

## **Managing or Encouraging Discrimination in the Media: Examining Newspapers Reports on Fulani Herdsmen Activities in Select Newspapers**

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**Abstract:** Over the years, Nigeria had witnessed relentless and remorseless crisis impelling the much felt hatred, discrimination and indiscriminate attacks which had culminated in hostile relationship between Fulani herders and their host communities. Civil society organizations and several government officials' efforts to contain this menace seem to aggravate the hostility the more. As a veritable instrument for peace building, the newspapers' place in this menace in the country is yet to be ascertained. Are they encouraging or managing the observed discrimination which had resulted in waste of lives and resources in the country? Against this backdrop, this paper examined the manifest contents of select newspapers- *Daily-Trust*, *Vanguard* and *This-day* on the activities of Fulani herdsmen in relation to the host communities. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative content analysis research method to ascertain the place of select newspapers in the issue under study. Based on social responsibility and cultivation theories of communication, the study found that newspapers have created lasting negative impressions of herders in the minds of many Nigerians while reporting issues concerning them. The researchers among others recommended that newspaper reports on the activities of herders should be guided by responsible journalism to avoid inciting host communities into war.

**Key words:** Discrimination, managing, encouraging, cultivation, hostility

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Around the world, peace had been the most wanted commodity but the road to secure and maintain it has been one of the most expensive ventures in human societies. This accounts for why different societies are at war with each other. In the words of Barde (2016), peace is a veritable factor that helps in the developments of every nation. It exists only when there is mutual understanding between people of diverse cultural and ethno-religious background. Ethnic group identity, according to Pearson (1996, p. 248) as cited in David, (2008) is not, on the other hand, a universal condition, but rather, "a possibly ephemeral, political instrument used to shape relations of 'them' and 'us'. In this regard, Pearson helpfully distinguishes between ethnic categories, ethnic groups, and ethnic communities.

Drawing from the view point above, it can be seen that the ethnic relationship between people of different cultures and religion is a matter of the level of mutual understanding between them. That is why different people understand themselves differently. Like various other nomadic nations, Nigeria is facing some hard times especially in the relationship between the Fulani herders and the farmers comprising other ethno-religious backgrounds in the country. One major problem confronting national peace in Nigeria today is the manifestation of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflicts in different regions across the country. This Fulani herders and farmers' clash remains uncontrollable because it is resource-based. This was captured more succinctly in the views of Adisa (2012) where the author noted that the farmers-herdsmen conflict has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria. The reason is that both parties are different resource users groups (Bello2013).

It is not news anymore in the country that the Fulanis usually had clashes with their host communities. At this point in time, one may begin to ponder on what could be done to avert these menacing situations in the country. Could it be possible to stop the Fulanis from migrating towards the Western and Eastern part of the country for these clashes to stop? This is one of the worrisome questions that can hardly be answered in the affirmative. In the words of Olayoku (2014) climate changes, necessitate the migration of the Fulanis further south leading to invasion of farmlands by cattle, assault on non-Fulani women by herders, cattle theft, defecation on streams and roads by cattle, ethnic stereotyping, and the breakdown of conflict intervention

mechanisms which culminates in the observed clashes between the two different resource-users groups. From the view above, it could be observed that the major source of tensions between pastoralists and farmers is basically economic (Abbass, 2012; Blench, 2010).

Unfortunately, these factors cannot be easily controlled among the two groups because there is more of lack of mutual understanding occasioned by ethnic stereotype cultivated among the people by different institutions in the state, sometimes including the media. As part of its responsibility, the media are expected to report events whether good or bad. In doing so, media practitioners have their ethics, which guides the conduct of their members. Reporting ethno-religious conflict is one of the delicate and sensitive areas in journalism which requires professionalism, objectivity and patriotism. When properly and professionally reported, ethno religious conflict can be quickly controlled while on the other hand, if reported unprofessionally with sentiment, such conflict escalates.

Apart from this highly pronounced Benue Fulani herders' crisis in recent time, Nigeria has witnessed other series of crises related to the herders and the farmers. The crises are as well reported in the media as they took place and the people read those contents as reported. The nature of the media reports on issues has been widely adjudged to encourage hatred or acceptance of one another over an issue of national concern globally. Classic examples are the 1992 Zangon Kataf conflict, the This Day Miss World Conflict and the Dennis Cartoon conflicts which were all believed to have either been initiated by the media or forced to have escalated through media contents as a result of unprofessional media reportage of the issues.

Media reports, especially the newspapers, serve as the major source of information to many people across the world including Nigerians. The nature of mass media operation makes conflict especially ethno-religious ones have major stake in the affairs of journalism profession (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, 2017). The scholarly stand above was captured more clearly in (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, 2017) who listed twelve things the media should do in conflict, management which include: channeling communication between parties, educating, confidence building, countering misperceptions, analyzing conflict, de-objectifying the protagonists for each other, identifying the interest underlying the issues, providing emotional outlet, encouraging the balance of power, framing and defining the conflict, face saving and consensus and solution building. Unfortunately, most of the contents of the media in conflict especially the Fulani herders' attack, hardly meet the above prescribed things.

Management of conflict by the media is important for societal development. In this sense, Puddephatt, cited in Howard, (2010) argued that policy makers need to focus on the media's role in establishing public sphere of society in such a way that can foster, encourage and nurture peace so as to allow non-violent resolution of crisis in fragile communities.

News framing has been praised and blamed in peace-oriented journalism, especially in developing countries (Adisa, 2012). In this perspective, it becomes pertinent to first identify, second rank news frames and also examine the differences in news frames on herdsmen-farmers' conflicts across selected newspapers in Nigeria. The conflicts between herdsmen and farmers have been on for decades in Nigeria (Olayoku, 2014). But what is pathetic is the recent upsurge and protracted nature of the conflict across the country (John, 2014). The media have become pervasive in influencing attitude, culture and behavior through framing, presentation and representation of common experiences among the people. This is to say that how the relationship between the farmers and the herdsmen are managed in the media will go a long way in healing the wounds and assuaging the losses that have been incurred by both parties in the crisis. It is very clear that some media messages are both offensive and in bad taste and therefore can instill the desire to engage in violence in the readers or listeners as a means of retaliating the harm done by others. It was against this background that this paper examined the contents of select newspapers with a view to examine whether the contents are encouraging or helping in managing the crisis in the affected region.

### **Statement of Problem**

One man killed his friend back then in 1993. Why? After they had a fight, the man went home and got provoked by the mother who said "*so you had a fight with that guy and you did not do him any meaningful harm. You are here to consume my food because you said I am your mother*". These words provoked this young man in his early 30s and he sneaked out of the house, took his cutlass and moves to the friend's house and killed him.

These kinds of communication sometimes flood the media and make some people to reason from behind. The alarmism caused by the use of catastrophic headlines and words on major means of communication as soon as the arrival of Fulanis in various communities in Nigeria intensifies a need for reorientation especially these recent times. Media immediately start talking about an '*invasion*', an '*emergency*', even about '*Islamization* conquest of Nigeria. Is this news well founded? And whether it contains some truth or not, what are the consequences of its '*entrance*' into the ears of other tribes in Nigeria? There are some communication contents in the media that are very discriminating and painting a particular tribe or group too bad and too

domineering making others to avoid them like plague. As a country in need of development, there is the need for an informed and dedicated press which will help in encouraging good and acceptable behaviors and attitudes among the citizens of the country. Given the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria, the kind of communication on certain issues is expected to be mild and well presented in order not to set the stage for more crises.

Communicating in a language that discourages unity is far from responsible journalism and therefore should be discouraged. Majority of the times, publications on the incidences of the herders and the farmers does not capture the true situation on ground. The publications end up showing what the herders have done and how destructive they could be on arrival in any region with little or nothing covered on the harms that they sustain from the farmers or organized crime groups in the farm. Since the inception of the herders farmers crisis in Nigeria research have explored virtually every aspect of the crisis but little attention have been paid to the other side of the matter which will take us to the cause of the killings by the Fulanis. From among scholars, the persistence of the crisis between herders and farmers had not been examined from the text in which it was reported in the media. It is the belief of the researchers in this study that communication contents can provoke some reactions from the people.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study was based on the following research objectives

1. To consider whether the publications are designed in good text that can encourage settlement of the crisis in the region under attack
2. To find out if the newspapers maintain balanced reporting on the issues of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis through exposing the people to the cause of the killings.
3. To evaluate the number of stories that reports the actions of the farmers or organized crime group that degenerates into the Fulanis attack on them.

### **Scope and Limitation of the study**

This study covers the contents of *Daily-Trust*, *Vanguard* and *This-day* newspapers published within the months of January through to March 2018. The stories examined are only the ones that reports the Benue attack by the herders. Any other newspaper publications other these three select newspapers were not covered by the study neither were there any contents that were not related to the Benue attack published in the newspapers were examined for the study. The library situation marred by poor record keeping around the country subjected the researchers to vigorous task and stress in order to ensure that all missing editions and pages were found and examined.

### **Significance of the study**

Generally this study is importance in nation building and sustenance of the needed peace and development in the country. To media scholars, the study will call attention to the texture of the media reports aired in the media when national issues of group identities are being reported in the media. It will also draw the attention of the media practitioners to the need for examining and in the same vain reporting the acts committed against the herders by the farmers and or organized crime groups who sometimes kill or steal the herders' cattle in the farm. The study will equally provide another view of the herders in the country bearing in mind that for every counter action, there was a promoting action which caused the reprisal attacks. The solution provided in the study will add to the previous ones done by other researchers in the area of the Fulani herdsmen crisis in the country.

### **Theoretical framework**

On the previous scholarly views which have stressed the importance and indispensability of theories in social science research, this study was anchored on two theoretical frameworks namely- the social responsibility and the cultivation theories of mass communication. The social responsibility theory places the media on the verge of doing the needful in passing information to the people concerning their daily lives and activities. By the provision of social responsibility theory, the press is expected to engage in peaceful communications that will not cause breach of peace of the people. It makes the media responsible for whichever bad textured content that may lead to provocations and violence in a state. The proponents of the theory present the media as responsible for the contents they dish out to the people.

Engaging in balanced reports on issues that concerns the persistence crisis of the Fulanis and the farmers in the country is considered very importance for nation building and sustenance of required unity in the country. Relating these theories to the current study, maintenance of peace during crisis is a responsibility to the media globally. Issuing messages that can assuage the pains of the people on the loss incurred may pay more positively to a nation in need of development than presenting it from a particular angle that will demonize some but makes others seem too innocent in a conflict

On the other hand, the cultivation theory was considered appropriate in the study based on its ability to provide the framework for the understanding of how media contents help the people cultivate particular behavior over a particular thing based on the communicated messages. That is to state that once a matter or set of people is presented in negative light, it will direct the readers of the news to begin to cultivate the ideas and behaviors that those people are not good. It is the believe of the proponents of cultivation theory that the mass media cultivate realities to people who use the media messages that they dish out on daily bases. Frequent presenting of the Fulani herders' crisis from the angle that they are evil will for every reason and time instill the fear among the people that they needed to be avoided at all costs. Media according to La Rocca, (2017) are able to produce a change of the cognitive structures, and, therefore, of the perception individuals have about what is happening around them because they do not only bring closer to the people and to the attention of their users some events which otherwise would have been far away from them, but also provide a frame of interpretation, to which the users can read and understand what is happening. Thus, information is not an amorphous object of communication; it is already interpreted by the media and its interpretation orients the users' reading what are exposed to them.

In relating this theory to the study, it is given that the media create lasting impressions about situations which the people assimilate as their trust in the media lasts. These impressions get registered in their minds and form their cultivated behavior which in turn control what they believe and see others to be. Experience has revealed that the destructive action of the Fulani herdsmen are more pronounced in the media rather than the offending actions unleashed against them in the society. Reporting same in the media will help in creating another image for the Fulanis and reduce the rate at which the host communities see and react about them once they hear about them. The negative impression that the people have today about the herders are mostly expressed in the media.

## **II. THE REVIEW**

### **The Newspapers and Conflict Reporting in Nigeria: A Sharp Review of Fulani Herdsmen**

It is the views of proponents of development communication that effective information and communication processes are prerequisites for successful development of any nation (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, 2017). They argue that communication and information flows are the lifeblood of development projects; an integral part of empowering and enabling a healthy and vibrant civil society; essential for the creation of efficient and effective economies; and a critical component of social security. Thus, the role of media in conflict ravaged community is to provide a platform for peace and conflict management, except which development becomes a mirage to such community (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, 2017).

In the defense of peace and unity of any nation in the hands of the media, Bamidele (2012) affirmed that duty of media during conflict situation is to provide independent and truth worthy information which can contribute to the process of reconstruction and encourage reconciliation among parties in the conflict. The above view is related to Nwankpa & Onyekosor (2015) who stated that the role of the media during conflict is to embrace objectivity and ethical reporting. In the alter of objectivity, lies the need for balanced reporting of events on issue of national concern like the Fulanis.

Objectivity exposes the people to every side of the story. This is mostly lacking in reports about the Fulanis. In another study, Adebayo and Olaniyi, (2008) outlined five ethical positions that are expected to guide the media in conflict reporting in order not to aggravate the crisis. One among the ethical guidelines that catch the mainstay of this study is that the media should make it a point of duty to encourage conflict sensitive reporting and always pre-consider the possible effect of their reports of certain conflict stories to discourage escalation but reflect on what other objective is expected to be achieved in the reporting. At a time like this, one may pause to ask, what is the objective of the report issued on the Fulani herders crisis- is it to demonize the herders or to promote a peaceful society?

It is expected that in conflict reporting, the media should encourage respect for all parties concerned a clash (Abubakar, 2012). In his study, Abubakar, (2012) argued that fairness without taking position or side in any conflict while reporting it will go a long way in controlling the crisis. While considering the importance of media in conflict management, Abiodun, (2016) maintained that conflict management through the media is very importance for the development of the society and advised that the media at all time should always seek to report issues of conflict in a way that can reduce the horrors that violence can provide. It is not in the interest of peace and unity of the country to cast headlines that are discriminating in the media while reporting conflicting issues.

### **Empirical Literature**

Studies on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on farmers abound in Nigeria following the fact that it has been one of the major security and peace threatening issues in the country. Many scholars in this regards have

attempted in different ways to come up with a lasting solution to the crisis and that makes literature rampant in the area.

Fajonyomi, Fatile, Bello, Opusunju, and Adejuwon, (2018) examined the patterns and impact of Conflicts between Farmers and Herders in Riyom Local Government area of plateau state using the survey research method which sampled 400 respondents in the area. The study which spanned between 2011 till 2016 employed a cross sectional survey method and a multi-stage purposive sampling in investigating measures applied in managing the conflicts while assessing the effectiveness of the measures. Finding revealed that herders/farmers crisis is rampant among the area and it was caused by factors including rustling and killing of stray cattle by farmers. It was recommended that open grazing should be banned while strong disciplinary measure will be put in place to fish out the offenders of the laws and deal with them appropriately. Meanwhile, the authors further recommended that security agencies will be equipped with a more effective training to be able to execute the rigorous investigations required in fishing out the offenders in order to ensure that the wrong persons do not suffer for an action they knew nothing about. This study looked at the impact of the crisis and found that it has impacted negatively to the economic development of the area. It is different from this current study in the sense that as the previous study is concerned with the people and the farmers, this very study is looking at how the communicated contents control or escalate the crises that had ensured. At this time, it is clear that this study is concerned with what the media have done in their quest to dish out the information that will suit and catch the readers with or without pre-consideration of the implication after its publications.

In another study, Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, (2017) examined newspaper framing of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria paying attention to the implications of the framing to peace oriented journalism. The study which was based on four national dailies the *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* sampled 100 edition of the select newspapers and found that the language used in the media are rough and violence oriented with solution frame dominant in most feature articles. This study is more closely related to the current one given that they both are concerned with the media and how they say what they say concerning the Fulanis and the farmers. According to Epkayimi(2016), some scholars argue that the media usually resort to allocate blame and once a perpetrator is identified the process of building an enemy image begins (Howard, 2003; Ozuhu-Sulaiman, 2013; Popoola, 2015) through the use of some words that can encourage rather than decreasing the tempo of violence and the desire to retaliate among the people.

Similarly, La Rocca (2017) had argued that the way the media publish issues concerning the Fulani herders in the country drops the feeling of awe among the host communities hence making them to have bad minds about the Fulanis even before they cause any problem in their communities. In Nigeria today, communities usually frown at the entrance of the herders in their areas and move quickly to meet their President-generals or the traditional rulers in their area to beg him to chase back the herders. This is a sign of rejection which creates the impression of war in the minds of the Fulanis herders who is ever ready for the war irrespective of the place they found themselves.

In another study, Arisi and Ukadike, (2013) blamed the instability and constant crises between the farmers and the herdsmen on lack of good governance in the country. According to the authors, the basic cause of the crisis between farmers and herders in Nigeria is because of the carefree attitude of the government of the federation to the crisis. In their views, the crisis will yield to settlement the moment the government of the federation should consider the needs of the people and the herders in the country and place appropriate settlement measures that will appeal to both parties.

Similarly, Otoghile, Igbafe and Agbontaen, (2014) share the same idea and views where they confirmed that the basic factor that can encourage peace and unity is a determined government that places the rights and lives of the citizens as the priorities with equity for all and sundry irrespective of tribe, colour or religion. In their view, such kind of government seems to remain in short supply in Nigeria, hence the crisis every here and there.

The above view is not different from the views of Adegbami and Adepoju, (2017) who categorically stated that the basic problem posing the greatest challenge to the unity of the country is '*poverty of leadership*'. The scholars however, dismiss the allegation that the herders are riotous and roving terrorists which is rampant among the lips of Nigerian but challenged the leadership of the country to provide enabling law that will accommodate interests of the different categories of farmers and spare the lives of the people in the country.

### **Summary of literature**

This review has explored the available literature in the relationship between herders and farmers with special attention to the media roles in managing of the crises in the country. The mainstay of this study which is to examine the position of the media to ascertain whether they are encouraging or managing discrimination between the farmers and the herders through the use of different offensive languages and violence instigating words have examined a good number of previous studies in the area. The study which was anchored on the cultivation and social responsibility theories of mass communication had considered the relationships of the

theories to the study while paying attention to the peace building in the media and cultivation of the right attitude through media messages. The review also looked at the direction of media coverage of the herdsmen issues and the implications of such direction of coverage before examination of other previously conducted studies in the area by other scholars. The researchers examination of empirical literature revealed a gap in the area of the side of the coverage usually found in the Nigeria newspapers which usually considers the Fulanis as deadly and destructive set of people that should be avoided without due consideration of actions of the people that instigate the Fulanis reaction against them. This is what this study set to explore.

### III. METHOD OF STUDY

This study is based on qualitative and quantitative content analysis research method. At the qualitative level, the study examined the contents of the select newspapers and considered the texture of the languages and headlines casting. The purpose of this is to ascertain if they are designed in such a way that it can help control the crises or instigate them.

At the quantitative level, the study looked at the number of publications that exposes the people to the provoking action of the farmers or organized crime group against the Fulanis that made them to retaliate. This study covers select newspapers editions published within the months of January to March 2018. This is a total of 63 editions each of the select newspapers. This left the researchers with a total of 189 edition of *Daily-Trust*, *Vanguard* and *This-day*. The researchers used the purposive sampling technique in selecting only the editions of select newspapers that has information on the issue under study. The researchers developed the units of analysis for the study as well as the contents categories.

Contents that use the words such as ‘killer herdsmen’, ‘herdsmen raid’, ‘roving terrorists’ say no grazing bill, etc are classified as provoking and discriminatory rather than providing solution to the crises. Any contents of the newspaper that covers the story only from what the herdsmen have done wrong without providing a clue to the provoking action of the farmers or organized crime groups are classified as an imbalance contents that can instigate the matter more than it will resolve it.

Data presentation and analysis

**Table 1 Texture and slant of news contents in the newspapers**

Variable	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>This day</i>	Freq.	%
Contents blaming the herders for killings	10	17	18	45	36.8
Contents blaming farmers/organized groups	4	0	0	4	3.2
Contents blaming the security for killings	9	13	12	34	27.8
Contents blaming FG for killings	13	15	11	39	31.9
Total	36	45	41	122	100

**Source:** Researchers’ Content Analysis, 2020

From the above table, which shows the texture and slant of the news contents of the select newspapers, it could be found that majority of the contents are designed in a way that they are pointing at the Fulani herdsmen as lovers of violence. It also revealed that very little attention is paid to the actions of the farmers and or organized crime groups who sometimes take advantage of the Fulanis to steal their cattle.

Another revealing information from this table is that it shows the level of imbalance in the news. As many stories considers the action of the herdsmen as inimical and destructive, only 4 stories from *Daily Trust* newspaper looked at the farmers actions on the whole issues. It shows the newspapers attempt to defend its ethnic origin in the saga, coming from the North. The number of contents blaming the federal government for the crises reveals the newspapers believe that there is poverty of leadership in Nigeria. The newspapers are not interested in the cause of the crisis but are more concerned with the outcome of the crisis and how many casualties are recorded.

**Table 2 Investigating if the contents are balanced**

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>This day</i>	Freq	%
Balanced	12	9	6	27	22.1
Not balanced	24	36	35	95	77.9
Total	36	45	41	122	100

**Source:** Researchers’ Content Analysis, 2020

This table revealed that there are more of imbalance in the contents of the media on the herdsmen and the farmers. The table also revealed the level of attention given to the issue among different newspapers in the country. Again, *Daily Trust* newspaper took the lead in publishing contents that are balanced among the three select newspapers.

### **The qualitative Research data**

Among the stories observed and studied in this newspaper, reports on the actions of the host communities are generally in short supply in the select newspapers under study. Qualitatively, the languages used among the newspapers are more of discriminatory and condemnation of the destructive tendencies of the Fulani herders in the country. This highlights imbalance in their effort to ensure that the crises are settled and so that more of it will not ensure in subsequent times. Some of the contents are inciting and pain-retaliation inciting. In a bid to get the number of stories that looked at the farmers action of rustling and stealing stray cattle in the farm, it was revealed that of the 122 stories published by the three newspapers under study, 4 stories which were all from *Daily Trust* were targeted at the actions of the farmers as the remote cause of the Fulani herdsmen attack while all others targeted the Fulanis and the federal government(see table one for more).

## **IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Our first research question in this study examined the whether the publications are designed in good text that can encourage settlement of the crises in the region under attack. This question was addressed through qualitative research method where the researchers examined the contents of the newspapers on the Fulani herdsmen attack from the months under study.

The findings revealed that the newspapers fail short of the social responsibility expectation on providing the people with information on the crises with a less discriminatory and derogatory words that can instigate rather than assuage the crises and ethnic sentiments. The media were found to be more sensational and profit oriented rather saving the public from the dangers of rough word use. The researchers found that because of the nature of the media headlines and the use of words, prominent men of voice in the country join the argument in the media and make some statement to save their tribe and religious groups from being demonized in the media.

This kinds of reactions attract counter reactions from the people of other tribes who reply to publications and change the issue of herders and farmers crisis to ethno-religious ones. This finding fall in line with the views held in Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) where they argued that conflict and crises are the bread and butter for journalism. Being a means of reaching out to the people and making their money, the media in Nigeria tilt towards ethnic, political and religious crises in a matter that should best be discussed as agricultural and economic. This negates the provision of the social responsibility theory of the press which maintains that the media should consider public interest in reporting national issue in order not to escalate an existing conflict. This finding therefore, confirm that the media are not presenting the Fulanis in good light and that effect their relationship with the host communities.

On the second research question which set to examine if the newspapers maintain balanced reporting on the issues of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis through exposing the people to the cause of the killings, the qualitative investigation revealed that the newspapers under study were more of reporting the Fulanis from the destructive lifestyle. Little is known about the offending actions of the farmers which may have triggered the killings of the people. Most of the reports call the herders militants thereby creating a room for sentimental reactions from the northern elites who may wish to reclaim the image of their people. Around the country today, the Fulanis are hardly accepted by any community partly as a result of their actions and most possibly the manners in which they are being reported in the media.

This finding draws the attention of the readers to the position of the cultivation theory of mass communication which presupposes that the media through repeated communication of a particular incidence instill in the minds of the people a communicated behavior and way of life over an event or issue.

This finding agrees with Azlan, (2012) who argues that the media means of reporting about a particular action may make the people to perceive the action as reported in the media. constant casting of such headlines like “*Say no cattle grazing policy, Killer herdsmen invade Benue community, Herdsmen: 100 men fared death in Benue, Suspected militant herdsmen kill 10 in Benue, Fulani roving terrorists kill 100; rape 15 in Benue*” and many other kinds of headlines instill fear and the desire to reject the herders coming into a community. These headlines are not in any way helping in managing the herders crisis, rather it is giving the people the mind to discriminate against them and at the same time give the Fulanis the information that they were not accepted and therefore, should prepare themselves for the battle that they may face from the enemies.

On the numbers of the observed stories that reports the actions of the farmers or organized crime group that degenerates into the Fulanis attack on them, the study revealed that the actions of the farmers were relegated to the background. This finding is against the provision of the social responsibility theory of the press. Objectivity andresponsibilityare the most observed values which the media hold sacred and at the same time, regulate media publications (Hassan, (2010, p. 572). The question that struck the minds of the people here, is do the Fulanis see people and began to attack them without any reason? This and more are what the media should establish through objective and responsible guided investigation in order to ensure that every angle of the issues are covered. Then if the Fulanis don't attack residents without any cause, what are the farmers doing that made

them to be attacked by the herders? This should reflect in the coverage of this issue if the problem will be addressed.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Based on the field examination and the literature, it is the view of this study to conclude here that publishing the action of the herders without the instigating actions of the farmers is not enough to come from the media. The summary of the above findings is that the media have not been fair to the herders in their reports on the incidences in the Benue crises of this year under study. The researchers therefore, conclude that media reports of the Benue herders attack on residents lacks balance reporting and fall short of the expectation of the social responsibility theory.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the study hereby recommended that:

1. The media should wake up to their duty and do reporting with less offensive and sensational language to avoid trivializing and twisting the main issue from what it is to what it ought to be.
2. That since the literature and the research findings have proved that the media give a chunk of blame to the government, the government should as a matter of unity of this country, ensure the provision of good governance to the citizens without favour of any kind.
3. Having seen that there is more to what is communicated than what happens, it is the believe of this study that the farmers should stop engaging in those actions that they knew may trigger herders attack on them.
4. That more effort should be put in place by media practitioners in engaging in balanced reports to save situations in a national issue of this nature.

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