



Newspaper Coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv Conflict and Its Implications for Peace-building in Nigeria

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Abstract

Media coverage of ethno-communal conflicts in Nigeria is often criticised for escalating tensions rather than supporting peace-building, yet systematic evidence from the Tiv–Jukun conflict remains limited despite its recurrence. This study addresses this gap by analysing newspaper coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict in Taraba State. Guided by Framing Theory, the study examined how selected Nigerian newspapers reported the 2019 Tiv–Jukun communal conflict. A quantitative content analysis was conducted on 1,305 weekday editions of *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact* published between September 2019 and April 2020. A structured coding scheme was used to analyse frames, tone and language, and patterns of bias, with inter-coder reliability established through percentage agreement. The findings reveal a dominance of conflict-centred frames emphasising violence, casualties, and ethnic confrontation, accompanied by emotive and sensational language. Limited instances of balanced and peace-oriented reporting were identified, mainly in the local newspaper. The findings suggest that prevailing reporting practices constrain the media's peace-building role by reinforcing polarised narratives. The study recommends greater use of peace-oriented frames, neutral and context-rich language, and stricter editorial guidelines to promote conflict-sensitive journalism in divided societies.

Keywords: Tiv-Jukun conflict; conflict reporting; framing; newspaper coverage; peace-building

Introduction

Ethno-communal conflicts remain a pervasive feature of socio-political life across Africa, with far-reaching implications for peace, security, and development. Between 1989 and 2014, the continent recorded 386 communal conflicts, resulting in approximately 131,563 fatalities (Torbjornsson, 2016; Elfversson, 2013; Chikaire, et al 2006). According to Chikaire, et al the conflicts in African, accounted for 131 563 deaths in Nigeria, Somalia, Uganda and DR Congo. These conflicts, though varying in scale and intensity, have consistently produced devastating outcomes, aside loss of lives, it contributed to displacement, destruction of property, and long-term disruptions to social and economic systems. In multi-ethnic societies, such conflicts are often deeply rooted in historical grievances, identity politics, and competition over political power and natural resources.

Nigeria reflects many of these broader continental challenges. Since independence, the country has experienced recurrent episodes of violent conflict linked to political rivalry, ethnic contestation, and governance failures. Historical events such as the 1979 Western political crisis, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, and the 2011 post-election violence in northern Nigeria underscore the severity of political and communal unrest in the country (Alemika, 2011). Although the frequency of conflict varies across regions, its consequences have been uniformly severe. Factors such as corruption, leadership ineptitude, executive lawlessness, globalisation,

weapon proliferation, and weak institutions have further exacerbated Nigeria's conflict landscape (Chinwoku, 2012).

Communal and ethnic conflicts have been particularly prevalent in northern Nigeria since the 1980s, posing significant challenges to national integration, peace-building, and security (Gambo & Ominin, 2012). The transition from military dictatorship to democratic governance in 1999, rather than resolving these tensions, coincided with the proliferation of violent societal conflicts across the country. Thousands of lives have been lost, with many more injured or displaced, as conflicts rooted in historical grievances and elite manipulation continue to undermine Nigeria's democratic and developmental aspirations.

Within this broader national context, the Tiv–Jukun conflict in Taraba State represents one of Nigeria's most enduring ethno-communal crises. The conflict, which dates back to the late 1950s, has been characterised by recurring violent outbreaks that have destabilised the political economy of the region (Egbefo & Salihu, 2014; Alimba, 2014). Scholars (Yange, 2025; Amakoromo et al, 2024; Osegbue, 2017) identify several interrelated drivers of the conflict, including historical disputes, citizenship and identity contestations, perceived marginalisation, and competition over land and natural resources. While the Jukun assert indigene status and view the Tiv as settlers, the Tiv argue for equal citizenship rights based on decades of residence in the area. These competing claims, alongside electoral rivalries and the involvement of various political actors, have sustained a cycle of mistrust and violence (Ciboh, 2014).

Despite repeated interventions by government and other stakeholders, efforts to resolve the Tiv–Jukun conflict have yielded limited success (Onugu & Ige, 2023). Violent clashes have continued to threaten peace, social cohesion, and food security across several local government areas in Taraba State, including Wukari, Ibi, Donga, Takum, Kurmi, Bali, and Gassol. In such volatile contexts, peace-building is essential not only for social stability but also for economic development and national cohesion.

The mass media constitutes a critical stakeholder in conflict and peace-building processes. Media coverage of violent conflict shapes public understanding, influences government responses, and can either facilitate reconciliation or exacerbate tensions (Reuben, 2009; Khalif, 2023). However, conflict reporting in Nigeria has been criticised for its dominant reliance on war-oriented journalism, which prioritises violence, elite perspectives, and militaristic narratives over dialogue and peace-building (Ugondo et al., 2022). Such reporting practices risk reinforcing hostility and complicating conflict resolution efforts.

Newspapers, in particular, play a central agenda-setting role in Nigeria's media environment. National dailies such as *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* command wide readerships and possess significant capacity to shape national discourse, while local newspapers such as *Taraba Truth and Fact* offer perspectives grounded in the lived experiences of affected communities. Objective and balanced reporting has been identified as vital to promoting economic development, nation-building, and public acceptance of political solutions in conflict situations (Jev, et al, 2020). Contrarily, biased or inflammatory coverage can deepen divisions and prolong violence.

The 2019 escalation of the Tiv–Jukun conflict, marked by widespread violence, displacement, and loss of life, received substantial coverage in both national and local newspapers. Analysing how this conflict was reported is therefore essential to understanding the media's role in shaping public perception and influencing the trajectory of ethno-communal violence. Studies indicate that media framing can function either as a tool for peace-building or as a catalyst for further conflict (Kaur & Arora, 2025). Against this backdrop, this study examines newspaper coverage of the 2019 Tiv–Jukun conflict in Taraba State, focusing on *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and

Taraba Truth and Fact. Specifically, it assesses the framing, tone, and consistency of reporting across these newspapers, with a view to understanding their implications for conflict escalation, management, and peace-building in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Although newspapers remain primary sources of information during crises in Nigeria, several existing studies suggest that media coverage of conflicts often oscillates between fostering public understanding and reinforcing social divisions (Manuwa, 2024; Schoemaker & Stremlau, 2014). Prior research has demonstrated that biased, sensationalised, or ethnically skewed reporting can intensify conflicts by legitimising stereotypes, amplifying grievances, and deepening intergroup mistrust (Apuke & Omar, 2022). In the case of the Tiv–Jukun conflict, concerns persist that newspaper reporting may adopt partial frames, emotive language, or conflict-oriented narratives that undermine peace-building efforts and complicate conflict resolution.

Despite the intensity of the 2019 Tiv–Jukun violence and the scale of its media coverage, empirical investigations into how newspapers framed this particular outbreak remain limited. While earlier studies, such as Igbashangev, and Ogunyemi (2022) analysis the role of communication in managing the crisis, underscoring the importance of media influence on conflict dynamics, there is a notable lack of systematic analysis of contemporary newspaper framing, tone, and language surrounding the 2019 conflict. Moreover, potential variations in how national and local newspapers construct and prioritise narratives of the conflict have not been sufficiently examined, raising concerns about inconsistent interpretations and public understanding across different audiences (Obi, 2022; Usman, 2021). This study addresses this gap by examining newspaper coverage of the 2019 Tiv–Jukun conflict in *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact*.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study specifically, it seeks to

1. Examine the framing techniques used by *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact* newspapers in their coverage of the 2019 Jukun-Tiv conflict in Taraba State.
2. Assess the tone and language employed by selected newspapers in reporting the 2019 Jukun-Tiv conflict.
3. Establish the potential biases in the newspaper coverage of the 2019 Jukun-Tiv conflict.

Literature Review

Jukun–Tiv Conflict in Taraba State

Scholarly literature consistently identifies the Jukun–Tiv conflict in Taraba State as a protracted ethno-communal struggle rooted in historical claims to land, identity, and political authority. Central to the conflict is the contestation over autochthony, with the Jukun asserting indigene status in areas such as Wukari and viewing the Tiv as migrants, while the Tiv maintain that long-term residence confers legitimate rights to land and political participation (Jev, et al, 2022; Joshua, 2017). These competing narratives have been reinforced by colonial and post-colonial administrative arrangements that institutionalised ethnic boundaries and exacerbated intergroup competition. As a result, historical grievances have persisted and periodically erupted into violent confrontations, undermining social cohesion and governance in the region.

Beyond historical narratives, scholars emphasise the role of horizontal inequalities in sustaining the conflict. Unequal access to land, economic opportunities, employment, and political representation has generated deep-seated grievances, particularly among the Tiv, who perceive systematic marginalisation within Taraba State’s political and administrative structures (Maigida et al., 2023). These inequalities are further amplified by ethnically skewed political processes and

elite manipulation, whereby local actors exploit identity-based grievances to mobilise support and consolidate power. Such dynamics align with insights from Conflict Theory, which underscores competition over scarce resources as a key driver of violence, and Social Identity Theory, which explains the salience of ethnic solidarity and the persistence of in-group versus out-group distinctions in the Jukun–Tiv relationship (Maigida et al., 2023).

The socio-economic consequences of the conflict have also attracted scholarly attention, particularly its impact on livelihoods and regional stability. Recurrent violence disrupts agricultural activities, destroys infrastructure, and triggers displacement, thereby deepening poverty and food insecurity in a region heavily dependent on farming (Oruonye & Abbas, 2020). Although various peace-building initiatives ranging from land reform proposals to inter-ethnic dialogue and educational interventions have been advocated, the literature suggests that their effectiveness has been limited by weak implementation, elite interference, and the failure to address underlying structural inequalities (Maigida et al., 2023).

Media Coverage of Conflict

Scholars widely acknowledge the mass media as a central actor in the construction and interpretation of violent conflicts. Beyond transmitting information, the media shapes public understanding by selecting, framing, and emphasising particular aspects of conflict events, actors, and causes. In ethnically plural societies, conflict reporting carries heightened responsibility, as media narratives can influence public attitudes, policy responses, and peace-building processes (Apuke & Omar, 2022). The manner in which conflicts are represented in the media therefore has implications not only for audience perception but also for the trajectory and intensity of the conflict itself. A dominant concern in the literature is the prevalence of war-oriented journalism in conflict reporting. Studies observe that media coverage often prioritises violence, confrontation, and elite perspectives, while marginalising voices that advocate dialogue and reconciliation (Abubakar et al, 2025; Ajilore & Alade, 2018). This approach, characterised by militaristic language and episodic reporting, tends to simplify complex conflicts into binary oppositions of victims and perpetrators. Such framing can normalise violence as a legitimate means of conflict resolution and obscure the structural and historical factors underpinning disputes, thereby complicating peace-building efforts.

Framing theory provides a useful lens for understanding how media narratives influence conflict dynamics. By highlighting certain frames such as ethnic blame, political rivalry, or territorial contestation media outlets shape how audiences interpret the causes and consequences of conflict (Aondove et al, 2023). Empirical studies indicate that biased or sensationalised frames can reinforce ethnic stereotypes, deepen intergroup mistrust, and intensify grievances, particularly in contexts of protracted ethno-communal violence (Adisa et al., 2016; Adisa 2012; Adisa & Kunle, 2010). Conversely, balanced and contextualised reporting has the potential to foster understanding and support non-violent responses to conflict.

In the Nigerian context, the media's role in conflict reporting has been both influential and contested. Newspapers remain primary sources of information during crises and play a significant agenda-setting role at national and local levels. However, a number of scholars suggests that Nigerian media coverage of ethnic and communal conflicts often oscillates between neutrality and partisanship, with concerns over sensational headlines, ethnically skewed sourcing, and emotive language (Ayara et al, 2023). Such reporting practices risk inflaming tensions and undermining national integration, particularly when conflicts are framed through narrow ethnic or political lenses. Differences between national and local media coverage further complicate the conflict communication landscape. National newspapers, with wider readerships, tend to frame conflicts

in ways that resonate with broader political narratives, while local newspapers may reflect community-level perspectives and grievances more directly (Jev et al., 2020). These variations can result in inconsistent or competing interpretations of the same conflict, shaping divergent public understandings across audiences.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies on media coverage of conflict in Nigeria consistently reveal a dominance of episodic and event-driven reporting that prioritises immediacy over contextual depth. Research on herdsmen–farmer clashes, insurgency, and ethnic conflicts shows that newspapers rely heavily on straight news formats, with limited analytical or investigative engagement. Gever and Essien (2018) demonstrate that coverage of the herdsmen–farmers conflict in Benue State was largely confined to straight news and accorded low prominence, reflecting a tendency to normalise conflict as routine rather than as a complex social problem requiring sustained scrutiny. Similar patterns are evident in studies of the Boko Haram insurgency, where media attention centres on violent incidents and military responses, with minimal emphasis on humanitarian consequences or structural drivers (Okoro & Odoemelum, 2013).

A significant body of empirical work highlights framing bias and sensationalism as recurring features of Nigerian conflict reportage. Studies indicate that newspapers frequently adopt narrow frames such as ethnic, political, security, and response frames that simplify conflict narratives and reinforce dominant interpretations (Okoro & Odoemelum, 2013). Research on herdsmen-related violence similarly identifies sensational headlines and ethnic stereotyping as factors that intensify tensions and undermine peace-building efforts (Adams-Osigbemhe, 2025)). Audience-focused studies underscore the implications of perceived bias for media credibility during conflicts. Odionye, et al (2018) show that audiences who perceive conflict reporting as biased exhibit low trust in media institutions, regardless of journalists' claims to objectivity. This challenge is compounded in the case of state-owned media, which are often viewed as extensions of government interests, even when reporting conflicts from a peace and national unity perspective. Such perceptions limit the capacity of the media to function as a credible platform for dialogue and reconciliation in divided societies. Structural factors, particularly media ownership, also shape conflict coverage in Nigeria.

Studies on the Niger Delta crisis reveal that privately owned newspapers provide more frequent and prominent coverage than government-owned outlets, though both categories exhibit limited analytical depth (Okafor, 2014). While some studies report relatively neutral or conciliatory tones in coverage, negative portrayals and episodic reporting remain dominant, suggesting weak engagement with long-term solutions and peace-building strategies (Nwankpa & Onyekosor, 2015).

It can be deduce from above that empirical evidence points to persistent weaknesses in Nigerian media coverage of conflict, including shallow analysis, selective framing, sensationalism, and limited attention to peace-building initiatives. Despite extensive scholarship on insurgency, militancy, and herder–farmer conflicts, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on newspaper framing, tone, and bias in the coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict, particularly through a comparative analysis of national and local newspapers. This study addresses this gap by examining how selected newspapers reported the conflict and the implications of such coverage for peace-building in Taraba State.

Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by Framing Theory to analyse media coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict. Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) asserts that the media shape audience perceptions

by selecting and emphasising particular aspects of an issue while omitting or downplaying others, thereby influencing interpretation, evaluation, and subsequent responses. In the context of conflict reporting, media frames such as conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, and solution-oriented frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Iyengar, 1991; Gitlin, 1980) can either escalate tensions or support peace-building. Conflict frames, which focus on divisions and violent incidents, may amplify audience polarisation, whereas human interest and solution-oriented frames can foster empathy and encourage engagement with reconciliation initiatives (Neuman et al., 1992). Utilising this theoretical lens, the study critically examines how *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact* framed the Jukun–Tiv conflict, considering choices of sources, language, and thematic emphasis, and how these choices shaped public understanding and perceptions of the conflict.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative content analysis approach to examine newspaper coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict in Taraba State. Content analysis is a systematic and objective technique for studying communication messages, allowing researchers to quantify patterns, frames, tone, language, and other variables within media texts (Kerlinger, 2000; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The method is particularly suitable for assessing how media narratives may influence public perception and peace-building processes. The study focused on three newspapers: two national dailies (*Daily Trust* and *Vanguard*) and one local newspaper (*Taraba Truth and Fact*), selected purposively based on their wide readership, regional relevance, and documented coverage of the conflict.

A total of 1,305 weekday editions published between September 2019 and April 2020 were examined using a census approach, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the period when the conflict escalated significantly. A structured coding schedule guided the analysis, with categories including frames (conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, peace-building, economic), framing devices (headlines, images, quotations), tone (positive, negative, neutral), language use (descriptive adjectives, labeling, loaded terms), source attribution, biases, and calls for action. Each edition containing reports on the conflict was coded manually, and inter-coder reliability was established through training and independent coding of sample editions, achieving percentage agreement as recommended by Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2002) and Neuendorf (2002). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages.

Data Presentation

Table 1. Framing Techniques Used in Newspaper Coverage of the Jukun-Tiv Conflict

Frame Type	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Taraba Truth and Fact</i>	Total	% of Total
Conflict Frame	120 (37.5%)	110 (33.3%)	80 (29.2%)	310	32.8%
Peace-building Frame	60 (30.0%)	50 (25.0%)	90 (45.0%)	200	21.2%
Human Interest Frame	70 (33.3%)	80 (38.1%)	60 (28.6%)	210	22.2%
Responsibility Frame	40 (25.0%)	70 (43.8%)	50 (31.3%)	160	16.9%
Economic Frame	30 (46.2%)	20 (30.8%)	15 (23.1%)	65	6.9%
Total	320	330	295	945	100%

Table 1 presents the framing techniques employed by *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact* in their coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict, based on 945 analyzed articles. Five key frames Conflict, Human Interest, Peace-building, Responsibility, and Economic were examined to reveal patterns in narrative emphasis. The Conflict Frame dominated across all newspapers, highlighting violence and blame, while Human Interest and Peace-building frames

were less prominent, and Responsibility and Economic frames were minimally represented. These disparities illustrate how newspapers prioritize sensational aspects of the conflict over constructive, solution-oriented reporting, shaping public perception and potentially influencing peace-building efforts in Taraba State.

Table 2. Tone of Newspaper Coverage in the Jukun-Tiv Conflict

Tone	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Taraba Truth and Fact</i>	Total	% of Total
Positive Tone	50 (41.7%)	40 (33.3%)	30 (25.0%)	120	12.7%
Negative Tone	180 (30.0%)	200 (33.3%)	220 (36.7%)	600	63.5%
Neutral Tone	90 (40.0%)	90 (40.0%)	45 (20.0%)	225	23.8%
Total	320	330	295	945	100%

Table 2 presents data regarding the tonal orientation of newspaper coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict across *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact*, revealing a pronounced emphasis on Negative Tone, which constituted 63.5% of the coverage. This dominance of hostile and conflict-driven language suggests that the media may have reinforced perceptions of division and intensified societal tensions. In contrast, Positive Tone and Neutral Tone were significantly underrepresented at 12.7% and 23.8%, respectively, indicating a limited deployment of constructive or impartial reporting that could foster reconciliation. The findings imply that while newspapers play a pivotal role in shaping public perception, their selective tonal framing may undermine peace-building efforts, highlighting the critical need for balanced and solution-oriented reporting in ethnically sensitive contexts.

Table 3. Bias in Newspaper Coverage of the Jukun-Tiv Conflict

Type of Bias	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Taraba Truth and Fact</i>	Total	% of Total
Dominant Perspective	140 (29.8%)	150 (31.9%)	180 (38.3%)	470	49.7%
Balanced Perspective	100 (38.5%)	90 (34.6%)	70 (26.9%)	260	27.5%
Editorial Bias	60 (32.4%)	80 (43.2%)	45 (24.3%)	185	19.6%
Opinion Bias	20 (44.4%)	10 (22.2%)	15 (33.3%)	45	4.8%
Total	320 (33.9%)	330 (34.9%)	295 (31.2%)	945	100%

Table 3 presents data regarding bias in newspaper coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict, categorizing it into dominant perspective, balanced perspective, editorial bias, and opinion bias. The dominant perspective was most frequent, appearing in nearly half of the articles, reflecting a tendency for newspapers to favor one community over the other, which may amplify polarization and limit nuanced understanding of the conflict. Balanced perspective was evident in just over a quarter of the coverage, indicating that impartial reporting was relatively uncommon and insufficient to foster reconciliation. Editorial bias accounted for a significant portion of the coverage, demonstrating that newspapers' own stances or orientations influenced the framing of the conflict, potentially reinforcing existing divisions. Opinion bias was minimal, contributing only slightly too subjective interpretations. On a general note, the findings imply a presence of media landscape where partial narratives are prevalent, dominant and editorial biases are pronounced, and balanced reporting is underrepresented, suggesting that the coverage may have inadvertently reinforced tensions while limiting opportunities for peace-building and objective public comprehension of the conflict.

Discussion of findings

Firstly, the study examined the framing techniques used by newspapers in the coverage of the 2019 Jukun–Tiv conflict. The outcome reveal a strong predominance of conflict-centric

narratives across *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Taraba Truth and Fact*. The newspapers largely emphasised violence, casualties, and property destruction, while underrepresenting peace-building or reconciliation efforts. This pattern corroborates findings from previous studies on Nigerian conflict reporting, where event-driven and episodic coverage prioritises immediacy over structural or humanitarian contexts (Gever & Essien, 2018; Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2020). The selective use of frames aligns with Framing Theory, which asserts that the media shape audience perception by highlighting certain aspects while downplaying others (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). However, the identification of human interest and peace-building frames, particularly in *Taraba Truth and Fact*, represents a divergence from earlier research that documented uniform conflict-oriented coverage, suggesting that local newspapers may provide more nuanced narratives capable of supporting reconciliation.

Furthermore, the study examined the tone of language used by the newspapers in reporting the conflict. The findings show that negative and emotionally charged expressions dominated the newspapers' reporting. Sensational terms such as "bloodbath" and "devastating attacks" were prevalent, often framing one ethnic group as aggressors and the other as victims. This tendency supports prior observations that alarmist and polarising language intensifies social divisions and limits the media's role in constructive conflict engagement (Suleiman & Eze, 2021; Adamu, 2016). At the same time, limited instances of neutral or solution-oriented language, though less frequent, suggest a potential for media outlets to moderate tensions through careful word choice. These results highlight the tension between sensationalism and responsible journalism, illustrating that while framing shapes the narrative, tone and language reinforce or mitigate audience perceptions of threat and urgency.

In addition, the study investigated the bias reporting techniques inherent in the coverage of the conflict. The finding in this regard indicates that newspapers exhibited both dominant perspectives and partial attempts at balanced reporting. *Taraba Truth and Fact* favoured the Jukun community, while *Vanguard* showed a relative bias toward the Tiv, and *Daily Trust* displayed a more balanced but politically influenced stance. These patterns resonate with prior findings on the influence of ethnic and political affiliations on Nigerian conflict reporting (Usigbe & Ilo, 2019; Akpoghiran & Otite, 2012), reinforcing the notion that media bias can perpetuate societal polarization. Yet, the observed inclusion of some balanced perspectives and recognition of peace-building efforts suggests a potential shift toward more impartial coverage. Overall, the findings demonstrate that framing, tone, and bias interact to shape public understanding of conflicts, with implications for both audience perception and the media's capacity to support reconciliation and peace-building initiatives.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that newspaper coverage of the Jukun–Tiv conflict, although effective in drawing public attention to the scale and severity of the violence, was largely structured in ways that constrained its peace-building potential. Reporting across the selected newspapers was dominated by conflict-centred frames, emotive language, and selective emphases that foregrounded violence, casualties, and ethnic confrontation, while marginalising reconciliation efforts and structural explanations. Through the lens of Framing Theory, this pattern suggests that editorial choices privileged dramatic and polarising narratives, shaping audience interpretations that accentuated fear, blame, and intergroup antagonism rather than mutual understanding. The implication is that, the dominance of conflict-oriented reporting may inadvertently contribute to the escalation and prolongation of the ethno-communal conflicts by reinforcing adversarial identities and limiting public exposure to peace-oriented alternatives. This weakens the media's

capacity to function as a platform for dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive problem-solving in conflict-prone societies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the followings

1. Newspapers should balance conflict-focused reporting with peace-building, solution-oriented, and human-interest frames, giving greater visibility to reconciliation initiatives, dialogue processes, and non-violent responses to conflict.
2. Journalists and editors should avoid sensational and emotionally charged language that reinforces ethnic stereotypes or escalates tensions, and instead employ neutral, precise, and context-rich language in conflict reporting.
3. Media organisations particularly newspaper should enforce stricter editorial guidelines to minimise bias, ensure balanced source representation, and provide continuous training in ethical and conflict-sensitive journalism, particularly for reporters covering ethnically sensitive conflicts.

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