

**CHALLENGES OF PRINT MEDIA IN PEACE BUILDING IN NORTHERN
UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF ATTITUDES OF THE NEW VISION
NEWSPAPER READERS BASED IN KAMPALA 2000 – 2005.**

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Abstract

The research set out to analyse the challenges of print media in peace building in Northern Uganda: A case study of attitudes of *The New Vision* newspaper readers based in Kampala from 2000-2005. In this research Northern Uganda refers to the Acholi Region, which includes the Districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Moyo, Adjumani, Amuru, Oyam, Apac, Amolator, Dokolo, Lira and Pader. *The New Vision* newspaper is a Government of Uganda publication that was started in 1986, when the National Resistance Movement came into office.

The researcher carried out this study, to find out the unique challenges of *The New Vision* newspaper in its peace building role and to find out whether the attitudes of readers negatively affect the outcome of peace building processes. Furthermore, it is the view of the researcher that the Government has an obligation of taking the lead in peace building initiatives, using every mechanism under its jurisdiction; in this particular case study: *The New Vision* newspaper, which is a Government of Uganda owned publication.

The study was both descriptive and analytical. The researcher used quantitative methods to deal with quantifiable data and qualitative methods to deal with values, opinions and perceptions. The main instrument of collecting data was the content analysis coding sheet, which was used to establish the aspects of peace building represented in the *New Vision* newspaper from 2000-2005. Structured Interviews and questionnaires were also administered.

From the results of the study, it was deduced that *The New Vision* newspaper has taken the lead in shaping the perceptions of its readers as far as peace building is concerned. However, *The New Vision* newspaper is a government of Uganda owned newspaper. The Government of Uganda is therefore able to exert control on the political environment using state mechanisms; in this case *The New Vision* newspaper; to promote its own political views to the chagrin of the challenging forces, which invariably causes a number of challenges like a lack of credibility especially among the elite and those challenging government positions; due to the belief that the paper is biased and favors government positions.

The researcher, came to the conclusion that although *The New Vision* had played a significant role in peace building, in Northern Uganda, by the number of articles written on peace building issues, the placement of articles, the length of articles and use of photographs, the prejudice that much of its reporting is censored by government is no mean feat. Furthermore, some of the pictures on the atrocities in Northern Uganda were gruesome and very difficult to look at.

It was recommended that *The New Vision* newspaper adopts a multifaceted strategy to help solve the challenges it experiences in its peace building role. This would include learning from successful media interventions, media development, working with other stake holders in the community, presenting a clear picture of the concepts strategies and future trends of peace building activities, increasing the involvement of female journalists in areas of conflict and providing non-partisan news.