

## **ROLE OF RADIO IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AMONG PASTORAL COMMUNITIES IN WEST POKOT COUNTY: KENYA CASE OF KALYA FM**

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**Abstract:** *Radio is an essential means of communication among citizens of the third world countries where ICT has not had a wider reach and is a credible tool in a sphere closed to the outside world. It plays a central role in today's conflict by taking part in increased violence or reducing conflict and its violent effects leading to resolution. The major objective of this study was to examine the role of radio in conflict management among pastoralist communities in West Pokot County. This was achieved through 3 specific objectives namely: establishing the role of radio as an escalating agent, examining its role as a de-escalating agent in conflict management and determining the intervening role of Socio-cultural factors on the relationship between radio and conflict management. It focused on inhabitants of West Pokot County who are the Pokot with whom conflicts have occurred between them and the Marakwet inhabiting the neighboring county of Elgeyo-Marakwet. Frequent conflicts have taken place along the southeastern border intermittently over the years. The research was carried in Pokot Central Sub-County and targeted a population of 10,080 in Lomut who reside within the conflict area & experience first-hand effects of conflict; including media practitioners who cover and disseminate information to the public & government administrators and security officers. A sample size of 375 was picked for the study. The study applied descriptive method of research. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling was used in achieving the samples. Document analysis was used to get more insight into the research. Questionnaires were used to collect data from community members while the interview schedules were used to collect data from Kalya FM media professionals, security officers, and government administrators. The study theoretical framework was based on the participatory theory of development communication and the conflict resolution theory.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict Management, Pastoral Communities, Peace Building, Community Radio*

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### **1. Background of the Study**

The media is seen as a tool capable of shaping perceptions of the world (Eagly & Wood 1999). Its power can be used to reflect the values of society and create new ones and has the potential to influence and to some extent control the minds of readers or viewers (Klapper, 1960). Radio, books, newspapers, television and the internet have become the avenue for reflecting our societies and through the content they offer, they create a representation of reality. The messages that the media carries thus have a huge impact in the audience positively or negatively. If messages of peace, forgiveness, awareness, resolution, reconciliation and re-orientation occupy airtime and space in media; the society might discard conflicts and embrace peace while the opposite

is the same. This is because information is power, and the information disseminated can impact on public participation in a way that perceptions and thought processes can be changed by access to media.

Regionally, Girard (2001) observes that radio remains the most important medium in Africa since low levels of literacy, distribution problems of newspapers and the cost of television leave it the most accessible medium; this therefore makes radio a driving force of change among the masses. Radio has played the role of a conciliator and a promoter of peace. For example, in Northern Uganda, radio has been used to promote peace Struges, (2007) where Mega FM has had positive effects since 2002. Existing evidence shows that the station played a major part in encouraging LRA members to come out of the bush. Struges (2007) further noted that the LRA leadership and former rebel soldiers were encouraged to listen to the station and were invited to take part in radio phone-in talk shows to hold discussions with government and civil society representatives, a good step in peace building. Thus mass media played a role in creating peace and giving the voiceless a voice and enabling the rule of justice.

Most Kenyans consume radio for news and information, its expansion having been propelled by the liberalization of the media airwaves in the 90's leading to an increase in the number of public, community, vernacular and private radio stations over the years (Bowen, 2010). Being a major information disseminator, radio can be used as a tool to mitigate against conflicts, because its programs are popular and accessible. Those who are illiterate hear and listen to radio that is aired in the most common language. Families and neighbors can share stories and news from a radio set that is listened to in a communal setting. People mostly in rural and remote areas can till their land, grace and milk their cows and cycle to the market as they listen, get entertained and do not have to stop their activities.

According to Practical Action (2014), violent conflicts involving pastoralist communities have become widespread and increasingly severe in North rift region of Kenya. The Pokot who have a mostly nomadic or semi-nomadic livelihood, apart from a small percentage of elites residing in urban centers, number around 700 000 with a sex ratio of 100:101, according to the (CID 2013), and mainly live in west Pokot County and to a lesser extent Baringo Counties (Greiner, 2013). The Communities live in harsh and inhospitable terrain and depend on livestock (cattle, sheep, goats and camels) for their livelihood. They rely on access to water and pasture for their survival and the resources are scarce and under pressure since all communities must share. Muntet (2016) contends that communities bordering each other in these regions are nomadic and are regarded as great survivors. This includes the Turkana-Pokot border to the North and the subject of the study the Pokot who share boundaries with the Marakwet to the east along the Kerio valley. Ironically, the pokot and marakwet belong to the Kalenjin ethnic group.

In the pursuit of radio's role in managing conflict, this study looked at Kalya FM, a vernacular radio station located in Kapenguria Town, West Pokot County established in 2012 to enhance development and peace amongst communities in the North Rift. It covers the counties of West Pokot County, Trans-Nzoia, Uasin-Gishu, Bungoma, Kakamega and Turkana, and other neighboring counties and runs various programs of interest on a 24 hour broadcasts in Pokot dialect and partially Kiswahili language in order to cater for the illiterate, youth, old, urban and rural audiences. Based on the above background, this study established the role of radio in conflict management through Kalya *fm* radio in West Pokot as opposed to other forms of media such as Newspapers, TV, Magazines and social media. This is because radio is easily accessed with local languages being popular for the mostly illiterate population. Indeed, according to the Peace bulletin (2003), radio is the best means of reaching physically isolated communities and their main source of accessing the "outside word."

This research explored the ways in which radio could act as an escalation or de-escalation agent. It helped gain insight on the role of socio-cultural factors on radio as in managing conflicts, provided knowledge that assisted to suggest improved, effective ways of managing conflict. The world is now a globalized village moving towards development, unity and peace but some regions still lag behind in embracing peaceful co-existence and the use of ICT's to support peace. Besides, accepting women as equal to men especially in roles that have traditionally been held by men will promote peace and the media especially should eradicate cultural practices that are preventing women from active participation in community activities and promote equality. Therefore, this study spotted a gap in women decision making in peace matters especially those in the remotest areas.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Perennial conflicts in northern Kenya which is an arid and semi-arid land dates back to pre-colonial days where the region is often in the news for conflicts, deaths, displacements, drought, diseases and destruction (Practical Action, 2014). West Pokot, though a traditionally conflict prone region, has recently witnessed flare ups and escalated fights with the Marakwet, the Tugen and the Turkana which has led to loss of lives at alarming levels. The Pokot have been accused as the main aggressors by their neighbors but they see themselves as victims of provocation by other communities who they claim, gang up with the government to annihilate them (Okari, 2017). The Pokot claim they acquire and take up arms against their neighbors to protect their flock and community because they are marginalized.

In late 2016 there were conflict between Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot counties that left more than 30 people dead and many others displaced from their homes and farms. In 2017, bandits shot and killed a chief while in a security meeting chaired by the Deputy President (Krop, 2017). Lately in January 2018, Cheseremi, (2018) reported that more than 100 teachers from public primary and secondary schools at the volatile Chesegon area along the border of Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot counties fled the region over personal safety of their lives as a result of violent conflict. The government's approach to conflict has been basically reactive and has failed to solve underlying issues with local leaders being blamed for siding with their communities during conflicts (Peace bulletin, 2003). Efforts by security forces to enforce the law only aggravates the situation due to allegations of biasness, leading to vicious gun battles, and with the porous borders, cattle rustlers flee to neighboring countries (Kaino, 2017). Local cultural solutions have not ended the conflict either.

The media however has a very complex but crucial role to play in the management of the conflict but unfortunately, is often taken for granted by stakeholders, political decision-makers and the armed forces during such times.

Nevertheless, radio can play a positive role during conflict and help reduce tensions by bringing members of different ethnic communities in West Pokot and neighboring counties together through programs that help them embrace diversity. Radio has been a voice of peace in Burundi through Radio Ijambo, (USAID 2009) that counteracted messages of hatred and quelled the fighting through, radio plays and game shows that promoted discussion and dialogue. Scholars in peace and conflict research are well aware of the communications revolution and the media is mentioned as an important factor in such times. However it is often either assumed to be all-powerful or irrelevant therefore excluding it from conflict management activities. This research project therefore sought to find out the role of radio in the management of Conflict among pastoralist communities in West Pokot County with *Kalya FM* as a case study. This was done bearing in mind that media has immense power and affects the peace process (Kusiik 2010).

### 3. Objective of the study

To establish the Role of Radio in Conflict Management among Pastoral Communities in west Pokot County.

### 4. Literature Review

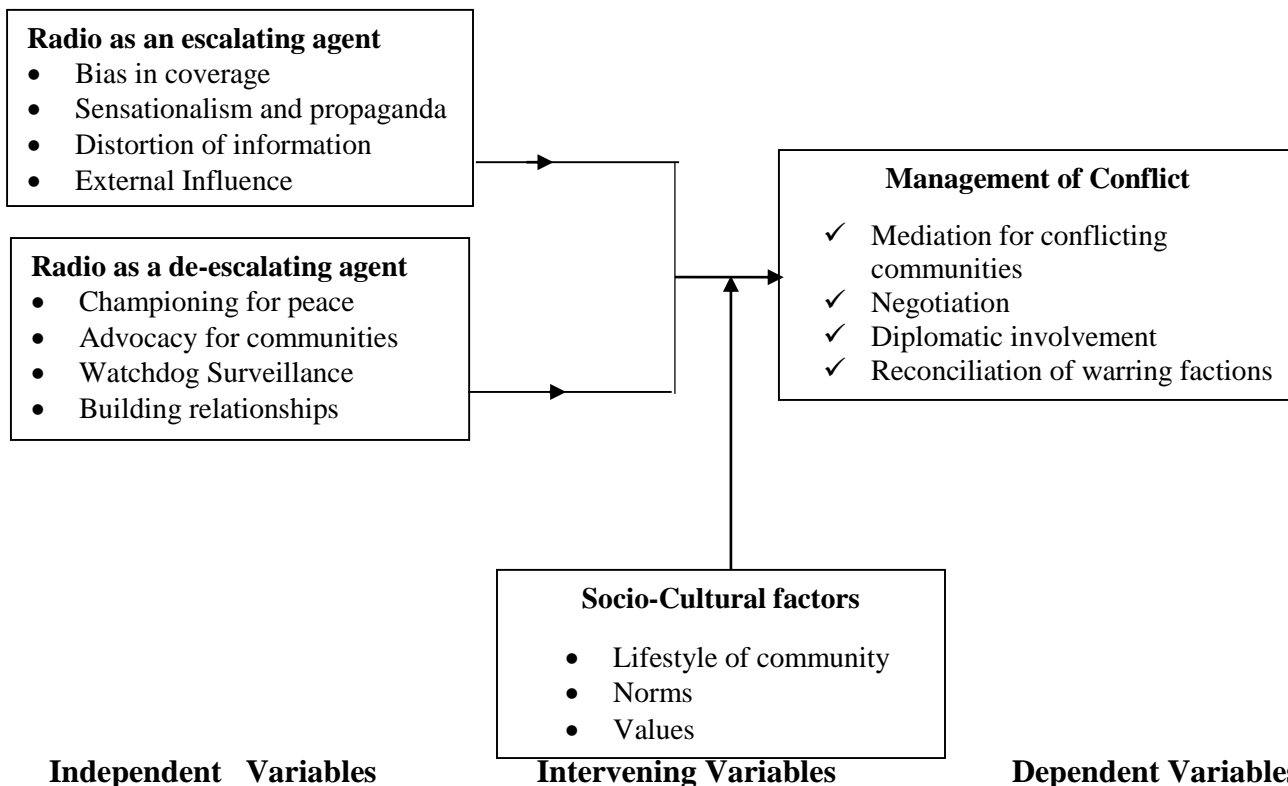
The study was informed by Participatory communication theory and Conflict resolution theory.

**Participatory communication theory:** is a theory of development communication that involves the utilization of mass media and interpersonal communication methods to help the society to be empowered and discover solutions to their developmental problems (Doan-Bao et al., 2018). Participatory communication involves communities in decision making in the processes of development with communication being used to bring opinions into common grounds so as to share different views and knowledge. Community radio best serves this purpose in bringing development to local audiences who have otherwise been ignored by national governments

**Conflict Resolution theory:** The conflict resolution theory focuses on industrial conflict which is defined as the expression of dissatisfaction arising in the employment premises (Sharma et al., 2015). These conflicts can be formal or informal depending on the nature of work. Formal conflicts are organized and can be reflected through a trade union while informal conflicts arise due to personal grievances. According to Stephens Robison (2012), conflict is majorly defined as a process of a party making more effort to block the occurrence of a certain behavior or furthering its interests. It can be a major obstacle to development due to rigidity in rules and regulations, lack of understanding, rigid ideas and opinions between the parties and behavioral differences. Conflicts are regarded as normal happenings in accordance to the human nature and the involved parties tend to argue based on beliefs and perception towards the object and can be due to variables such as gender, culture, education and religion. Conflicts therefore require solutions. strategies are rarely mentioned in communities, they work as the best methods to improve togetherness and overcoming bigger challenges. legal proceedings are seen to be expensive and time costly and most parties employ alternative methods to overcome the conflicts. These methods include arbitration and mediation leading to a win-win end results thus being less costly and effective.

In order to achieve win-win alliances, negotiation strategies are employed which include cooperative and distributive bargaining. Cooperative bargaining includes enlarging the pie as much as possible which leads to distributive bargaining. This implies that both strategies are very essential in solving the conflicts. The theory also notes that a key aspect of negotiation is reconciliation where negotiators carry the message of forgiveness to both parties aimed at promotion of attitudinal and behavioral changes that will build a positive relationship between parties in dispute. In this case Kalya FM together with other stakeholders can use mediation, negotiation and arbitration to reconcile warring communities in west Pokot County.

**Conceptual Framework**



**5. Research Methodology**

The study applied descriptive method of research. The research was carried in Pokot Central Sub-County and targeted a population of 10,080 in Lomut who reside within the conflict area & experience first-hand effects of conflict; including media practitioners who cover and disseminate information to the public & government administrators and security officers. A sample size of 375 was picked for the study. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling was used in achieving the samples. Document analysis was used to get more insight in the research. Questionnaires was used to collect data from community members while the interview schedules was used to collect data from Kalya FM media professionals, security officers and government administrators.

**Results and Discussions**

**6. Role of Radio as an Escalating Agent of Conflict**

Objective one of the study sought to establish the role of radio as an escalating agent on conflict management among pastoral communities in Pokot Central Sub-County. The respondents were asked to state the medium of receiving information and were allowed to give multiple responses. Table 1 presents the findings.

**Table 1: Medium of Receiving Information**

Medium of Receiving Information	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	294	98.0
Television	129	43.0
Newspaper	119	39.7
Internet	149	49.7

Phone	294	98.0
Talking to other people	263	87.7

As shown in Table 1, majority 98.0% of the respondents received peace information through radio and mobile phones, 87.7% received information by talking to other people, 49.7% via internet, and 43.0% on television while 39.7% received information through the newspapers. Most respondent received information through the radio because the findings revealed that 100% of those respondents owned radio sets in their respective homes and majority preferred listening to Kalya FM (98.0%), followed by Radio Kokwo and then Radio North Rift. These findings indicate that the most used sources of information in the study area are the Radio and mobile phones.

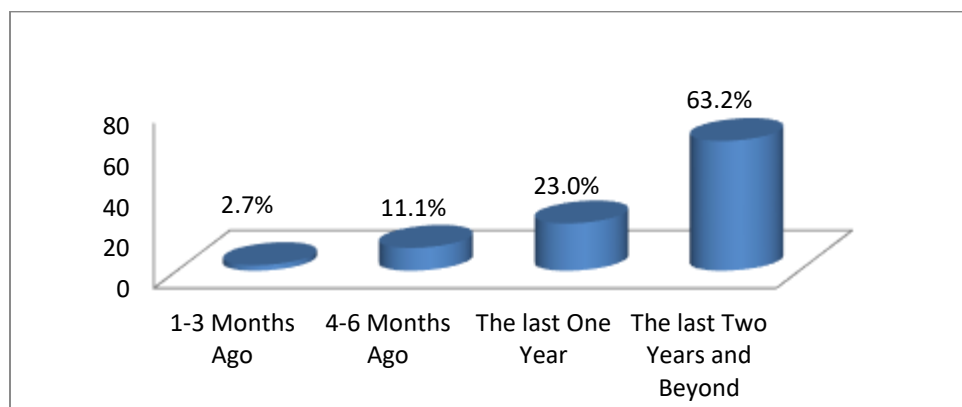
Another interesting finding through interview with Kalya Media Editors was that despite Kalya FM playing a leading role in reducing conflicts in the entire West Pokot County, local/community radio could be declining in influence in the contexts of high media density in the region, where they have to compete with numerous other sources of information including mobile phones. This is a critical departure from the highly acclaimed role that Kalya FM as the main media played in the region.

Some of the selected responses from respondents show that media escalated violence by involving listeners in the day to day announcements relating to chaos, playing music that could trigger violence and incite members of the community according to a respondent. In addition, another respondent stressed that media escalated violence through, *news briefs that negatively reflected some communities.*

From the study, radio and mobile phones are the most used means of receiving information as by Mahmood (2013) who contends that radio has the widest geographical reach and largest audience mainly in Africa today. However local radio is receiving competition from other media due to digitalization and globalization.

### 7. Kalya FM

From the study, 98.0% preferred listening to Kalya FM to receive information. An item was included in the questionnaires which sought for information on the period within which the respondents have listened to Kalya FM station and Figure 2 presents the findings.



**Figure 2: Periods for Listening to Kalya FM Radio Station**

Figure 2 shows that majority 63.2% of the respondents have been listening to Kalya FM station the last two year and beyond, 23.0% have been listening for the last one year, 11.1% for the past 4-6 months and 2.7% for only 1-3 months. The majority of respondents (98 percent) in Pokot Central Sub County said they did rely on

local Kalya FM radio stations for information on the violence. While one could argue that this naturally makes sense given the nature of the conflict (cattle rustling) and the fact that many of the respondents were in constant movement as they sought refuge and move with animals, this argument becomes difficult to sustain if one considers that most of the respondents said they actually relied on Kalya FM, due to constant movement due network problem and the vast geographical area.

### 8. Frequency of Tuning-in to Kalya FM

It was also necessary to establish the opinions of the respondents concerning frequency of listening of programmes and reports on issues related to security and conflict management. The respondents were asked to state how often they tuned-in and listened to Kalya FM and Figure 3 present the findings.

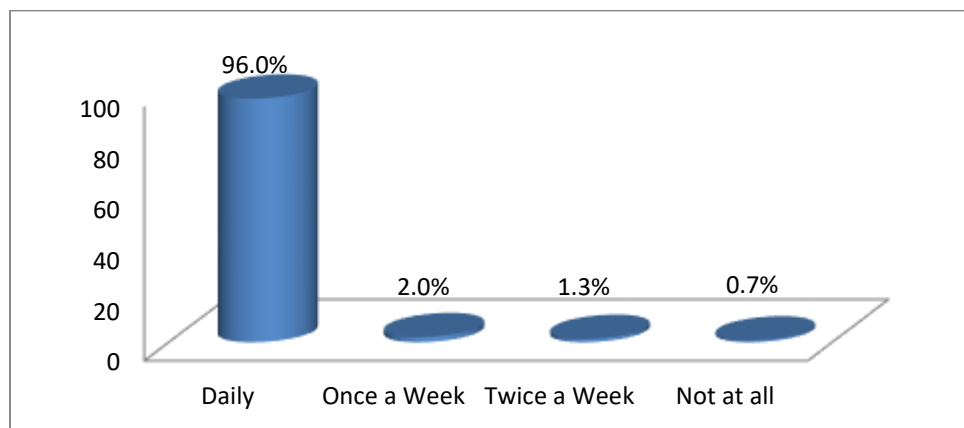


Figure 3: How often Respondents Listen to Kalya FM

The findings revealed that majority 96.0% listen to Kalya FM daily, 2.0% listened to it once a week, 1.3% twice a week while only 0.7% did not listen to it all. In terms of time, Figure 4 presents the findings.

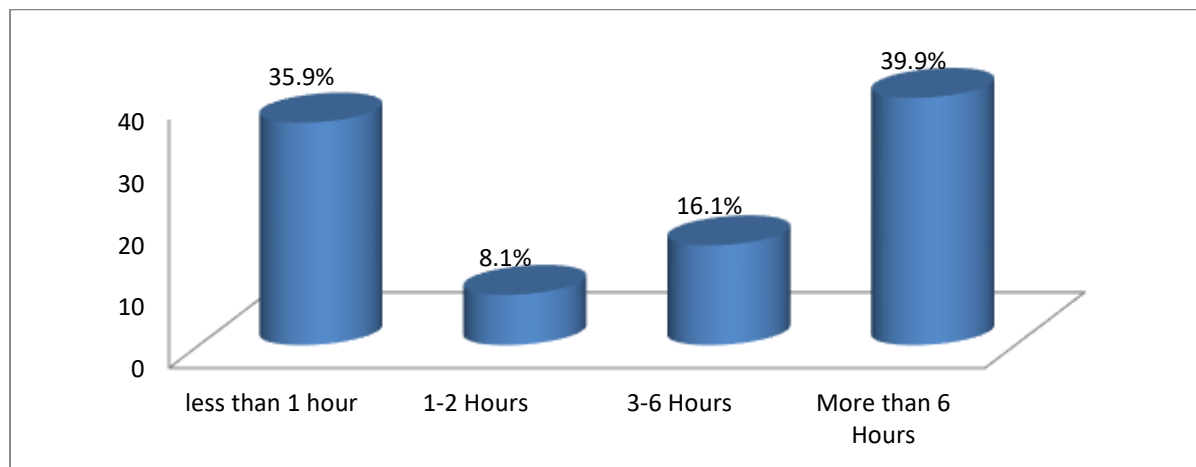


Figure 4: Numbers hours for Tuning-in Kalya FM

As shown 4.3, majority 39.9% preferred listening to Kalya FM station for more than six hours, 35.9% tuned to Kalya FM for less than an hour, 16.1% for 3-6 hours while 8.1% for 1-2 hours. This implies that Kalya FM was generally the preferred FM station in this region.

One village elder had this to say on Kalya FM: *“This is the most preferred media outlet in this region. Residents of West Pokot rely on it for breaking news, updates, events and music. Residents feel it directly tackles issues affecting them.”*

In summary radio is the most preferred mode of communicating important matters among rural Africa, with communities tuning in frequently and for many hours. This is due to high illiteracy levels, Occupation (farmers/herders/housekeepers) poverty and the cost of buying newspapers or Televisions (Nyambane, 2014).

### 9. Radio as an Escalating Agent

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the most appropriate answer regarding Kalya FM radio as an escalating agent. The response given was based on the Likert scale through which the respondents rated the extent to which they agreed with the given statements which were indicators of the so identified factor on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). The items were subjected to descriptive statistics analysis and the results obtained as to whether conflicts led to taking up of arms, increased tension, security officers carrying out operations or whether Kalya Fm broadcast about conflicts led to movement to safe places to avoid attacks. Table 2 presents the findings.

**Table 2: Kalya FM broadcasts about Conflicts**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Kalya FM broadcasts about conflict leads to:</b>					
a) Taking up of arms to fight with other communities	200 (67.6%)	74 (25.0%)	14 (4.7%)	6 (2.0%)	2 (0.7%)
b) Increased tension	79 (26.7%)	177 (59.8%)	30 (10.1%)	8 (2.7%)	2 (0.7%)
c) Security officers carrying out operations	115 (38.9%)	96 (32.4%)	69 (23.3%)	16 (5.4%)	-
d) Movement to safe places to avoid attacks	76 (25.7%)	102 (34.5%)	80 (27.0%)	24 (8.1%)	14 (4.7%)

Table 2 shows that 67.6% of the respondents strongly dis-agreed that kalya FM broadcast about conflict led to people taking up arms to fight with other communities, 25.0% disagreed and only 2.7% agreed. From the findings, 26.7% strongly disagreed that Kalya FM broad increased tension and 59.8% disagreed, 38.9% strongly disagreed that it led to security officers carrying out operation and 32.4% disagreed while only 5.4% agreed on the same. The study also revealed that 25.7% strongly agreed that Kalya broadcast led to the movement to safe places to avoid attacks, 34.5% agreed. This generally implies that Kalya FM broadcast was generally used as agent of making peace. This is a clear indication that media, and particularly Kalya Radio, makes an intervention in issues of conflict and specifically in West Pokot County being a hotspot of violent conflict.

Given these findings, media in west Pokot played a small scale pivotal influence in conflict escalation. Ideally, with its professional objectives of accuracy, impartiality and public responsibility, media should be a contributor to peace building. Kuusik (2010) concurs that the media tends to dramatize conflict either openly or tacitly by focusing on irreconcilable differences between the parties, extreme positions and inflammatory



statements, violent or threatening acts of win- or lose outcome. Specifically, a respondent claimed, “*media used news briefs that negatively reflected some communities as being antagonists to promote hatred*”.

In comparison, majority of media practitioners and security officers supported the finding that media encouraged hate speech to a large extent. According to one Kalya FM reporter, hate speech can make recipients to feel that they are targeted and thus gang up to defend themselves, which results in conflicts. This because ordinarily radio initiates tensions and exaggerates events by blowing them out of proportion and indulges in false propaganda against adversaries. In addition, Schönbach (2010), states that media can play different roles in terms of moderating, balancing and escalating a conflict. The Rwandan Genocide is a good example of how media can be directly involved in escalating of conflict. Therefore this supports the opinion that radio can fan conflict.

### 10. Kalya FM as Agent of Information

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on some statements regarding Kalya FM as a giver of information about conflicts. The response given was based on the Likert scale through which the respondents rated the extent to which they agreed with the given statements which were indicators of the so identified factor on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 3 presents the findings.

**Table 3: Kalya FM information about conflict are presented in a way that:**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Kalya FM information about conflict are in a way that:</b>					
a) They provide messages not based on truth	98 (33.1%)	117 (39.5%)	51 (17.2%)	24 (8.1%)	6 (2.0%)
b) They exaggerate messages	95 (32.1%)	134 (45.3%)	33 (11.1%)	30 (10.1%)	6 (1.4%)
c) They don't give time to all sides of the conflicting parties	62 (20.9%)	51 (17.2%)	69 (23.2%)	90 (30.4%)	24 (8.1%)
d) They don't air messages that touch negatively on government and leaders.	6 (2.0%)	12 (4.1%)	19 (6.4%)	155 (52.4%)	104 (35.1%)

Table 3 shows that 33.1% strongly disagreed that Kalya FM broadcasts provided messages that are not based on truth, 39.5% disagreed while only 10.1% agreed. From the study, 32.1% strongly disagreed that Kalya FM exaggerated messages and 45.3% disagreed while 11.5% agreed even though 30.4% of the responded did agree that Kalya FM broadcast did not give time to all sides of the conflicting parties. The study further revealed that 52.4% agreed that Kalya FM don't air messages that touch negatively on government and leaders while 35.1% strongly agreed.

In finding if Kalya is biased or externally influenced, majority of responses indicate that it is highly biased and influenced by leaders. However a higher number say that it does not exaggerate or provide false information. The kind of information broadcasted is very important as Saleem et al (2014), avers that media in conflict-ridden countries often distorts information when it plays a significant role in creating and furthering both

facilitating factors and triggering factors, for example by utilizing ‘oppositional metaphors’ (‘us’ vs. ‘them’) linked to internal and external issues or ‘threats’ facing the nation.

To back this, Kuusik (2010) contends that, the media finds it challenging to find a balance between preventing harm caused by speech and protecting individual expression, however finding balance is important in conflict situations. Responsible journalism does not just re-publish press releases but is truly concerned with a truthful, balanced and fair account of events.

### 11. Kalya FM reaction to audience views about Conflict

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on some statements regarding Kalya FM as a platform where they aired their views. Table 4 presents the findings.

**Table 4: Kalya FM as a Platform where they aired Their Views**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>I have aired my views on conflict to Kalya FM and this happened:</b>					
a) The presenter did a follow-up and gave feedback	59 (19.9%)	66 (22.3%)	48 (16.2%)	100 (33.8%)	23 (7.8%)
b) The station acted on the information by informing relevant bodies.	44 (14.9%)	62 (20.9%)	107 (36.1%)	69 (23.3%)	14 (4.7%)
c) The presenter did nothing about it	31 (10.5%)	46 (15.5%)	30 (10.1%)	119 (40.2%)	70 (23.6%)
d) The presenter avoided and cut off communication	36 (12.2%)	29 (9.8%)	30 (10.1%)	56 (18.9%)	145 (49.0%)

Table 4 shows that in the course of airing views on conflicts, 33.8% agreed that Kalya FM presenters did a follow up and 22.3% disagreed. The findings also showed that 36.1% were not sure whether the station acted on the information by informing relevant bodies, even though 49.0% strongly agreed that the presenters avoided and sometimes cut off communication.

From the above findings, majority respondents said that Kalya fm did not follow-up nor give feedback, did not act by giving it to relevant authorities, did nothing and presenters avoided the subject about conflict being aired by listeners. This is in contrast to media’s role as a preventor of conflict. According to Anderlini et al., (2008), preventing conflict is not a single event of getting information but responding to crises, collaboration with security, government, religious units, leaders and other stakeholders to address issues before they escalate and following up to assess the efforts put in place.

To establish the relationship between radio as an escalating agent and the ethical practice of impartiality, the sought to establish the relation between taking arms to fight with other communities and radio acting partially in disseminating information about conflicts. The study used Pearsons moments correlations test to establish the relationship between the two variables and Table 5 presents the findings.

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix between Taking up of Arms and Radio Partiality**

		Taking up of arms to fight with other communities	Partiality by Radio
Taking up of arms to fight with other communities	Pearson Correlation	1	.194(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	296	296
Partiality by Radio	Pearson Correlation	.194(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	296	296

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 5, the relationship between taking of arms to fight with other communities and radio partiality, had a correlation coefficient of 0.194 and an alpha value of 0.001. This therefore confirms that the relationship between the two variables had statistical significance and not by chance. This is because the alpha value was below 0.05 for it to have statistical significance.

The findings above prove that failure by media to be impartial can lead to bias intended or unintended as Awoshakin (2002), observes. He furthers says that while reporting conflicts, objectivity is an important ideal even if it is an uphill task to achieve. Information and content that is distorted leads to escalation of conflict. Noshina (2014) argues that distorted media contents create the feelings of fear prior to and during the conflict that the riots and violence are inevitable by shifting toward consistently negative reporting; this because media has been used as a tool to inflame grievances and accelerate the escalation towards violent conflicts.

## 12. Role of Radio as De-Escalating Agent

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the most appropriate answer regarding Kalya FM radio as a de-escalating agent. The response given was based on the Likert scale through which the respondents rated the extent to which they agreed with the given statements which were indicators of the so identified factor on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). The items were subjected to descriptive statistics analysis and the results obtained as to whether listening to Kalya FM had led to peaceful interaction with the neighboring communities, whether it has led to more awareness about the impending conflicts. Other items include whether listening to Kalya FM has led to improved participation inter-community events for peace or whether it has increased public debate on peace matters about conflicts. Table 6 presents the findings.

**Table 6: Listening to Kalya FM**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Listening to Kalya FM has led to:</b>					
a) Peaceful interaction with neighboring communities	-	8 (2.7%)	8 (2.7%)	171 (57.4%)	111 (37.2%)
b) More awareness about impending conflict	-	10 (3.4%)	40 (13.4%)	99 (33.2%)	149 (50.0%)

c) Improved Participation in inter-community events for peace	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)	10 (3.4%)	145 (48.7%)	139 (46.6%)
d) Increased public debate on peace matters about conflict	-	4 (1.4%)	10 (3.4%)	89 (30.1%)	193 (65.2%)

The results from Table 6 shows that 57.4% agreed that listening to Kalya FM has led to peaceful interaction with neighboring communities and 37.2% strongly agreed on the same. Fifty percent 50.0% strongly agreed that listening to Kalya FM has led to more awareness about impending conflicts, 46.6% strongly agreed that Kalya FM has led improved participation in inter-community events for peace. Majority 65.2% strongly agreed that listening to Kalya FM broadcast had led to increased public debate on peace matters about conflicts. Kalya FM personnel interviewed said that peace programs in the station have led to the containment of the violence witnessed in 2014/2015 due to cattle rustling. Furthermore, conflict hotspots are now peaceful and people are now engaged in economic ventures including agriculture as shown earlier. Government officials interviewed said Kalya FM radio has provided a forum for constructive dialogue on peace amongst the warring communities and the peace programs have complemented government efforts to promote peaceful co-existence.

From the interview results, there were conflicting views. Security officials believed that radio (including Kalya FM) encouraged or promoted controlled propaganda while media practitioners denied so and argued that they objectively reported what leaders said and this fact could cause conflicts. In support of his view, a media practitioner upholds that care is exercised in aired content to ensure validity and reliability of information before it is aired to avoid propaganda. Conversely, a security specialist argued that there could be factual accuracy in a single story that could not be substituted for the total truth. He stated that; “...*factual accuracy can be misleading and thus can be used to promote propaganda.*”

From the above results Kalya fm has highly been rated for promoting peaceful interactions, awareness, community participation and public debate. This is backed by peace media scholars who argue that media acts as a surveillance tool for de-escalation by avoiding propaganda and providing adequate and quality information based on truth as (Melone et al., 2002).

A peace promoting media deliberately designs programs that aim at dialogue, reconciliation and positive transformation of attitudes and behavior as proposed by Aho (2004). In addition Melone et al., (2002) concur that when media gives all the information along with facts and figures, it, in a way, decreases misperceptions and creates mutual understanding in the process of conflict resolution.

### 13. Mode of Airing Peace Messages

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the most appropriate mode through which Kalya FM radio aired peace message. The response given was based on the Likert scale of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 7 presents the findings.

**Table 7: Mode of Airing Peace Messages**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Kalya FM airs about peace through:</b>					
a)Talk shows	4 (1.3%)	8 (2.7%)	32 (10.7%)	175 (58.7%)	79 (26.5%)
b) News	-	2 (0.7%)	12 (4.0%)	65 (21.8%)	219 (73.5%)
c) Music	-	2 (0.7%)	14 (4.7%)	85 (28.5%)	197 (66.1%)
d) Drama and comedy	73 (24.5%)	20 (6.7%)	162 (54.4%)	29 (9.7%)	14 (4.7%)

As shown in Table 7, 58.7% agreed that Kalya FM airs about peace through talk shows, 73.5% strongly agreed that they aired peace messages through news, 66.1% through music and 54.4% were not sure whether drama and comedy was also used to air peace messages.

From the above results Kalya fm has succeeded most in peace campaigning through news, followed by music, talk shows and drama in that order. This means it has positively engaged program scheduling in a well researched and analyzed format as seconded by Aho, (2004) who mentions that for media to promote peace building, they have to carry out intended outcome programming.

#### 14. Impact of Airing Peace Messages

The respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with some statements on the impact of using Kalya FM radio to air peace message. The responses given were based on the Likert scale of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 8 presents the findings.

**Table 8: Impact of Airing Peace Messages**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Airing of these leads to:</b>					
a) More reception to the message of peace	6 (2.0%)	-	2 (0.7%)	124 (41.9%)	164 (55.4%)
b) Improved knowledge about our rights	6 (2.0%)	8 (2.7%)	45 (15.2%)	90 (30.4%)	147 (49.7%)
c) Improved relations with neighboring communities	-	4 (1.4%)	11 (3.7%)	122 (41.2%)	159 (53.7%)
d) Increased demand for accountability and responsibility from leaders.	18 (6.1%)	40 (13.5%)	95 (32.1%)	40 (13.5%)	103 (34.5%)

Table 8 shows that 55.4% strongly agreed that airing of peace messages through Kalya FM resulted into more reception to the message of peace, 49.7% strongly agreed that it improved knowledge about rights, 53.7% indicated that it improved relations with neighboring communities while 34.5% strongly agreed that airing

peace messages through Kalya FM had led to increased demand for accountability and responsibility from leaders.

Through interview a Kalya FM presenter had this to say:

*“I have been doing so many radio talk shows in Pokot and Swahili languages in propagating peace. I realized my community relates more with radio stations that broadcast in local languages than the national stations” (A presenter, Kalya FM, 10th September, 2018).*

A Producer in Kalya FM had this to say:

*“Beyond the normal peace dialogue, we needed to have wider conversations around the prevention and response to constant conflict at the grassroots hence my goal of reaching a wider audience” (A producer, Kalya FM 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2018).*

The following sentiments concur with Nwanne (2007) who argued that if media truly desire to assist in conflict resolution and peace building they must be objective. He emphasizes that achieving a higher level of objectivity require journalists to always present conflicting possibilities, supporting evidence, judicious use of quotations, structuring information in an appropriate sequence and above all, humility. In the long run, like Das (2009) would say, the journalists ‘mission becomes that of telling what is going on, as completely, accurately, honestly and dispassionately as possible.

To establish the relationship between radio as an de-escalating agent and listening to Kalya FM, the sought to establish the relation between improved participation in inter-community peace events and better relations with neighboring communities. The study employed Pearsons moments correlations test to establish the relationship between the two variables and Table 9 presents the findings.

**Table 9: Correlation Matrix between improved Participation in Intercommunity Peace events and Better relations with Neighbors**

		Improved participation in inter-community events for peace	Better Relations with neighboring Communities
Improved participation in inter-community events for peace	Pearson Correlation	1	.192(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	298	296
Better Relations with neighboring Communities	Pearson Correlation	.192(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	296	296

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 9 the relationship between improved participation in inter-community peace events and better relations with neighboring communities, had a correlation coefficient of 0.192 and an alpha value of 0.001. This therefore confirms that the relationship between the two variables had statistical significance and not by chance. This is because the alpha value was below 0.05 for it to have statistical significance.

To prove media’s role in peace building, Kalya FM ‘s role in reducing conflict cannot be ignored as witnessed by the high number of respondents who agreed that it is a tool of peace and that there exists improved inter-relations with neighboring communities. Furthermore, the participatory communication theory states that mass media is utilized for matters that improve and empower society through involving communities in solving their own problems and providing home grown solutions (Doan-Bao et al., 2018). Different views and knowledge are shared for outcomes that are otherwise ignored by national governments. This is a testimony that local radio acts on local problems to come up with local solutions for society’s benefit.

### 15. Intervening Role of Socio-Cultural Factors

The study sought to establish the intervening role of socio-cultural factors by Kalya FM radio. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). The items were subjected to descriptive statistics analysis as to whether listening to Kalya FM had led them into making decision on what to do with messages, whether the culture of the community had strong effect on members or what the community’s way of life dictated. Table 10 presents the findings.

**Table 10: Role of Kalya FM on Decision Making**

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
<b>I listen to Kalya Fm and decide what to do with messages about conflict basing on:</b>					
a)What my religion says	24 (8.7%)	51 (18.6%)	199 (72.7%)		
b) What community leaders say	10 (3.6%)	41 (15.0%)	109 (39.8%)	114 (41.6%)	
c)What family leadership decides	4 (1.5%)	12 (4.4%)	37 (13.5%)	100 (36.5%)	121 (44.2%)
d) My abilities as a man or woman	8 (2.9%)	12 (4.4%)	53 (19.3%)	55 (20.1%)	146 (53.3%)

Table 10 shows that 48.2% listened to Kalya FM and decided what to do with messages about conflict basing on what their religion said, 41.6% strongly agreed with what community leaders said, 44.2% strongly agreed with what the family leadership decided and 53.3% agreed with their abilities as men or women. Advocacy for peace is also achieved through imploring authorities for capacity building, educating locals about their rights and arranging meetings between both men and women. However according to Trichie (2014), the Pokot society is based on patrilineal heritage and is organized around clan systems.

Among the Pokot, women may receive and embrace media messages of reconciliation, but decisions are a prerogative of elders who must approve since the women are regarded as “not very visible”. Pkalya (2004) observes that a womans’ role ends with “being asked” to perform peace songs or rubber stamp what the men folk have deliberated. Radio’s peace and conflict agenda was influenced by who and how decisions are made, how responsibilities are assigned, power difference between men and women, age-set factor and the secrecy factor amongst the Pokot community.

### 16. Role of Kalya FM on Culture of the Community

The respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with some statement on the role of Kalya FM on the culture of the community and its effects on the members. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 11 presents the findings.

**Table 11: Intervening Role of Kalya FM on Culture of the Community**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>The culture of the community has strong effect on members. This power leads to:</b>					
a) Men making decisions about engaging in conflict.	83 (30.3%)	22 (8.0%)	14 (5.1%)	125 (45.6%)	30 (10.9%)
b) Men calling for peace and reconciliation	8 (2.9%)	16 (5.8%)	8 (2.9%)	63 (23.0%)	179 (65.3%)
c) Women encouraging revenge for enemies	67 (24.5%)	64 (23.4%)	37 (13.5%)	50 (80.2%)	56 (20.4%)
d) Women preaching peace and reconciliation	-	2 (0.7%)	6 (2.2%)	50 (18.2%)	216 (78.8%)

Table 11 shows that despite the intervening role of Kalya FM, 45.6% agreed the culture of the community has strong effect on members which lead to men making decisions about engaging in conflicts, 65.3% strongly agreed that men called for peace and reconciliation. The study further revealed that 80.2% agreed that women on the other hand, encouraged revenge for enemies, interestingly 78.8% also strongly agreed that women were equally involved in preaching peace and reconciliation.

One Security Officer in the community had this to say regarding the role played by Kalya FM to reduce conflict in West Pokot County:

*The conversations on Kalya FM radio have been very interactive and effective. You can tell the enthusiasm of communities on issues that affect their livelihoods and peaceful co-existence from the way they ask questions and give feedback on issues relating to Conflicts and resolution mechanism in West Pokot County,” she narrates. Women also discuss the radio conversations during their ‘chamas’ (local women gatherings), meaning that the Kalya FM radio programmes on Conflict Management have touched their lives (Police Officer, West Pokot Central Sub-County).*

### 17. The Way of Life of the Community

The respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with some statement on the way of life of the community and its effects on the members. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 12 presents the findings.



**Table 12: The Way of Life of the Community**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>The way of life of the community dictates that:</b>					
a) Appointed elders make most important decisions	-	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.5%)	161 (58.8%)	107 (39.1%)
b) Community information is guarded from outsiders	2 (0.7%)	-	-	44 (16.1%)	228 (83.2%)
c) Responsibilities are assigned according to gender	-	-	-	92 (33.6%)	182 (66.4%)
d) Clans live collectively for protection	-	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)	24 (8.8%)	246 (89.8%)

Table 12 shows that 58.8% of the respondents agreed that the way of life of the community dictated that appointed elders make most important decisions; 83.2% strongly agreed that community information is guarded from outsiders. The findings also revealed that 66.4% strongly agreed that responsibility of the community is assigned according to the gender and 89.8% strongly agreed that clans live collectively for protection.

The findings indicate that social and cultural factors have a strong influence on most decisions and actions among communities in West Pokot County. These are in line with Triche (2014), whose findings prove that a heritage passed down generations still influences decision making. Furthermore, conflict and peace matters Acted, (2016), are affected by a combination of underlying causes such as migratory patterns, occupations and age-sets that sets the Pokot apart from the rest of the “outside world”.

Interestingly, women who are the life givers and are seen to nurture live, encourage revenge for enemies while at the same time call for peace.

### 18. Conflict Management

The study sought to establish the effects of effective conflict management. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). The items were subjected to descriptive statistics analysis regarding effect of involvement of outside parties in conflict peace meetings, effects of taking part in peace meetings and the effect of involvement of Kalya FM in conflict diplomacy. Table 13 presents the findings on effects of involvement of outside parties.

**Table 13: Involvement of Outside Parties in Conflict Peace Meeting**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Involvement of outside parties in conflict peace meetings lead to :</b>					
a) Opening of communication lines for parties not in talking terms	-	-	2 (0.7%)	183 (61.8%)	111 (37.5%)
b) Greater support for agreements	-	-	8 (2.7%)	98 (33.1%)	190 (64.2%)
c) Ease of making demands to opponents	13	38	43	86	116

	(4.4%)	(12.8%)	(14.5%)	(29.1%)	(39.2%)
d) Trust and confidence for all parties	-	-	2	46	248
			(0.7%)	(15.5%)	(83.8%)

As presented in Table 13, majority 61.8% agreed that involvement of outside parties in conflict peace meetings has led to opening of communication lines for parties not in talking terms, 84.2% strongly agreed that it led to greater support for agreements. The study further revealed that 39.2% strongly agreed that involvement of outside parties has led to ease of making demands to opponents and majority 83.8% strongly agreed that it has led to trust and confidence for all parties. According to Richmond, (2005), conflict Management therefore involves use of peace builders acting as external diplomats and bilateral or multilateral organizations where leaders of the parties play a role in the conflict; the efforts are aimed at short-term management.

### 19. Effects of Taking Part in Peace Meetings

The respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with some statement on the effects of taking part in peace meetings and its effects on the members. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 14 presents the findings.

**Table 14: Effects of Taking Part in Peace Meetings**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Taking part in peace meetings enables community members do the following:</b>					
a) Give information about conflicts	-	-	32	157	107
			(10.8%)	(53.0%)	(36.1%)
b) Preach reconciliation	-	-	2	78	214
			(0.7%)	(26.5%)	(72.8%)
c) Help make decisions	-	-	4	116	176
			(1.4%)	(39.2%)	(59.5%)
d) Take part in oaths	4	8	72	51	161
	(1.4%)	(2.7%)	(24.3%)	(17.2%)	(54.4%)

As presented in Table 14, majority 53.0% agreed that taking part in peace meetings enables the community to give information about conflicts, 72.8% strongly agreed that it preached reconciliation. The study also revealed that 59.5% strongly agreed that taking part in peace meetings helped the community to make decisions and 54.4% strongly agreed that it enabled the community to take part in oaths. However media personalities interviewed said that the biggest challenge facing Kalya FM Radio in promoting peace and cohesion in West Pokot County is lack of adequate funding. This has made it hard for them to report on conflict in remote areas. In addition they cited high staff turnover, technological challenges as well as lack of adequate equipment.

Government officials interviewed, felt that if there are any challenges facing Kalya FM radio in promoting conflict, they are minimal. They added that community members are the owners of peace and living harmoniously is a choice for them to make. Media can set the conflict management agenda in a major way, influence main actors, such as the government and opinion leaders to take steps towards managing a conflict.

## 20. Involvement of Kalya FM in Conflict Diplomatic Initiatives

The respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with some statement on the involvement of Kalya FM in conflict diplomatic initiatives and its effects on the peace building. The responses given were based on the Likert of 1 – 5 where 1 was Strongly Agree (SA) and 5 Strongly Disagree (1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree). Table 15 presents the findings.

**Table 15: Involvement of Kalya FM in Conflict Diplomatic Initiatives**

Statement	SD=5	D=4	NAD=3	A=2	SA=1
<b>Involvement of Kalya FM in conflict diplomatic initiatives has led to:</b>					
a) Heightened campaigns for peace	1	-	4 (1.4%)	141 (48.0%)	149 (50.7%)
b) Improved security from government		4 (1.4%)	18 (6.1%)	84 (28.6%)	188 (63.9%)
c) Increased forgiveness and reconciliation	-	-	6 (2.0%)	96 (32.7%)	192 (65.3%)
d) Improved leaders accountability to communities	10 (3.4%)	18 (6.1%)	63 (21.4%)	52 (17.7%)	151 (51.4%)

As presented in Table 15, 50.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that involvement of Kalya FM in conflict diplomatic initiative has led to heightened campaign for peace, 63.9% strongly agreed that it has led to improved security from government. It was also revealed that 65.3% strongly believe that involvement of Kalya FM in conflict diplomatic initiatives has led to increased forgiveness and reconciliation while 51.4% strongly agreed that it had led to improved leaders accountability to the community.

The findings above are in line with the conflict management agenda according to Richmond, (2005), which involves the use of peace builders acting as external middle ground parties aimed at short-term management while long term efforts are carried by the affected communities with the help of volunteers over a long period of time (Infinity). In this case, communities are able to build trust, provide information, make demands and gain support for their agreements. According to Spencer (2004), journalists are “full and active participants in contestations and dialogues about peace” where they gather and deliver information and affect the events they report; thus the media have the power to determine the direction of events in a conflict. With Kalya FM as a link, they are able to preach reconciliation, gain improved security and hold leaders accountable.

## 21. Conclusion

Based on the study findings, radio (Kalya FM) is the most pervasive medium and communication tool for de-escalating conflict in West Pokot county. The findings also suggest a number of other things. First, that radio remains a critical avenue through which communities particularly in remote West Pokot County send and receive information. This is important because, for practical purposes, the issue of access to these vital sources of information is necessary for active citizenship participation in conflict management.

In view of the findings of this research, it can be concluded that radio contributes to conflict resolution. It is evident that radio is a suitable media for disseminating messages of peace in conflict torn areas not only during

the actual conflicts but also during the post conflict period. Ideally, with its professional objectives of accuracy, impartiality and public responsibility, media should be a contributor to peace building.

The findings also show that through its peace programs, Kalya FM Radio has made a big contribution to conflict resolution in terms of West Pokot County. Moreover, it continues to provide a platform on which area residents discuss social issues, increased accountability for leaders, and chief among them being the need to build & maintain peace. Kalya FM radio has provided a forum for constructive dialogue on peace and the need for reconciliation amongst the warring communities and the peace programs have complemented government efforts to promote peaceful co-existence.

In addition, despite Kalya FM playing a leading role in reducing conflicts in the entire West Pokot County, local/community radio could be declining in influence in the contexts of high media density in the region, where they have to compete with numerous other sources of information including mobile phones. This is a critical departure from the highly acclaimed role that Kalya FM as the main media played in the region.

This study findings also imply that information and content aired must not be distorted otherwise this may lead to escalation of conflict. Distorted media contents create the feelings of fear prior to and during the conflict that violence is inevitable. By consistent negative reporting, media becomes a tool to inflame grievances and accelerate the escalation towards violent conflicts.

Yet when media gives all the information along with facts & figures, fairness, truthfulness and without influence it, in a way, decreases misperceptions and creates mutual understanding in the process of conflict resolution therefore having an upper hand as a superior trusted information giver and giving other forms of media a run for their money

Even though the Pokot society is highly influenced by cultural factors, advocacy for peace can be achieved through imploring authorities for capacity building, educating locals about their rights and arranging meetings between both men and women.

In conclusion, Conflict Management therefore can involve successful use of media as a tool of peace building where all stake holders play a role in the conflict resolution.

## **22. Recommendation for Policy Makers**

Based on the findings and conclusions, this study recommends that:

- i. Media organizations should come up with broadcasting policies that give more prominence to issues of conflict resolution and peace building especially with regard to the frequency of peace and conflict resolution programming. In addition, the media should design programs meant for conflict resolution in such a manner as to allow audience participation since issues of conflict touch on all people.
- ii. All stake holders including policy holders in the media environment need to understand that the conflict in West Pokot is a unique one and requires unique measures. This includes improved ICT in the region, increased support for media peace efforts and involvement of external mediators.
- iii. In general the Kenyan laws should allow free expression of views and reduce limiting media practices such as the oppressive media laws introduced in Kenyan Parliament. Oppressive laws curtail community members in Pastoralist communities from freely airing their views and openly seeking help.

This makes them find home grown solutions to access & creation of information and decision making which can be disastrous, thus negating peace efforts.

- iv. Kenya government needs to create information and media policy regimes that facilitate increased citizen access to radio in pastoralist areas that promote peace efforts & conflict resolution as well as subsidize program production (all media). This includes mobile radio stations that serve pastoralists on the move. Education as a driver of progress should be promoted in West Pokot in order to get the communities outside the box of culture (which has a strong influence on peace efforts) and enable them make objective informed decisions in matters conflict management.
- v. There is need for the government to allocate more money to allow ease of transport to far flung areas, set up and allocate specially trained security units that deal with conflict matters, to journalists and other stakeholders such as NGO's. As the study revealed the vast land and security are major problems for parties taking part in peace meetings.
- vi. Government security forces ability to resolve conflict has been wanting. Reported cases of excessive force meted on innocent old men and women in such areas by the Police under the aegis of flushing out suspected cattle rustlers coupled with the ensuing rounding off of thousands of livestock have greatly eroded the government's capacity to resolve cattle rustling and related conflicts in Arid and Semi Arid areas in Kenya.

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