

## A General Assessment of the Independent Ethnic Radio Broadcasting Stations in Kenya

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### Abstract

*Radio has become a very important tool for disseminating information to a mass audience in the African society. In fact, most governments actually run through the use of mass media, radio being one of the most important. The liberalization of the media sector has brought with it ethnic radio broadcasting stations, which have slowly acquired a special place in our society as one form of independent media capable of evolving a community managed and interactive communication and programming of issues of public awareness and human activity. One of the major problems that faced African countries immediately after independence was that of welding the various ethnic groups into a national unity and creating a sense of belonging and national identity. Therefore the implication of this new development may be far reaching especially in a multi- ethnic society like Kenya. In view of the above the study was conducted as a general assessment of the independent radio broadcasting stations in terms of ownership, management and structure, policies governing them and the extent to which they enhance various national issues. Data was collected through audience questionnaires and guiding question to the management. To strengthen this, content analysis on the content and programming of the stations was also carried out. These were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables. The analysis showed that, as much as the ethnic stations are a very important source of information to their audiences, they actually do very little to enhance national issues, especially the aspect of unifying the society, which to a large extent contributes to the tribalism factor in Kenya.*

**Key Words:** FM Radio Station, Independent Ethnic Stations, Communication

### 1.0 Background

Radio has become such a vital and indispensable tool for governing in Africa, that it is difficult to imagine how modern African societies could be run without the use of radio; it's therefore considered the only truly mass medium in Africa. The process of democratization in many African countries including Kenya has contributed to the calls for the liberalization of the media sector bringing forth community media, which has acquired a special place as one form of independent media capable of evolving a community managed and more interactive communication, and programming of issues on public awareness and human activity. This liberalization of the airwaves has allowed for the development of private radio stations that cater for various communities by broadcasting community service programs. In these stations, buyers have exclusive controlling rights which exclude their managers, staff, and listeners. If the community it serves has a problem with such a station, there is no way it can resolve it within the stations structures. Instead, only confrontation may change the stations views. Even when the community is granted some kind of access, or participation on this kind of station, it still cannot claim any right over this kind of station thus, legally, rights are exclusively reserved for the individual owner or shareholder.

The proliferation of these media structures has mainly been due to; the narrow focus of the contemporary African media practice and its' tendency of giving wish- washy treatment to issues of rural and impoverished communities; the use of old colonial language in traditional media practice at the expense of other African languages; the tendency of the contemporary African media to perpetuate western perception of the socio- economic- political issues due to its heavy reliance on western news agencies and its' failure to rely on the communities in question. In the context of this study, the term 'community' is used to denote the aggregations of people who have something in common such as residence, geographical region, and shared beliefs, or who claim membership in a common lineage structure or who are distinguished by similarities of economic activities or class position (Kamweru and Odera, 2000).

These community radio stations can therefore be referred to as ethnic radio stations as is most appropriate in this study. Historically, the mass media in Kenya is foreign as opposed to indigenous in terms of their technology and structure, they are as such, not African although, in their use they have become localized. Like other forms of survival, they require adaptability by the receiving culture or society in a manner that such societies can ensure their own preservation and survival. Primarily, the media process has to be viewed as part of the society's striving towards self articulation, identity, and existence. The problem of the media being foreign to the Africans is therefore easily demonstrated.

Firstly, even within the regional context, the media are relatively stronger in those societies where European economic power still holds sway. Although political control has gone to the blacks, effective operation after colonialism still remains with the former owner- the Europeans. It is easy to say that a country has so many newspapers and radio stations, but the calculation cannot be accurate unless factors of ownership have been claimed by the African population. The maintenance of the structures still depends largely on the owners of the technological skills, who in another sense are not local blacks, but mostly white companies with local or international link.

The emergence of ethnic radio broadcasting stations, being a result of ideological and political pluralism which is nothing else, but the free expression of social and political reality, demands that variety, difference, contrariety, and divergence are permitted, tolerated and even encouraged. Applied to the mass media, it demands the existence of publication, radio or television stations that are free to express and exhibit the ideological expressions of politics, religious beliefs, economic policy perspectives, cultural diversity such as the use of any language and respect of differences in practices. In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, the media has been enjoying a period of liberalization, and there has been a sharp rise in the number of independent radio and television stations. This liberalization of broadcasting has had profound effect in Nairobi, but outside the main urban centers, state-run Kenya Broadcasting Corporation provides the only domestic radio and TV for many listeners and viewers, with the rest still struggling to go further upcountry.

The Kenyan media is now the most diverse in east Africa, with a large middle class providing a base for substantial advertising revenue. The concept of radio is drastically changing. Gone are the days when the entire country had only a single state radio. Now everyone with money to invest is racing to secure an FM frequency, and the moment they get the station going, they apportion lots of airtime to talk-shows and call-ins. However there are a lot of questions about what goes on during these 'shows and the Kenyan government appears to be getting jittery. Liberalization has offered an alternative voice to the people of Kenya, but lack of guidelines and clear media policy has meant that there are no restrictions on the content of the independent stations' programming. Some of these stations are filled with foreign content as opposed to local thus posing the question of how relevant they are to the cultural development of the people they are meant for. At some point, the government felt that they were getting cold feet, and decided it was time to regain some control. It therefore introduced a new bill that sought to regulate media practice. However many people see this bill as a draconian, and it has been widely condemned. Critics of the bill don't deny that some form of media regulation is needed, but broadcasters and producers would prefer self regulation, backed by sensible laws rather than direct government involvement. The media is a key component in the promotion of democracy and all facets of development in any country and therefore, if it has a problem then the whole country does.

### **1.1 Theoretical framework**

This study is based on the media structure and performance theories namely;

- The social responsibility theory,
- Development media theory.

#### **1.1.1 The social responsibility theory**

The main impetus of this theory was the growing awareness that in some important respects, the free market had failed to fulfill the promise of press freedom and to deliver expected benefits to the society. In particular, this theory argues that the technological and commercial development of the press has led to lower chances of access to individuals and diverse groups and lower standards of performance in meeting the informational, social and moral needs of the society; seeing the media as having increased the power of single class. At the same time, it postulates that the rise of the new and seemingly powerful media of radio and film had demonstrated the need for some public control and accountability, additional to those appropriate to the long- established and professionally organized print media. It seeks to reconcile independence with obligation to society.

Here, media ownership and control is to be viewed as a kind of public stewardship and not a private franchise. Under private ownership, the media professional is not only responsible to the consumer and shareholder, but also to the society at large.

This theory reconciles three somewhat divergent principles: of individual freedoms and choice of media freedom; and of media obligations to the society. It therefore advocates for the development of public but independent institutions for the management of broadcasting and further development of professionalism as a means of achieving higher standards of performance, while maintaining self regulation.

The social responsibility has the following postulates:

- Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society
- These obligations can only be met by setting high or professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
- Media should be self regulating within the framework of law and established institutions.
- The media must avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder, or give offence to minority groups.
- The media should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to rights of reply.
- That the society has a right to expect high standards of performance, and intervention can be justified to secure a public good.
- That journalists and media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to employers and the market.

### **1.1.2 Development media theory**

Development media theory is generally opposed to the dependency and foreign domination, and the arbitrary authoritarianism, but is for positive uses of the media in national development for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular national society. It favors democratic grass-roots involvement, thus participative communication models. The major principles of this theory are as follows:

- Media should carry out and accept positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.
- Freedom of the media should be open to the restrictions according to the economic priorities and development needs of the society.
- Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language.
- Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally and politically.
- Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as freedoms in their information-gathering and dissemination task.
- In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operations and devices of censorship; subsidy and direct control can be justified.

### **1.2 Literature review**

It is important to note that this is a pilot study which has very little, if any, related past studies due to the fact that it is in the area of one of the most recent developments in the growth of the mass media industry and in particular, radio broadcasting. However, a related research was carried out by Smith (1994), Weaver and Elliot (1985), and Fuller (1983) in the United States on community press. In their study, they were able to show systematic biases in the content of the community press and in the selection of news by the editors and journalists. Smith, in particular established that the media are likely, both to affect and be affected by what goes on in a community. The development role of mass media of which radio broadcasting belong, is well established. Highlighting its' contribution, Schramm says that, it is hardly possible to imagine national, social and economic development going on at its' state without some modern information multiplier, and indeed, without mass communication. Probably the great freedom movements and national stirrings of the last few decades never would have come about at all", ( Schramm 1964: 271) Kasoma, in his study of the rural press in Zambia, stressed the need for the rural folk to set their own rural press as the national or provincial press did not seem to address their needs. In his later study, on the vernacular press in Zambia, Kasoma (1990), he established that this press was ineffective content-wise and circulation-wise.

According to Dube, (1976) vernacular press plays direct and useful role in the areas of community development.

A research conducted for a mobilization campaign for Kagadi- Kabaale community in radio Uganda in 1994, had villagers report that although they had access to national radio, most of them felt cut off from the basic information they needed, even information that was available within their region. According to Mbindyo, (1985) development is a result of complex interaction of many factors which cannot be achieved without mass mobilization of the rural communities. These sentiments were echoed during a regional workshop on the development on rural press in Africa held in 1987, which stressed that rural broadcasting should reflect the rural people in such a way that they should be able to identify themselves with the paper or the station. Everette Rodgers, on his part sees development as a widely participatory process of social change, in a society intended to bring about both social and material advancement for majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.

Therefore, development news and features should cover issues that are relevant to the social and economic changes and includes topics on agriculture, health, sports family planning and education. Each of which, deals directly or indirectly with human problem, success, sorrow, joy, or similar human factors. His study on the rural press in Kenya shows that it doesn't adequately cater for all its audiences, and that some audiences would prefer more materials, while others prefer certain items to others. In addition, the study showed that this press gave top priority to agriculture, local news, social issues education among others, but strangely enough, other development oriented issues such as health and community projects had a low rating.

Ochillo, (1988) in his quantitative analysis of the rural press in Kenya, later found out that the six topics given top priority were farming, health, education, politics, pictures and social welfare. According to Kasoma,(1991) community newspaper and therefore radio, should be participatory. He describes participatory as that which is for and by the people, containing news views and advertisements for the community which it is meant to serve. He contends, that in order to make the rural community perceive the publication as 'theirs', they ought to be encouraged to contribute. Reporting should not be restricted to the papers staff and the editorial committee should not be the sole determinants of its' content. A number of studies have been carried out in Kenya and several papers presented to gauge whether the community press still adhere to the objectives they set during implementation. This question also applies to the current community radio stations. At the core of the objectives is one central aspect: development. The major aim of the community media is to enhance the socio- economic and political developments of a country with a view to achieving better life for the people.

Nkinyangi, (1993) on his study on the Homa Bay community radio defines relevance in community radio programming as that which try to deal with the contemporary issues in an objective manner and then into other areas. He further argues that development interventions through the media are part of the liberal approach to change in society that assumes, that by raising peoples consciousness about their situation, their enhanced state of awareness can bring about the general dynamics of change. Here relevance is intertwined by those aspects of access and participation, which have major implications for programming, since access and participation are at the centre of devising a more democratic means of communication to serve a more equitable and representative society.

Concerning relevance in radio programming, this must mean a faithful or nearly as faithful, a representation of the prevailing social reality in the society. According to Ikechukwu Nwosu, content should include interviews which emphasize unknown people whose ideas are new, challenging and unique, and can promote or encourage others. In addition, there should be utility programs, which he says are useful in literacy, adult education and public enlightenment campaigns such as farming, health and environmental hygiene.

## **2.0 Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Population**

The population of this study consists of all the private ethnic radio stations in Kenya, all of which are located in Nairobi province. In general, the study targeted all possible listeners, managers and some of the staff.

### **2.2 Sample size**

During this study, two out of the total five stations were purposively chosen, due to the fact that these stations broadcasts in the two most widely spoken languages in Kenya and are owned by different individuals.

It was also discovered that most of these stations were owned by one individual, thus were technically knocked out since ownership was also an important objective in this study. The two stations are Kameme and Ramogi which broadcasts in Kikuyu and Luo languages respectively. The sample size comprised of 100 listeners chosen at random within Nairobi and Nyanza provinces and a questionnaire administered to them personally by the researcher. Of the total number of questionnaires administered, 80 of them were fully filled in and returned registering an eighty percent response. For the objective on management, guiding questions were used to interview the managers of the selected stations on a face to face forum, while for that dealing with contents, one week recording of talk shows and development programs was done and then later analyzed by the researcher.

### **2.3 Data collection techniques**

Data was collected through various techniques such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews with the management and some of the staff members of the selected stations. The audience information was obtained through questionnaires which were administered to them by two research assistants after reading it through with them and making necessary clarifications. The questionnaires were later collected from them after one week. Information from managers was obtained through in depth interviews conducted on a face to face basis by the researcher herself by the use of guiding questions. The same applied to staff members of the selected stations. For the question dealing with the existing programs and their content, data was collected through content analysis of the ongoing programs by use of audio tapes. The programs were recorded for a period of one week for the two FM stations and later analyzed.

### **2.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis was specifically done as per the research questions owing to the fact that most of the research questions cut across each other. Most of the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which mainly summarizes, describes, and present pictures of data presented in form of tables and charts.

## **3.0 Findings**

The objectives of the study were:

- To assess the ownership, management and structure of the stations
- To establish the extent to which address the needs of the local people
- To establish how far they seek to enhance:
  - National Unity
  - Development
  - Cultural Heritage
- To examine the policies that govern these stations
- To examine the programming and content of the stations

The study discovered the following:

### **3.1 Ownership, management and structure of the stations**

Both Kameme FM and Ramogi FM are owned by local individual investors, who are both Kenyan citizens. In the case of Ramogi, the owner is Mr. S. K. Macharia, a well-known local investor and owner of Citizen Media, a local electronic media house. The identity of the owner of Kameme FM was not revealed by the respondent of the questionnaire, but it is common knowledge that local entrepreneur, Mrs. Rose Kimotho is one of the founders and owners of the firm. Both stations are relatively young, Kameme having been founded in March 2000, and Ramogi, in July 2002. Respondents indicated that the management of both stations is individual, rather than cooperate, indicating that the stations are run more or less at the bidding of the individual managers or owners. With regard to the organizational structure, Kameme FM has an organic structure, designed to change and grow in response to the rapidly changing environment. Ramogi FM's organizational structure is not clear, as the respondent did not respond to the question of structure. With regard to the question of sponsorship, Kameme's main revenue base comes from internally generated funds and advertisers such as manufacturing concerns, and international NGO's. Ramogi's funding comes from direct clients and agency clients.

### **4.2 The extent to which they address the needs of the local people**

To analyze this factor better, we look at the demographics of the respondents. Of all the 63 respondents, 53 responded to the question of gender and age. The data analysis reveals that the largest sub category in the sample is males between the age of 20 and 24. The data also reveals that few respondents were over the age of 41, indicating a largely youthful sample.

**Personal Background Information**

	Male	Female	Total
16-19 yrs	9	0	9
20-24 yrs	15	5	20
25-29 yrs	8	4	12
30-40 yrs	5	5	10
41-50 yrs	1	1	2
Total	38	15	53

With regard to the level of education, the analysis reveals that majority of the respondents are well educated, with 62% having been educated to Tertiary level.

**Education**

	Percent
Standard 5-8	9.8
Form 1-2	4.9
Form 3-4	23.0
Tertiary	62.3

The data analysis further reveals that close to 80% of the respondents listen to ethnic radio. Of these, the stations listened to are Ramogi FM, Inoro FM, Kameme FM and Choro. The most popular station is Ramogi FM followed by Kameme FM with 60% and 26% of respondents respectively.

Do you listen to any ethnic radio station?

	Percent
Yes	79.4
No	20.6
Total	100.0

Ethnic Radio Stations listened to:

Station	Percentage of respondents
Ramogi FM	60.4
Inoro	7.5
Kameme	26.4
Choro	5.7

**Learned most from stations**

The respondents indicated that the most popular thing learned from radio for most was politics, with 21% indicating it as the thing they learned most. This is closely followed by culture and society with 16.2%, Educative issues with 11%, the Knowledge of God with 9.6% and sports with 8.1%.

Category label	%
Politics	21.3
Culture and society	16.2
Educative	11
Know God	9.6
Sports	8.1
Entertainment	4.4
HIV/AIDS	4.4
Health	3.7
Events taking place	2.2
How to life in society	2.2
Agriculture	2.2
Economics	2.2
Youth	2.2
Language	2.2
Moral issues	1.5
Musicians	1.5
Human rights	1.5
Family	1.5
Communication	0.7
Environment	0.7
Development	0.7
Total	100

This demonstrates that Ethnic radio actually promotes culture and society, and that politics, which in this country is synonymous with culture, is a major issue that listeners consider when listening to radio.

### 3.2 Enhancement of various issues:

#### 3.2.1 National Unity

The data demonstrates that about a third (36%) of respondents feel that ethnic radio taught them very little about other communities in Kenya. This would indicate that the radio stations promote ethnicity, rather than national unity. Majority of the respondents (39%) have learned nothing about other communities from ethnic radio, and over 75% having learned little, very little or nothing at all. This is compared with 83% of respondents who feel that they have learned much or very much about their communities through their ethnic radio station of choice. This indicates a possibility that ethnic radio promotes only the culture of the ethnic group it targets, do little if anything for National Unity.

#### How much would you say you learned on:- Your Community?

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	61.7	61.7
Much	21.7	83.3
Little	5.0	88.3
Very little	8.3	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

#### How much would you say you learned on:- Other communities in Kenya?

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	14.0	14.0
Much	10.5	24.6
Little	21.1	45.6
Very little	15.8	61.4
Nothing	38.6	100.0
Total	100.0	

To further emphasize the issue of promotion of ethnicity, 66% of respondents feel that ethnic radio stations actually do promote ethnicity, as indicated in the following table.

#### Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations don't promote ethnicity/tribalism?

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	33.9	33.9
Disagree	66.1	100.0
Total	100.0	

Further investigation of the concept of community and by extension, national unity, is very revealing. Respondents feel very strongly that the ethnic radio stations unify the community (65%). 59% also agree that the station acts to unify the society (see tables below). This further emphasizes the fact that the station actually serves to unify the community and society, especially in the eyes of the respondents.

#### q14. How much do you think this station unifies the community?

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	65.5	65.5
Somehow	32.8	98.3
Completely not	1.7	100.0
Total	100.0	

#### q15 .Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations unify the society?

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	59.3	59.3
Disagree	40.7	100.0
Total	100.0	

However, with regard to encouraging national unity, majority of the respondents (61%) disagree with the notion (see table below). This further emphasizes the point made earlier that ethnic radio stations do not do enough to promote national unity.

**q15 .Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations encourage national unity?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	39.0	39.0
Disagree	61.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

**3.2.2 Development**

With regard to the issue of enhancement of development, the following issues were established.

**How much would you say you learned on:- Education?**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	45.0	45.0
Much	23.3	68.3
Little	25.0	93.3
Very little	3.3	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

The analysis indicates that over 68% of respondents actually feel that they have learned much or very much about education from the station. 70% of respondents indicate that they have learned much or very much about the environment from the station (table below), while 63% have learned much or very much about Agriculture (table below). This shows that ethnic radio actually promotes educational, agricultural and environmental policies in the country.

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Environment?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	36.7	36.7
Much	33.3	70.0
Little	16.7	86.7
Very little	8.3	95.0
Nothing	5.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

**q13. How much would you say you learned on:- Agriculture?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	38.3	38.3
Much	25.0	63.3
Little	16.7	80.0
Very little	16.7	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

With regards to health, majority of respondents indicated that they learned a lot about health (86%) and HIV/AIDS (83%) from the radio station (see tables below). Thus ethnic radio could be said to contribute towards promotion of health policies in the country.

**q13. How much would you say you learned on:- Health?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	47.5	47.5
Much	39.0	86.4
Little	10.2	96.6
Very little	1.7	98.3
Nothing	1.7	100.0
Total	100.0	



**q13. How much would you say you learned on:- HIV/AIDS?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	64.4	64.4
Much	18.6	83.1
Little	8.5	91.5
Very little	1.7	93.2
Nothing	6.8	100.0
Total	100.0	

The data analysis further reveals that majority of respondents indicated that they have learned much or very much about politics (78%), Family (68%), and economics (47%) from the stations (see tables below). This would indicate that the stations generally contribute a lot towards the promotion of these factors in the society.

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Politics?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	57.4	57.4
Much	21.3	78.7
Little	11.5	90.2
Very little	3.3	93.4
Nothing	6.6	100.0
Total	100.0	

**q13. How much would you say you learned on:- Family?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	40.0	40.0
Much	28.3	68.3
Little	23.3	91.7
Very little	5.0	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Economics?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	23.0	23.0
Much	24.6	47.5
Little	23.0	70.5
Very little	26.2	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

With regards to Youth and Social Welfare, majority of respondents (70% and 67% respectively) state that they have learned a much or very much about the two topics from their ethnic station. This would indicate that the stations actively promote youth and social welfare affairs in their programming.

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Youth?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	48.3	48.3
Much	21.7	70.0
Little	11.7	81.7
Very little	15.0	96.7
Nothing	3.3	100.0
Total	100.0	

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Social Welfare?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	44.1	44.1
Much	23.7	67.8
Little	20.3	88.1
Very little	8.5	96.6
Nothing	3.4	100.0
Total	100.0	

Two very important aspects of the Kenyan society are Entertainment and sports, and spiritual nourishment. Both these aspects are well covered and promoted by the ethnic radio stations, with 79% and 77% of respondents respectively indicating that they have learned much or very much about these issues from these stations.

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Entertainment and sports?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	55.9	55.9
Much	23.7	79.7
Little	8.5	88.1
Very little	6.8	94.9
Nothing	5.1	100.0
Total	100.0	

**q13. How much would you say you learned on: - Spiritual nourishment?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	37.7	37.7
Much	39.3	77.0
Little	8.2	85.2
Very little	4.9	90.2
Nothing	9.8	100.0
Total	100.0	

**3.3 Cultural Heritage**

With regard to culture, the data indicates that the overwhelming majority (83%) claim to have learned much or very much about their culture from ethnic radio. This would indicate that ethnic radio contributes a lot towards enhancing cultural heritage in Kenya, especially for the ethnic group served by the station.

**How much would you say you learned on:- Your culture?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	68.3	68.3
Much	15.0	83.3
Little	5.0	88.3
Very little	10.0	98.3
Nothing	1.7	100.0
Total	100.0	

On the other hand, with regard to encouraging cultural values of the community, the overwhelming majority of respondents (91%) agree that this is the case for ethnic radio stations. 82% of respondents (lower table) also agree that ethnic radio stations represent the interest of the local community. This goes to further prove the fact that ethnic radio contributes significantly to cultural heritage in the country.

**Q15. Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations encourage cultural values of the community?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	91.5	91.5
Disagree	8.5	100.0
Total	100.0	

**Q15.Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations represent the interest of the local community?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	82.8	82.8
Disagree	17.2	100.0
Total	100.0	

There could be a conception that ethnic radio stations cater mainly for the lower social classes. It is commonly held as well, that ethnic radio encourages participation of rural people, who are more inclined to speak in vernacular. Both these notions are upheld by the findings of this study, with 71% of respondents disagreeing that ethnic stations do not respond to the needs of the lower social classes (see table below), and a whopping 89% agreeing that ethnic stations encourage better participation of rural people (following table). In addition, 67% of respondents agree that ethnic stations are more accessible to the average lower social class people (lower table).

**Q15.Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations do not respond to the needs of lower social class better?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	22.4	22.4
Disagree	77.6	100.0
Total	100.0	

**Q15.Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations encourage better participation of the rural people?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	89.8	89.8
Disagree	10.2	100.0
Total	100.0	

**Q15.Do you agree or disagree:- Ethnic stations are more accessible to the average lower social class people?**

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	67.8	67.8
Disagree	32.2	100.0
Total	100.0	

These and further tables which form the outcome of the analysis of data can be found in appendix 2.

**3.4 Policies that govern the stations**

The governing policies of the stations were also analyzed, with a specific focus on two stations, Kameme FM and Ramogi FM. Management questionnaires were administered on both stations, and the following was deduced from the analysis of the questionnaires. Kameme FM is guided mainly by CCK's policies concerning management of radio stations, as well as internal policies, which were not revealed in detail by the respondent. Ramogi FM on the other hand, is governed by regulatory policies (presumably from the CCK) and states that they are business oriented. The goals of Kameme FM include: Social awareness, Empowerment (skills, AIDS prevention), Information and Education. Their strategy for attaining the goals includes; maintaining clear audience focus, adhering to an effective marketing mix, and continual media and audience research. The respondent feels that these goals have largely been met in the course of the stations operations. Ramogi's goals are Business and National Unity. Their strategy for attaining the goals involves frequent revamps.

However, the respondent feels the stations goals have not really been met. With regard to the question of tribalism, neither station feels that their programming is tribalist in any way. Kameme FM actually quotes statistics from Steadman Research that indicate that 62% of their audience come from the Kikuyu ethnic group, while 38% are non Kikuyu. Further, while majority of their programming is geared towards entertainment, 20% of it is music, while 30% aims at informing and educating their audience. In order to guard against tribalism, the station has editorial policies, and their programming is vetted by 3 key departments that is, programs, and administration and production department/news before being aired. For Ramogi FM, the respondent indicated that the station discourages tribalism. Policies in place to guard against it are use of right language and employment of media Ethics. To encourage national unity, Kameme FM plays Kenyan music, deals with National issues such as the constitution, development programs, global views, and tends to lean towards Kenyan rather than regional news. Ramogi FM does many panel sessions in an effort to encourage national unity.

With regard to the challenges facing the stations, Kameme sees the major challenges being a lack of clear operating guidelines from the Communication Commission of Kenya, massive competition, with an estimated 32 FM stations currently licensed to operate, which shrinks the advertising budgets for all, and the challenge of sourcing for advanced technology and equipment. The challenges facing Ramogi are having a limited reach and the harsh economic situation prevailing in the country. As for future prospects, Kameme contends that there will be a shift from tribal to national outlook for the audience for the ethnic stations, while more stations likely to emerge. Further, ethnic radio stations will become regional e.g. Pwani FM rather than focus on a narrow ethnic group. Ramogi sees great prospects for the future of ethnic radio, contending that there are many market niches, which have not been exploited yet.

A summary of the analysis of the management questionnaire can be found in appendix 1

### **3.5 Examination of programs and content of the stations**

A content analysis of the stations programming was also conducted, with a view to establishing whether they tackle issues concerning the general public and the extent to which national and developmental issues are tackled. The analysis was done by recording portions of their programming and transcribing the recordings into English. The transcriptions are included in Appendix 3.

The analysis revealed the following:

Kameme FM has a show dedicated to development issues that airs between 7 and 8 pm on week days. The show is hosted by Njoki Wandegwa, and was recorded for a period of 4 consecutive days (Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> August through to Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> September). Among the issues tackled during these shows include the following:

The National Youth Parliament – Two members of the National Youth Parliament, namely the President and the Foreign Affairs Minister were invited as discussants on the show. They began by giving a brief chronological account of the organization, from its beginnings to the current period. They highlighted the role of the Youth Parliament, its structure, operations, membership and activities. The discussants looked at the overlaps between the Youth Parliament and other areas of society, particularly the August House. They ended by giving an indication of how to get in touch with them for further details.

- The Stock Exchange - The show looked at the Stock Market and an expert on the Stock Market was invited to give views on how to invest and ways of improving your financial position through investing in stocks. The host took questions from the audience submitted by email, sms and telephone, covering a variety of subjects with relation to the Stock Exchange and how to get involved in it.
- The Security Situation in the Country – The discussion centred mainly around the security situation in the country, with questions and comments coming in from various callers, and audience members. The questions were handled via short message services (sms), email and live calls.

This indicates that the shows actively promote matters of Development, judging from the content of the days in question. This shows that Kameme FM actively promotes issues, mainly of development and cultural heritage in their programming.

### **4.1 summary and conclusions**

The main objective of the study was to make a general assessment of the independent ethnic radio broadcasting stations in Kenya. In order to achieve this objective, information concerning the programming, their contents, guiding policies and their relevance in terms of fulfilling the needs of the community and by extension, the society were obtained through questionnaires, face to face interviews, and content analysis. Data was then analyzed as per the research questions, most of which used descriptive statistics which mainly summarizes, describes and presents pictures of data in form of data in form of tables and charts. From the findings of this study, we can conclude that:

- Ethnic radio actually promotes culture and society, and that politics which in this country is synonymous to culture, is a major issue that listeners consider when listening to radio.
- Ethnic radio promotes only the culture of the ethnic group they target, and do little if anything for national unity.
- Ethnic radio actually promotes educational, agricultural and environmental policies in the country.
- Ethnic radio contributes a lot towards enhancing cultural heritage in Kenya, especially for the ethnic group served by the station.

- Ethnic radio can be said to contribute towards the promotion of health policies in the country.
- Ethnic radio stations contribute to the learning of politics, family issues and economics in the society, as well as actively promote youth and social welfare development activities in their programming.
- Ethnic radio helps to promote two important aspects in Kenyan society, that is entertainment and sports, and spiritual nourishment.

With regards to the objectives of the study, the following can be deduced:

1. **National unity**- ethnic radio as demonstrated by the data analysis does not do much to enhance national unity.
2. **Development**- ethnic radio promotes development by tackling issues such as economics, politics, education, environment and family matters in their programming.
3. **Cultural heritage**:- ethnic radio promotes cultural heritage, especially of the ethnic group served or targeted by the station.
4. there are no clear guiding policies by the CCK under which these radio stations operate.
5. that most of the ethnic radio stations are both locally and individually owned

#### 4.2 suggestions for further studies

From the finding of this study, these ethnic radio stations are still in their formative stages and were all started almost at the same time. This therefore created a limitation in the range of comparisons that could be made between these stations. Besides, the results may not present a true picture of what these stations are likely to look like once they are well established. There is therefore need for a similar follow-up study to act as a comparison for this pilot study so that we may establish the true characteristics of these stations. This study therefore serves as a good starting point that provides a general direction on the readership, listenership, programming, opinions and what people learn or not learn from the stations. It serves as a pioneer study in the subject area and as an eye opener, which can provide good breaking concepts to other specific related studies such as the role of ethnic radio stations in community as well as national development.

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