories tagged “news from the local government areas”. The media do not only give priority to development journalism but to development communication generally (Nwabueze 2005).

One of the core-value of reporting peace journalism is the ability for one to uphold to the profession. There is an on-going debate on the status of journalism as a profession. Scholars are variously divided on the issue. While some argue that like medicine, law and teaching, journalism can also be regarded as a profession; many others would prefer to classify it as a craft (McQuail 2000; Woo 2003).

Like most social science concepts, professionalism has been variously defined. One of the proponents of professionalism described a profession as full time occupation, which assumes a centrality in the life of the professional, often abolishing boundaries between work and leisure. He said that professionals come to derive satisfaction from the work itself, not simply from the conditions of work or the rewards it offers (Moore 1972). According to Nwosu (1987, 32), professionalism is “a set of principles, ideas, attitudes and activities that characterize and guide the behaviours of members of any occupational group anxious to gain and maintain both in-group and out-group acceptance of its professional standing”.

Explaining further, Nwosu argued that professionalism entails high education, specialized training, and self-organisation into an association of practitioners. Other elements include occupational commitment, professional ideology and code of conduct. A further excursion into the literature would reveal that certain criteria have been identified as necessary in a profession. These include the systematic acquisition of specialized skills based on theoretically grounded knowledge, exclusive right to exercise those skills, a public service (as opposed to commercial interest) orientation, a high level of related ethical standards, and autonomy in setting those standards and regulating practice (Ibelema 1993; McQuail 2000).

Looking at the above criteria, one wonders if journalism can rightly and automatically qualify as a profession. However, the study safely argues that journalism exhibits some of the attributes associated with professionalisation. For example, one could find in journalism the existence of a code of ethics, desire for autonomy, independence, high level of education among practitioners, and very importantly, public service. Though the aspect of public service is often disregarded, Journalists, however consider it important to the extent of regarding themselves as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, “independent of public or private power centres. Their mission was disclosure; their canon, objectivity; their discipline, reification; their credo, the people’s right to know” (Woo 2003).

The position of the study is that no matter what one feels about the professional status of journalism, let it be appreciated that “the purpose of journalism is more than reporting and writing of stories... skills and competence are essential. Its purpose has to do with something more fundamental...serving the public trust... providing the news and information that free people need to make political, economic, social, and personal decisions” (Woo 2003). The point, however, is that one should be able to understand the contextual or operational environment in which the journalist practices. For example, comparative studies have found out that news media in developing countries enjoy much less autonomy, suffer from shallow reporting, and are more likely to breach standards of neutrality and objectivity, accuracy and facticity, and ethics than in developed countries (Ekwele 1986; Rugh 1987; Boafu 1992). Thus, one cannot excel in this field of reporting without imbibing a professional skill.

## **Upholding Professionalism in the Reporting of Peace Journalism and Development**

For the media to be eminently respected and trusted, its personnel

must demonstrate professional competence in dealing with issues of peace journalism and development. Of course, the starting point is for the media environment to be diverse by reflecting in their structure and content the various social, economic and cultural realities of the society in which they operate, in a more or less proportional way. For instance, a diverse newsroom would be expected to reflect staff and content to reflect its area of coverage. (Pate 2002).

Secondly, it is important to note that there is a growing interest in what is referred to as “peace journalism”. Scholars like Galtung (1998), Albert (2000), and Akinfeleye (2003) advocate for peace journalism by insisting that peace and development issues should be professionally reported with peace building objectives being the guiding principle. Major requirement of peace journalism include “balance news coverage, positive education of people about what is going on in the society, controlling dangerous rumours and providing a trusted source of information for all parties in the society”. In the words of Albert (2000), peace journalism is:

...a “journalism of attachment” to all actual and potential victims. It stands for the truth as opposed to incitements, lies and propaganda that often dominate war journalism. The peace journalist thus has eyes for the essential; the devotion both to fact and hope... it takes right training, determination, environment and exposure... (Albert 2000, 32).

It is established in the literature that the reportage of peace journalism and development in Nigeria requires professionalism, there seems to be an interlock between journalists - who play a crucial role in shaping public understanding by providing information about conflict - bear a heavy responsibility for what they write and broadcast as well as emphasising a balanced reporting to increase awareness of the contending issues illuminates structural and cultural violence as it bears upon the lives of people (Pate 2002).

Therefore, this study goes further in ascertaining the extent to which peace journalism can pave way to development. Thus, paraphrasing the words of Pate, peace journalism connotes peace initiatives and potential solutions more visible equips people to distinguish between stated positions, and real goals, when judging whether particular forms of intervention are necessary or desirable, multiplies and divides the parties, creating space for initiatives to be taken, and progress measured, as a positive gain all round. Peace journalism is a kind of journalism and media ethics that attempt... to transform conflicts from their violent channels into constructive forms by conceptualizing news, empowering the voiceless, and seeking common grounds that unify rather than divide human societies. Therefore, going by the above arguments, it is clear that development can only be factored in a

country where peace journalism has taken the lead.

Therefore, in a democratic society, the mass media convey information and opinion that must be free from government control in order to present all significant ideas and opinions. On the other hand, they also have a responsibility to present minority as well as majority of views (Orhewere 2012). Thus, the utilization of the mass media specifically, the broadcast media become a channel not only for cultural transmission but also for developmental change. With each new medium has come a new opportunity for social learning, a new way to achieve common understanding is usually designed to reach a large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed people.

The basic functions of mass media are not to inform, educate, and entertain only but they are also veritable channel for wide range of development campaign. To Okunna (1999), the mass media, specifically the broadcast media encourage and ginger people to achieve developmental goals of the society by promoting peace and demonstrating professionalism in their reportage in the media and stimulating the aspirations and activities of people towards achieving development goals. The broadcast media NTA Damaturu for example, which has the power to reach a vast number of people almost at the same time can help tremendously in promoting development plans of the government which seems to be the focal point of this study in reporting peace journalism and development in the Northeast of Nigeria.

Development is a change process that seeks to improve the life and environment of man largely through his own effort and at his own pace. Sears op cit Nwabueze (2005, 2) sees development as “the creation of opportunities for realisation of human potentials” Beltran op cit Nwabueze (2007) summarised what development connotes in the following words:

Development is a directed and widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change geared towards producing substantial changes in the economy, the technology, the ecology and the overall culture of the country so that the moral and material advancement of majority of its population can be obtained within conditions of generalised equity, dignity, justice and liberty (Beltran op cit Nwabueze 2007, 191).

## Ten Commandments for Peace Journalism

According to Majid (n.d, 46) established a list of Ten Commandments for peace journalism as follows:

1. Never reduce the parties in human conflicts to two. Remember that when two elephants fight, the grass gets hurt. Pay attention to the poor grass.
2. Identify the views and interests of all parties to human conflicts. There is no single Truth; there are many truths.
3. Do not be hostage to one source, particularly those of governments that control sources of information.
4. Develop a good sense of scepticism. Remember that reporting is representation. Bias is endemic to human conditions. You, your media organization, and your sources are not exceptions.
5. Give voice to the oppressed and peacemakers to represent and empower them.
6. Seek peaceful solutions to conflict problems, but never fall prey to panaceas.
7. Your representation of conflict problems can become part of the problem if it exacerbates dualisms and hatreds.
8. Your representation of conflict problems can become part of the solution if it employs the creative tensions in any human conflict to seek common ground and nonviolent solutions.
9. Always exercise the professional media ethics of accuracy, veracity, fairness, and respect for human rights and dignity.
10. Transcend your own ethnic, national, or ideological biases to see and represent the parties to human conflicts fairly and accurately.

In Nigeria, since 1980s, conflicts have become the order of the day, more frequent, more widespread, more violent destructive of life and property has really taken the lead. Between 1980 and 2016 alone, some many conflicts have occurred. Eliagwu op cit Gofwen (2004) established them as follows:

**Table 1: Conflict Cases in Northeast of Nigeria (May 1980 – October, 2016)**

Date	Location	Principal Actors
October 29-30, 1982	Bullumkutu, Maiduguri (Borno State)	Kala-Kala and Maitatsine sect... 118 people died, extensive damage to property.

April 26-28, 1985	Pantami Ward, Gombe. (Bauchi State)	Maitatsine sect, 105 died, extensive destruction of property.
April 1991	Tafawa Balewa (Bauchi State)	Started as a quarrel between a Fulani man and a Sayawa meat seller in Tafawa Balewa. Escalated into a full blown violence and later took the colouring of a religious war in Bauchi Several lives were lost and property valued over hundreds of millions of Naira was destroyed.
September 8 2000	Gombe	The Kaltungo religious crisis. The crisis erupted over the implementation of Sharia in the State.
June 8 2008	Adamawa	Conflict between Christians and Muslims in Numan town. Caused by the location of the town's Central Mosque close to Bachama paramount ruler's palace; over 17 persons killed.
February 18 2006	Borno	Conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri. The riot was caused by the Danish cartoon on prophet Mohammed, in Jyllands-Posten newsstudy; over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed; over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized.
March 22 2007	Gombe	Muslim pupils killed their Christian teacher, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Olusesan. The pupils claimed that their teacher had "desecrated" the Quran in the process of stopping a student from cheating in an examination hall.
February 21 2009	Bauchi	Ethno-religious conflict at the Makama New Extension. Over 11 people were killed, more than 400 houses burnt, and over 1,600 families displaced
June 11 2009	Bauchi	Clash between members of the Boko Haram and the police. 17 members of the sect were killed.

July 26-30 2009	Bauchi and Borno	Religious violence unleashed by the radical Boko Haram sect. Over 700 persons killed; 3,500 persons internally displaced; 1,264 children orphaned; over 392 women widowed; and several properties destroyed.
December 29 2009	Bauchi	Religious violence unleashed by the Kala-kato sect. Over 38 persons killed; about 20 suspected members of the sect arrested; and over 1000 people internally displaced.
December 12 2013	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Taraba.	Boko Haram killed over 202 persons.
March 31 2014	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Gombe	More than 1,500 killed in armed conflict across the four states
July 31, 2015	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Taraba.	Violence in the northeast destroyed lives and communities and displaced 1.4 million people.
July, 2016	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Taraba.	Over 14 million people are affected by conflict in northeast Nigeria and more than 10 million people are in need.

Source: J.I. Eliagwu, op cit Gofwen 2004, 65-67

## Theoretical framework

This chapter uses cultural theory of conflict and diversity as its theoretical justification with a view to explain vividly the supposed role of journalists in an ideal situation. This theory identifies social difference, particularly cultural, as the main factor that creates a social identity and social exclusion thereby creating “we” against “them” feeling which nurtures animosity, hatred and contemptuous relationship among people of divergent cultures leading to conflict, how the competing interest of groups tie conflict directly into the social, economic and political organizations of society as well as the nature and strength of social networks within and between community groups (Ademola 2005).

The culturally induced conflict that this relationship cultivates is as a result of creation of the enemy image which is learned from early stage of growth to adulthood and is passed on from generation to generation. An example is seen in the case of Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. The theory

believes that different forms of identities in various societies exist; however, the one that has ethnic origin is the most dangerous identity and the one that most explains violent conflicts. Psycho-cultural theory of conflict argues that conflict is avoidable when tolerance and understanding among people of different races, culture, languages and historic are established. The theory however becomes relevant as it address the feeling which nurtures animosity, hatred and contemptuous relationship among people of divergent cultures leading to conflict.

Pate (2009), opines that “diversity is a fact of life. Without it life would be boring, flat and hardly interesting. By simple understanding, diversity is heterogeneity, differences or dissimilarity in several respects”. In the words of Albert in Pate (2009), diversity “connotes heterogeneity or dissimilarity on the grounds of sex, cultural practice, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, ideological stance, political leaning, level of social development, place of habitation and so on.” In a relative term, Diversity connotes multiculturalism, pluralism and variety. For example, Nigeria is appropriately described as a diverse country comprising of over four hundred ethnic groups, more than 140 million people, pursuing different engagements, speaking different languages, adhering to different religious leanings and different political orientations, and so on. Of course, it would be unrealistic for anyone to expect that all of us would think and behave in the same manner. Or, to assume that because we are all Nigerians, the various cultural groups and religions can fuse into one group for all our problems to “die away”. No wonder, therefore that the issue of diversity has remained very important in several countries like the United States and Nigeria (Duncan in Pate 2009).

Furnham and Bochner cit Pate (2009), this importance possibly is borne out of the realization that in a mix where “diverse people” meet, most especially as a result of social and geographical contacts, a culture shock is produced. Thus, the politicization or poor mediation of diversity could produce shocks that can explode into social conflict with devastating consequences.

## Research Procedure

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was used as a method of data collection. The method was interested in understanding the perception, experiences, attitudes and behaviour of the discussants under the study. A sample of 10 discussants was drawn from the identified population. Nine questions were asked with a moderator who led the discussions. Tape recorder and writing materials were used as instruments of data collection

for recording the responses of the respondents.

The choice of focus group discussions as a method of gathering and analysing data for this study is justifiable because of the usefulness of FGD in investigating issues in an appropriate way so as to discover how the individuals (who are the stakeholders of the issue) think and feel about reporting peace journalism and development within Nigerian Television Authority, Damaturu.

The general conclusion that was drawn from the work of Boodhoo and Purmessur (2009) is that a qualitative study is very important to organisations with relatively small or manageable population. These scholars quoted Dr. Prudence L. Carter as saying "The beauty of qualitative study is unpacking the black box and getting at the Why?"

The limitation of this methodology came from the instruments of gathering data for the study. As noted above, some of the respondents declined the request to audio-record the discussion; thus, leaving the researcher with the herculean task of trying to cover the key information given through note-taking while also saddled with the responsibility of observing and listening to the respondents.

## Findings and Discussions

As it is noted in the methodology, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) method was used in data collection, nine questions were asked among the ten randomly selected members of correspondences in NTA, Damaturu, Yobe State. The following are the findings and discussions from the members of the panel.

Question one address the general introduction of all the members. While question two asked: *As practicing journalists, are you aware of peace journalism and development? If yes, what is your understanding about the concepts?* In answering this question, members of the panel collectively admitted that they are aware of peace journalism and development. For instance, Yunusa Suleiman says:

We are actually aware of peace journalism and development. Peace journalism is the practice of using peace mechanisms for the promotion of peaceful co-existence in heterogeneous or homogeneous societies in media reportage. The adoption of peace building mechanisms in reportage becomes imperative considering the growing humanitarian crises plaguing many parts of the world particularly in the developing countries where insurgency, political instability, ethnic/religious conflicts among others have become the order of the day. On the other hand, development reporting is an aspect of reporting that is meant to draw the

attention of the government and other citizenry to development needs of the society; and it also aim at mobilizing the citizenry to support or participate in development process.

Based on the discussion, it can be deduced that journalists are much aware and familiar with the existence of peace journalism and development in the Northeast of Nigeria. However, they admitted that it is an aspect of reporting that demands high level of professionalism and skills.

Question three asked: *Is peace journalism relevant to you as a journalist? If yes how?* They succinctly admitted that peace journalism is very relevant in journalism practice base on the fact that it acquaints the reporter with the professional skills. Contributing to the question, Mustapha Yusuf Musa says:

Peace journalism gives better sense of editorial judgment during crisis. It is also relevant to journalists in the sense that NTA Damaturu, Yobe State is built on promoting peaceful coexistence and unity among the various divides in the country. Peace journalism also facilitates and encourages media to report positive things happening in the society which have been the core value of NTA Damaturu. Yobe is one of the States in the Northeast affected by the insurgency; thus, the need to concentrate on peaceful reportage has become a priority in our daily bulletin.

According to the discussants, peace journalism is very relevant and significant in the journalism profession. The reason is simple: it serves as a means of unionism and thus, cements the society together.

Question four asked: *Do you consider peace journalism and development reporting very important in your daily routine? If yes, how?* All the discussants agreed that peace journalism and development reporting offer them with the platform of bringing out the plights of people and present them to the public domain for possible interventions for NGOs, government and other critical stakeholders. In the words of Husaini Mohammed:

Peace journalism is just gaining ground as years of Boko Haram insurgency which has given a bad publicity to the region. Despite that, we can say that peace journalism is very important to us as journalist because it encourage reporting things that have direct bearing on the society and thus, encourage them to see the need to embrace development initiatives.

The above discussion shows that peace journalism practice is just gaining due cognizance as compared to what was obtained in the past. This is because with the emergence of Boko Haram in the Northeast of Nigeria, it has become something journalists cannot do without in their daily routine.

Question five asked: *To what extent can you say peace journalism has contributed to the development of Northeast of Nigeria?* This particular

question tried to ascertain the extent to which peace journalism has contributed to the development of Northeast of Nigeria. The respondents agreed that the contributions of peace journalism to the development of the Northeast are numerous: (a). It has succeeded in presenting to the people of the area the ideals of peace making processes, peace building as well as reconciliation. (b). It has successfully enlightened the people on how to be security conscious by reporting suspicious persons or objects to the security agencies, hence boosting community security awareness. (c). Peace journalism has contributed to the resent peace being enjoyed in the geopolitical zone through objective fairness, balanced and impartial reporting of happenings etc.

Question six raised the issues of: *In what way do you think peace journalism enhances effective development in Nigerian media organization like NTA Damaturu for example?* In an attempt to answer this question, Mustapha Yusuf Musa says:

Nigerian media landscape is dotted with reportage of violence and for the last seven years due to Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast however, peace journalism has helped in promoting the course of peace across the board through effective news coverage that conforms to journalism code of ethics. We at NTA Damaturu, just like any other serious media organisations are out there to promote things that help in societal development.

From the above discussion, it can be said that NTA Damaturu is charge with the responsibility of projecting peace journalism at the forefront in order to ensure meaningful societal development. As the discussants contended that peace journalism has helped in promoting tranquility across the region.

Question seven asked: *There is this belief that journalism is not a profession as compared to other discipline? How true is this?* While contributing in this regard, Abubakar Hashim is of the view that it depend on how one look at it; to him, it is not a profession as anybody can decide to be a journalist overnight with or without the requisite qualifications. However, Yunusa Suleima argued that journalism is indeed a profession like Medicine, Law, Engineering, etc. journalism like any other profession has a union for its members (NUJ). It has also clearly defined code of ethics regulating the activities of members. Journalism as a profession has a specialized training for members just like in any other profession. This coincided with what Aisha Mohammed said that “journalism is a profession hence it has been the watch dog of the society holding government accountable and Fourth Estate of the Realm.”

Question eight asked: *What are the challenges you are facing as*

*journalists working in NTA Damaturu?* The discussants mentioned that the challenges are many, but few among them are: poor state of equipment, lack of adequate funding for the running of the station, lack of commitment on the part of some subordinate staff, poor remuneration and motivation, harassments while on the field and security threats which all constitute the major challenges confronting journalists working in NTA Damaturu.

Question nine asked: *What solutions can you suggest to address some of the challenges you have mentioned?* Members of the panel established some of the possible ways that can be used in addressing the problems which includes adequate funding for operation, provision of state of the art facilities to meet contemporary challenges, good take home package for staff in forms of salaries and allowances, regular training and re-training of personnel, commitment and dedication to work by all media workers and adequate security. The discussants concluded that, we have been complaining to our superiors and extension national headquarters but nothing was done about it.

## Conclusion

This study discussed the practice of peace journalism and development in the Northeast of Nigeria. Some members of NTA Correspondents' Damaturu, Yobe State were selected for Focus Group Discussions who responded to some questions raised. Arising from the discussions, the study concludes that all media organisation should imbibe the appropriate way of reporting peace journalism and development in the country, especially in the Northeast of Nigeria where cases of ethnic, religious, political and other types of conflicts have taken the lead. As observed elsewhere, "while the news media need close examination and warrant the same type of scrutiny and analysis they impose on other institutions, there is no strong tradition of media criticism in this country, nor are the news media themselves properly self critical" (Kerr 1992). Therefore, it is a challenge for all the stakeholders, to insist on the observance of professionalism, in the conduct and performance of our journalism and media organizations. It is imperative for the media to be responsible in discharging their social responsibility in reporting conflicts in the Northeast region of Nigeria in other to restore peace and tranquility in the area.

This call has become more compelling given the wave of ethno religious conflicts that have engulfed the region recently, and indeed, the entire federation, most of which are threatening the corporate existence of the country. Against this backdrop, there is a serious need for peace journalism in the embattled region, and the country generally to pave the

way for more responsible, and perhaps, progressive reportage of the conflicts towards attaining amicable resolutions in the interest of development.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Peace journalism is fundamental like in any type of reporting. Thus, it facilitates reporters to disseminate information that would help attune to the development of a nation. Base on the available literature, the study discovered that the media have been variously blamed for their role in the exacerbation of different conflicts in complex and heterogeneous countries like Nigeria. The study uses social responsibility theory as a guiding principle. Likewise, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is applied as a methodological approach in data gathering among some selected members of NTA correspondents' Damaturu, Yobe State. A total number of 10 practicing journalists were randomly selected in NTA, Damaturu. They discussed peace journalism practice and development in the Northeast of Nigeria. Arising from the discussions, the study concludes that all media organisations should imbibe the appropriate way of reporting peace journalism and development in the country, especially in the Northeast of Nigeria where cases of ethnic, religious, political and other types of conflicts have taken the lead.

## **KEYWORDS**

Reporting; Peace Journalism; Development; Conflict; Professionalism.

*Received on November 23, 2017.*

*Approved on January 31, 2018.*