Abstract

Fulani herdsmen /farmers crisis is an ongoing conflict situation in Nigeria. This crisis has claimed lots of life and property and can be referred to as one of the major conflicting situations that have ever been raised in Nigeria. The herder/farmers crisis has shaken various regions in the country and the media is said to have been a major contributor to the escalating situation. The media is considered a powerful sector in a country especially in Nigeria where the media sets the agenda for the masses not outrightly stating what is to be done but stating what should be thought of. The media is considered wanting in their social responsibility to the public by not being objective in their reportage as someone sets the agenda for them while they set the agenda for the society. Conflict reportage in Nigeria is seen to be problematic and factors influencing it need to be researched. While previous studies in this line have sought to know the nature of conflict reportage of Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes by the Nigerian media, this study, media ownership influence on reportage of Fulani herdsmen-farmers clashes is concerned with finding out, the influence, if any, of media ownership based on geographical location on reportage of the conflict. The theories which guided the study are the Agenda-Setting theory and the Social Responsibility theory while content analysis is the research method adopted, with purposive sampling used in selecting the sample size of two daily newspapers- The Nation (the South) and Daily Trust (the North). Findings show that basically, the two newspapers leaned in favour of their geographical axis hereby inferring that ownership does set the agenda for media organizations, hence, the objectivity of the media in its reportage is held at controversial level. The researcher thus recommends that the media owners or investors should endeavor not to use the media as a channel for enhancing their political, religious or ethnic goals as this will only make the media lose its credibility. Further studies are recommended in this area, especially in the broadcast media, to give a wider range of information on this topical issue.