

The Role of Community Radios in Changing Perceptions of Cattle Rustling Communities in Turkana County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Cattle rustling has constantly devastated and disrupted normal livelihoods of the pastoral community in Turkana. Traditionally, cattle rustling is a growing phenomenon and was perceived as a cultural activity through which cattle were raided to pay dowry among Turkana communities. However, in society today, cattle rustling has taken a different dimension altogether! It is characterized by the proliferation of sophisticated small arms in the wrong hands of bandits, which has resulted in wanton and reckless killings, children and women maimed, and property destroyed. To bring to an end the escalating challenges bedeviling the pastoralist community, as a result of persistent banditry in Turkana, In this regard, the study investigated the role played by community radios like Ekeyokon and Echami on changing perceptions of pastoralists in providing a long-lasting solution to the menace. The four objectives of the study were, first, to explain the extent to which community radio programs change perceptions of communities on cattle rustling. Second, to examine the role stakeholders play in providing an enabling environment for community radio stations to change perceptions of cattle-rustling communities. Third, to appraise the strategies the stakeholders put in place to leverage on the community radio stations, and finally, to evaluate the challenges community radio stations face in changing perceptions of communities on cattle rustling in Turkana. A descriptive research design was used in the study. Target population was 400,000 listeners. A sample size of 400 was determined using the Lamola and Yamane formula. Purposive sampling was used to identify the pastoralist community. A simple random sampling technique was also used to identify 5 radio editors, program producers, chair MCK-Turkana, County Director of Peace, and a representative of the Peace partner. Agenda-setting theory was used to evaluate the research problem. On data collection, the study administered a structured questionnaire and key informant interview schedule. Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 26 and content analysis were used to analyze data. The study concluded that community radio in Turkana was the only powerful game-changer that influences pastoralists' mindsets and social behavior on cattle rustling. The study recommended the county government intentionally establish a Community Media Fund to effectively support community radios to change pastoralists' mindsets on the barbaric cattle rustling. It also put forward that the county government must formulate policies and legislation that make radios more effective and efficient. At the same time, outlaws cattle rustling. The study applies to academia, national and county governments, and non-state actors.

Keywords: Banditry, Community Radio Service, Cattle Rustling, Community Radio, Kenya Community Media Network, Media Sector Fund

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Anas and Edward (2012), Community Radio in Africa, posit that community radio, over time, has developed differently in different countries given the local needs. Early experiences of using community radios in North America and Europe, as well as Latin America, have shaped and motivated the use and spread of community radio worldwide. He continued to say that the success reported from those early initiatives had motivated the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Culture Organization (UNESCO) to exploit it in many initiatives targeting communities in developing countries. According to them, the Voice of the Community in the Philippines was among the first independent community radios set up with help from UNESCO with the aim to empower residents of local communities through information, to take better advantage of existing development opportunities, and to seek their own development opportunities through discussion and debate. There are many other well-documented and well-remembered community radio initiatives serving communities across the globe.

According to Birgitte (2022a), in Latin America, a much-known successful community radio is a radio that targeted miners in the mining district of Columbia, Catavi in Bolivia, and the United States of America (USA). The experience started in the late 1940s and early 1950s of the 21st century. They mushroomed up through from the 1970s to the 1990s, starting in the South and moving northwards. The usefulness of the station has motivated local residents

to financially support the stations and ensure their sustainability. The impact of these stations has triggered other mining communities in other districts to follow suit. By the beginning of the 1970s, there were more than 25 stations serving mining communities across Bolivia.

In India, community broadcasting has been indispensable, where there are 18 officially recognized languages and many more languages, and a considerable percentage of the population are underprivileged or minority cultures. Radio technology has been enabling those communities to have access to information specific to their communities, such as weather conditions, coverage of cultural events, public announcements on electricity and water supplies, disaster warnings, and health alerts (Anas & Edward, 2012).

A report by UNESCO (2024) suggests that community radio can be an effective tool in the provision of the important democratic rights of citizens to have access to reliable, accurate, and timely information. This statement reaffirms the potential of community radio in enabling access and promoting participation. The same report also claims that community radio can play an important role in the inclusion of minority and marginalized groups and support diversity in public deliberations. It summarizes the functions of community radio in: reflecting and promoting local identity, character, and culture; creating a diversity of voices and opinions; providing a diversity of programs and content; encouraging open dialogue and democratic process; promoting development and social change; promoting civil society; promoting good governance; and encouraging participation and sharing of information and innovation.

Birgitte (2022b) observes that community radio gives communities a voice and allows them to define their path, pandering neither to political nor commercial interests. It is in the unique position of only operating in the interests of the community it serves. It is a platform for the community's freedom of expression, a fundamental human right in a democracy.

Bulunga Incubator (2023) acknowledges that CR, even with the proliferation of communication platforms and technology, stands out as unique and remains as the community's foolproof solution for socioeconomic problems, connection, information, and entertainment. Either globally or nationally, it plays a crucial role in providing a powerful voice to underrepresented people, sharing information that is relevant to their daily lives, promoting social-economic cohesion, and linking them to opportunities. These, among others, are the key reasons that gave birth to the establishment of the community radio.

In Kenya, Ochichi (2014) argues that CR remains the most important media in most rural parts of the country, due to illiteracy levels. Radio is a driving force of change among the masses and has significantly played the role of a change agent. Most Kenyans, especially in remote parts of the country, consume radio for news and information. Those who are illiterate find it convenient to hear and listen to radio that airs in their own most common local language.

In 1982, Anas and Edward (2012) still maintain that Homa Bay Community Radio Station, one of the most well-known and perhaps Africa's first community radio, was established. The station served the East African Homa Bay rural community on Lake Victoria in Kenya. The station was a joint initiative by the Kenyan government and UNESCO. This station, though short lived, is considered a landmark in the history of community radio usage in Africa. The station provided valuable experience in decentralization of structures and programming and the use of low-cost technology and localization for rural communities' development. According to them, with the benefit and effectiveness of such low-cost technology and its appeal to local communities, the use of community radio spread quickly to other countries and regions. In the 1990s, community radio took off in many African countries as a part of what has been called the third wave of democratization in Africa. This has been evident in many countries, like Liberia and Mozambique, among others.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Turkana County is geographically in the north-west part of Kenya, the North Rift region, characterized by its arid landscape and predominantly dominated by a nomadic pastoralist population. According to the opinion piece by Guyo (2024), Turkana, like other counties in North Rift, is always confronted with escalating cattle rustling challenges due to constant banditry in the area. The scattered population with limited government services and the customary governance of herders aggravate further the situation, prompting communities to wander across borders in search of pasture and water. The urgency for mobility has been amplified with climate change, intertwining with heightened insecurity in the region (Guyo, 2024).

Over the years, the Turkana community has borne the brunt of illegal guns ferried through the porous borders of its neighbors. It is these guns that are used during cattle raids, which have increased in recent times. The continuous spate of the many cattle rustling attacks and banditry in Turkana County has claimed many innocent lives of both innocent civilians and uniformed security officers, as well as destruction of property. Guyo (2024) opined that the consequences of both cattle rustling and banditry have posed a security threat to the Turkana pastoralist community. He argues, has led to a devastating way of life, encompassing large-scale cattle raiding, armed robbery of households,

violence against women and girls, human rights abuses, community-to-community revenge attacks, and property destruction. The menace has resulted in increased widows, widowers, orphaned children, poverty, displacement of people, disruption of education programs, and other economic activities owing to the destruction or closure of educational, health, and other key institutions. This, as a result, has denied people living in Turkana the enjoyment of their social, economic, and political rights as guaranteed to them under the Bill of Rights as enshrined in Chapter Four of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

With the statement of Elias (2023), we all agree that cattle rustling has increasingly become lethal, leading to deaths and destruction of property. This is a hitherto unknown phenomenon that has become part and parcel of armed cattle raiding. As a result of a lack of social amenities and minimal government presence, the Turkana pastoral community has resorted to using illicit small arms and light weapons for self-protection and protection of their livestock.

According to Kaino (2017) in his opinion piece, the traditional cattle raids have changed to a full-fledged war that has left behind scars of bitterness and hatred among the warring communities. He further argues that the issue is that, unlike in the past, pastoral communities are no longer using the traditional bows and arrows. They are now using AK 47, G3, mortars, and even grenades, among other sophisticated weapons. It was therefore against this backdrop that the study interrogated the role a community radio plays in critically changing the perceptions of pastoral communities against cattle rustling in Turkana.

1.2 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were: -

- i. To establish the role of community radio programs that change perceptions of pastoralist communities on cattle rustling in Turkana County.
- ii. To investigate the role of stakeholders in providing an enabling environment for community radio stations in changing perceptions of communities on cattle rustling in Turkana county.
- iii. To identify the strategies radio stakeholders ought to put in place to leverage the community radio stations in changing perceptions of communities on cattle rustling in Turkana county.
- iv. To evaluate the challenges community radio stations, face in their effort to change perceptions of communities on cattle rustling in Turkana county.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions for the study were:

- i. How does community radio programmes promote change in perceptions of pastoral communities towards cattle rustling in Turkana County, Kenya ?
- ii. What role do stakeholders play to provide an enabling environment for community radios to change perceptions of pastoral communities towards cattle rustling in Turkana County, Kenya?
- iii. What are the strategies radio stakeholders ought to put in place to leverage the community radio stations to change perceptions of pastoral communities towards cattle rustling in Turkana County, Kenya?
- iv. What are the key challenges community radios face in their effort to change perceptions of pastoral communities towards cattle rustling in Turkana County, Kenya?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Agenda-Setting Theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) was embedded in analyzing the change of perceptions of pastoralist communities in regards to cattle rustling in Turkana. The theory was formally developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Lewis Shaw in a study on the 1968 presidential elections deemed "the Chapel Hill study." McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation between one hundred Chapel Hill residents' thoughts on what was the most important election issue and what the local news media reported was the most important issue. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions, McCombs and Shaw determine the degree to which the media sways public opinion. Further, it also suggests that media has a great influence on their audience by instilling what they should think about instead of what they actually think. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important (Kim et al., 2017).

It also explains that the communications media, through their ability to identify and publicize issues, play a pivotal role in shaping the problems that attract attention from governments and international organizations and direct public opinion towards specific issues. The theory suggests that the media can shape public opinion by determining what issues are given the most attention and has been widely studied and applied to various forms of media. The way

news stories and topics that impact public opinion are presented is influenced by the media. It is predicated on the idea that most individuals only have access to one source of information on most issues: the news media. Since they establish the agenda, they may affect how important some things are seen to be. The agenda-setting by the media is driven by the media's bias on things such as politics, economy, culture, etc. Audiences consider an issue to be more significant the more media attention it receives, usually issue saliency (Kim et al., 2017; Protess & McCombs, 2016).

This theory describes the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. It posits that if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important. It is therefore relevant and useful, as community radio is a form of mass media that will effectively shape the public opinion and understanding of socioeconomic and political discussions against cattle rustling in Turkana. Simply put, it sets the agenda on cattle rustling as a socioeconomic issue. Community radio has helped pastoralist communities to have their public agenda set, especially on what they want to know and think about the cattle rustling menace, while at the same time, the policy agenda has been determined in finding out what regulatory or legislative actions are to be taken against perpetrators of cattle rustling in Turkana County.

2.2 Empirical Review

According to the Media Council of Kenya (2023/2024) Survey Report of the State of Media in Kenya, with a listenership of 33%, community radio is still a powerful tool in catalyzing change in the community, for example, the change of attitudes and perceptions to the retrogressive act of cattle rustling. With the survey, 78% of the listeners use radio for information more in rural areas, unlike in urban towns.

In the same line, according to Hall (2024), the Ipsos survey on Joint National Listenership Research shows the latest results as 3.4 million listeners tune into radio every weekday, that is, daily radio listening at 81.0% of all adults. Weekly listenership also increased to 91% of the total Kenyan population. This makes radio a popular community medium trusted for channeling information.

In addition to this, community radio has also been seen as a key to raising indigenous voices for the rural communities to advocate for their rights. Communication For All (2024) has strengthened indigenous community radio in Central America through training of community leaders to advocate for their rights, in particular for their right to their land, language, and other socioeconomic issues. CFA stresses that strengthening the network of Indigenous community radio broadcasters was essential to efforts to protect and promote indigenous rights of the communities.

Biwott and Mberia (2019) evidently reaffirm that CR is a suitable medium for disseminating messages of calm and peace in areas prone to cattle rustling practices. Ideally, she says, with its professional objectives of accuracy, impartiality, and public responsibility, CR should be a de-escalating agent to cattle rustling communities in North Rift counties where cattle rustling is the order of the day. Biwott and Mberia (2019) said, through its peace programs, Kalya FM Radio has made a big contribution to conflict management in West Pokot County. Moreover, she continued to add, it continues to provide a platform on which area residents discuss social issues and increase accountability for their leaders as they provide lasting solutions to the problems affecting them.

According to the Kenya Advertising Research Foundation, in their audience tracking survey for May 2019, more than 90% of the Kenyan population have access to the radio. With more than 350 radio stations in the country. In the same breadth, the Kenya Audience Research Foundation (2019), 87% of the population in the North Western region of Kenya, in which Turkana County is located, is in access to the radio. In Turkana, there exists a number of radio stations whose aim have been to air messages on peace-building against the cattle-rustling mentality. For instance, the launch of the Ata Nayeche FM in Kakuma was to ensure emphasis on peaceful coexistence between the communities in Northern Kenya (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2012).

A study by Lihavi (2020) recommends that the only sustainable and convenient solution to the persistent cattle rustling between Turkana and its neighbors is through community radios through well-designed programming that prioritizes change of mindset in terms of social and behavioral change. In so doing, she argues, the pastoralists pressure on competition for scarce water, pasture, and land that oftentimes triggers conflict can drastically be reduced.

The findings by Hermansky (2022) also demonstrated community radio provides direct development benefits to communities, such as aiding in grassroots initiatives, community building, empowering community members, and promoting diversity and inclusion, among others. If provided proper support, he argues, to overcome barriers and ensure the sustainability of the field, community radio could prove a valuable tool for communities to achieve sustainable social change and development.

In agreement with the survey by Afro Barometer (2016) and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019), 35% (299,390) people in Turkana own a radio. They explained radio is easily accessible and cheap in the region.

The availability and launch of more community radio stations, for example, Ekisil, Radio Akicha, Ata Nayeche Radio, Echami, Ekeyokon, Ejok, and Maata Radio in Turkana County, demonstrate their willingness to be at the front

line to advocate for a change of mindset of the pastoralist communities towards the gradual end of the cattle rustling menace. The radio stations are conscious of the content they air. For instance, at Radio Akicha (2019), a program called *Makala* and *Yaliyojiri* is aired every Tuesday and Saturday to address the issue of cattle rustling practices within the area. The expert talk shows on Maata Radio (2019) focus on promoting peaceful coexistence between warring communities.

According to the Audience Measurement and Industry Trends report for the financial year June 2023/2024 by the Communication Authority of Kenya, the radio broadcaster sector is particularly vibrant, with 293 community radio stations offering a wide range of content listened to in quarter four of 2023/2024. It also adds that 82% of rural areas have higher radio listenership compared to urban areas.

At the same time, the study by the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) (2024) as reported by Nation Media Group in online article; entitled *Managing the Dangerous Drift in Livestock Rustling and Banditry in Kenya*, released in August 2024, says that over 300 people have been killed since 2023, adding that there was increased use of terrorism-like violence and militarization and the vitalization of modern weaponry during such raids. The study covered the counties of Turkana, Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Isiolo, Kitui, Laikipia, Marsabit, Meru, Samburu, West Pokot, Tana River, Kisumu, and Nandi. According to the NCRC, apart from the displacement of huge populations, cattle rustling has changed from an 'organized cultural sport' to an 'organized crime.' According to the study NCRC, rustling has metamorphosed over time, with implications for change of tact in combating the present form of the menace. And that change of tact is only through the use of community radio to educate and create awareness among the members of the public against cattle rustling practices.

Gerald (2021), in his Standard online article on "Change tack in efforts to tame cattle rustling," opines that historically, cattle rustling was viewed as a cultural practice where crude weapons such as bows, arrows, swords, and rungun were used to carry out raids. Then, livestock was considered a measure of wealth, and cattle raids were conducted without necessarily killing people. However, he says nowadays, cattle rustling among pastoralist communities in the North Rift region, where Turkana is, has persisted for decades and poses a huge security challenge. The proliferation of illegal arms and light weapons being smuggled into the country fuels the cattle-related conflict. He recalls the recent killing of security officers in Kapedo, Turkana County, including a Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU) chief inspector and a senior General Service Unit (GSU) officer, Emadau Tebakol, when Ameiyan village was under siege from armed bandits, which exposed the insecurity in Baringo and Turkana counties. The systematic banditry attacks explain the interconnected political and socioeconomic trends in Kapedo, which borders Baringo and Turkana counties. The change of tactic, according to him, was for the government to re-design its strategy by not succumbing to any political pressure from leaders, who always call for a de-escalation of the security operations. Gerald (2021) also advises the government to lay out a roadmap in planning, gather intelligence, analyze it, and share with other security agencies on any possible threats. This will give the government a perspective on the nexus between cattle rustling and proliferation of illegal arms in Kapedo and other Turkana pastoral areas (Gerald, 2021).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design. It employed a mixed-methods approach, which integrated both qualitative and quantitative research methods that made possible the gathering of different kinds of data. The qualitative methods allowed a deeper understanding of the research subject to dig out the nuances of measuring the use and effectiveness of radio in changing attitudes and perceptions of cattle rustlers. Quantitative methods helped to bring out empirical data that both complement and authenticate the qualitative analysis and conclusions. The basic assumption of all triangulation is that the weaknesses of each single method are compensated by the counterbalancing strengths of another. The methods used intend to provide an objective, unbiased evaluation of data.

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in Lokichar and Lodwar in Turkana County, Kenya. The two locations were selected where the significant community members are listeners of the two radios, and at the same time they bear the brunt of being victims of cattle rustling. Turkana County is located in the north-western part of Kenya and is known for its cattle rustling practices. According to the National Crime Research Centre, in 2024, Turkana County recorded the highest percentages of cattle rustling crimes at 70% after Laikipia at 82% compared to the national rate of 37.2%.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the three community radio stations targeted for the study was 400,000 listeners. The target population included the pastoralists, who were the listeners and at the same time bore the brunt of cattle rustling.

According to the Media Council of Kenya's State of Media Report, February 2023, Radio Echami (95.3 FM) in Lokichar, Turkana South, has 90,000 listeners, whereas Echami Radio (93.5 FM) in Lodwar, Turkana Central, has 120,000 listeners, and Radio Ekeyokon (97.10 FM) in Lodwar, Turkana Central, has 190,000 listeners.

3.4 Sample size

To determine a sample size, Lamola and Yamane (1967) formula was used. Based on the formula, the sample size was determined from the total target population

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{400,000}{1 + 400,000(0.05^2)} = 400$$

where N= Total population size

E=the margin of error (0.05)

Sample size= 400 respondents

3.5 Data Collection

The two main data collection methods were employed in this study to capture primary data: semi-structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. A Likert scale of 1–5 to represent the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents on cattle rustling was used, where 1 was 'strongly agree', whereas 5 was 'strongly disagree'. The data from the 5 respondents, including editors, program producers, and other key informants, was collected using an interview schedule. In establishing the reliability of the instrument used, a pilot study was conducted among the 200 people who were randomly selected from Turkana West Sub- County, Turkana County. The content validity of data and information was assessed through the respondent's honesty in answering questions. Thereafter, the instrument was developed and reviewed by researchers, who found it relevant to what was designed to measure.

3.5 Data Analysis

There were four main objectives that were addressed in this study. For all the objectives, much of the data was analyzed through generation of frequency distributions. Where a Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire, to determine the general tendency in ratings. The qualitative data collected was analyzed through creating descriptive summaries.

Qualitative data collected was analyzed using content analysis. The information out of it was represented in form of narration. On the other hand, quantitative data was analyzed consisting of frequencies and percentages using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26 software for its accuracy and reliability. They were presented in the form of tables, figures, bar-graphs and pie-charts. Further, the relationship between the two variables were determined using the regression analysis.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

All the 400 questionnaires issued to respondents, were all returned. This was 100 % response rate. In addition to this, 5 station managers and programme producers went through key informant interviews. Therefore, this 100% response rate was far much above threshold, sufficient for analysis.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	257	64.25
Female	143	35.75
Non-responsive	0	0
Total	400	100

Out of the total sample, there were 257 male respondents, representing 64.25%, while female constituted to 143 female accounting to 35.75%. this means the male presented a higher proportion compared to females in the sample respondent.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents by Age and Gender

Age	Male	Female	Non-responsive	Total
25-30	106	40	0	146
31-40	69	53	0	122
41-50	47	32	0	79
51-60	35	18	0	53
Total	257	143	0	400

In this study, 146 respondents fell in the age bracket of 25-30 years old. Notably, there were more male (92) than female (40) in the same age bracket. 122 respondents were aged between 31-40 years with 69 female while 53 were male. On 41-50 age bracket, there were 79 respondents through which 47 were male and 32 female. Only 53 of the respondents were in the age bracket of 51-60 years old. Still, there were more male (35) than female (18) in the same age bracket.

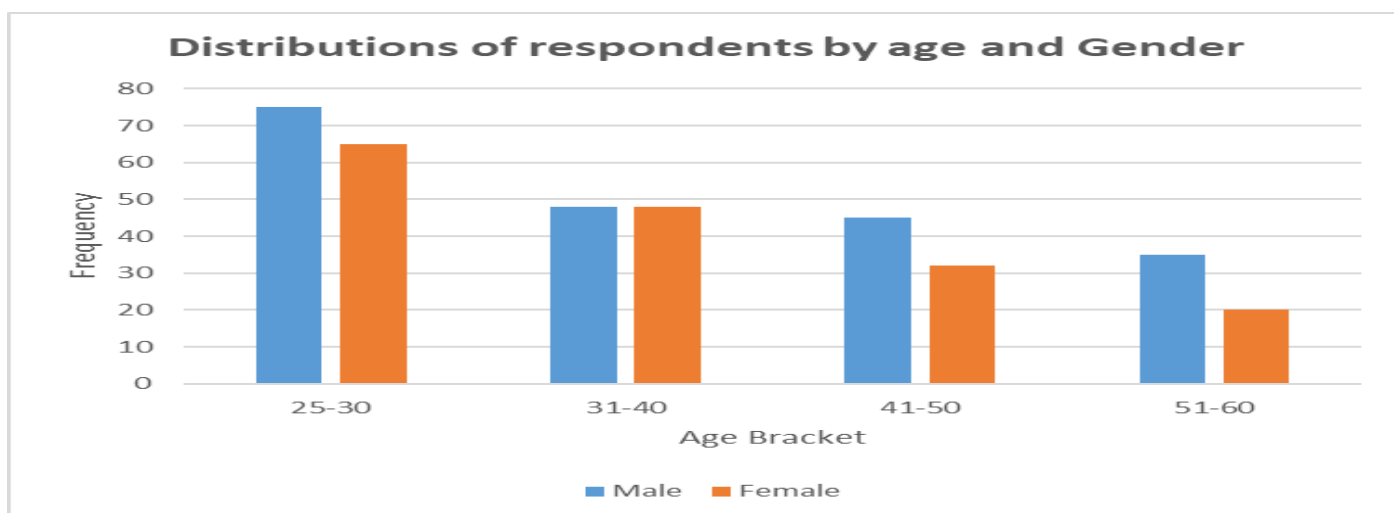


Figure 1
Distribution of the Respondents by Age and Gender

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 The Role of Community Radio Programs in Changing Perceptions of Pastoralist Communities on Cattle Rustling

The study sought to establish the role of community radio in changing perceptions of pastoralist communities on cattle rustling in Turkana County.

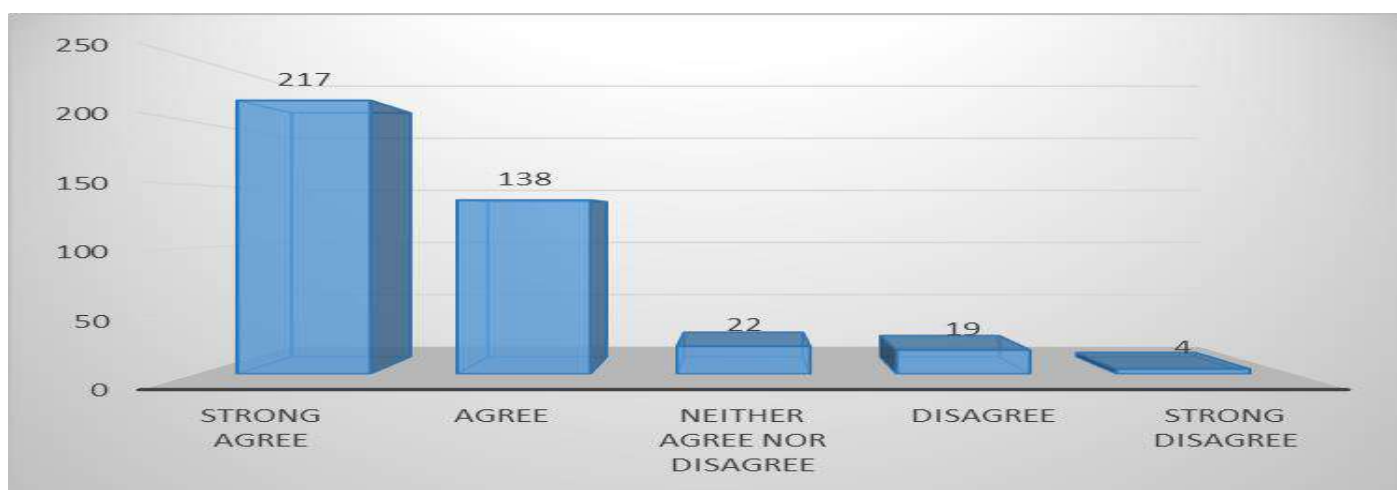


Figure 2
Respondents on the Role of Community Radio Programmes in Changing Perceptions of Pastoralist Communities on Cattle Rustling.

The respondents were asked to show the role of community radio in changing attitudes of the pastoralists on cattle rustling? In regards to this, 217 strongly agreed (54.25%). 138 (34.50%) agreed and 22 (5.50%) disagreed altogether, the 10 (4.75%) neither disagreed nor agreed and 4 (1%) strongly disagreed. This indicated that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the radio programmes play a key role in changing perception of the pastoralist communities on regards to cattle rustling in Turkana county. Figure 2 above presents the findings.

4.2.2 Stakeholders Role in Providing an Enabling Environment for the Community Radio Stations in Changing Perceptions of Pastoralist Communities on Cattle Rustling.

The research sought to investigate the role stakeholders play in providing enabling environment for the community radio stations in changing perceptions of pastoralists on regards to cattle rustling. Respondents were asked if the radio-sector stakeholders played a pivotal role in providing an enabling environment to community radios in changing perceptions of the local communities on cattle rustling? As demonstrated by the univariate analysis, 167 (41.75%), 129 (32.25%) agreed to the statement. Those who neither agreed nor disagreed were 93 (23.25%), and 10 (2.5%) and 1 (0.25) respondent didn't know.

From the findings, a majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the radio-sector players have an active role in ensuring they have fully supported the community radio stations to have that conducive environment through which they can freely work to ensure they become change-agents to pastoralist communities in discouraging and bringing to the end the cattle rustling menace. Figure 3: The pie chart below shows these findings.

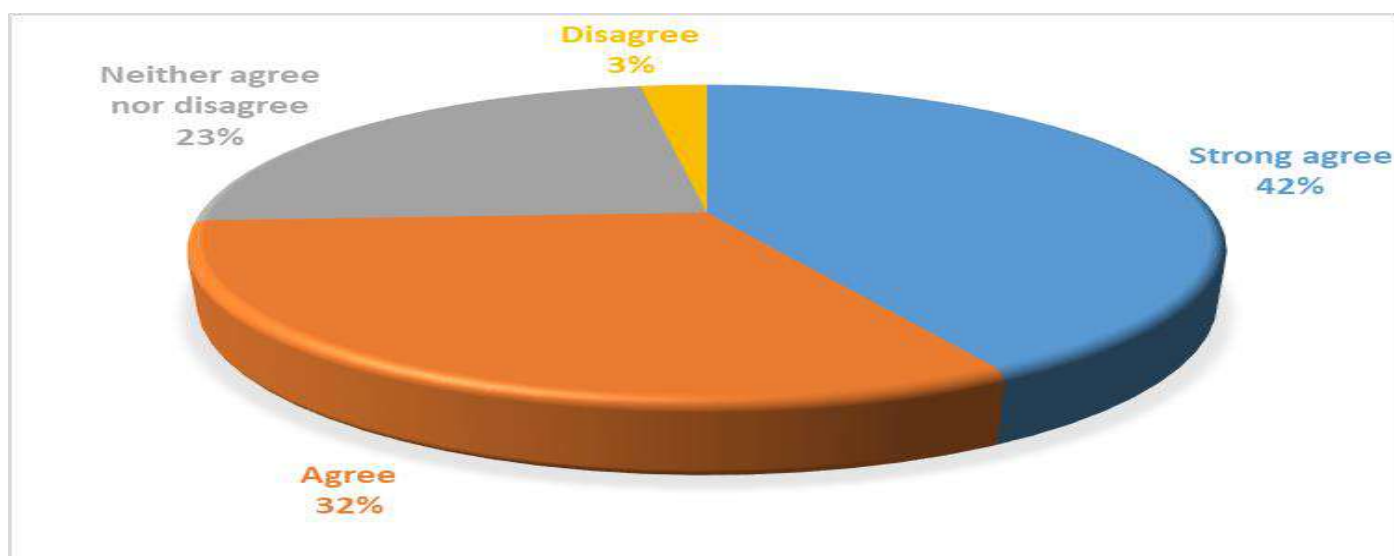


Figure 3
Stakeholders Role in Providing an Enabling Environment for the Community Radios

4.2.3 Strategies Radio Stakeholders Ought to put in Place to Leverage on the Community Radio Stations to Change Perceptions of Pastoralist Communities on Cattle Rustling

The study, respondents were asked to identify the strategies stakeholders ought to put in place to leverage on the community radios in changing perceptions of pastoralists on cattle rustling in Turkana County. 154 of the respondents representing 38.50% prioritized strengthening of communication on early warning system over the other strategies. In addition to this, 76 of them constituting to 19% said the involvement of local leadership to issues to deal with cattle rustling in the community was an encouraging move. 43 of them representing 10.75% said there should be a concrete strategy to share security updates and daily patrols over the radio. 32 respondents comprising of 8% suggested that the stakeholders should support the community radios to expand signal reach to cover other parts of Turkana, where cattle rustling incidences are also rampant. At the same time, they insisted sharing correct information on the number of livestock stolen in and outside the county to avoid exaggeration on numbers. The 23 and 20 respondents forming 5.75% and 5% respectively, believed consistent use of the local language across radio programming and scheduled expert talk shows, radio drama and skits are ways that create public awareness on effects of cattle rustling in communities. Consequently 5 respondents making up 1.25% chose not to answer any question. There was no effect on the outcome, for their missing values were excluded from analysis.

From the findings, it is clear the majority of the respondents are putting it out strongly that strengthening the communication of early warning system as one of the key strategies in deterring menace of cattle rustling in pastoralist communities. Other strategies are also valid if put into action. See figure 4: Bar graph below for the findings.

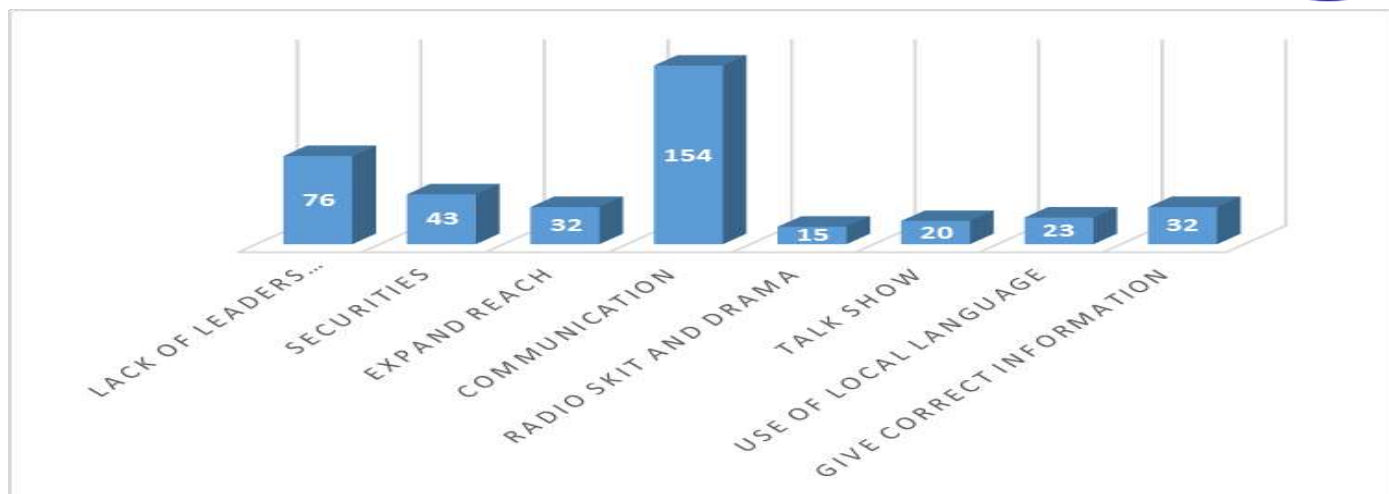


Figure 4
Strategies Out to be Put in Place by Stakeholders to Leverage on Community Radio Stations in Changing Perceptions of the Pastoralist Communities on Cattle Rustling in Turkana County.

4.2.4 Key Challenges Community Radios Face in their Effort to Changing Perceptions of Cattle Rustling Communities in Turkana County

The study sought to evaluate from the respondents key challenges community radios face in their effort to changing perceptions of cattle rustling communities in Turkana county. Out of the total sample, 105 respondents representing 26.25% believed insecurity is the first key challenge among others that have hindered the radios from their effort to gradually change the perceptions of cattle rustling communities. Second to this, is the challenge of language barrier which 87 respondents comprising of 21.75% singled out as a hindrance to the target audience of the community radios. Most radios , respondents allege are broadcasting in Kiswahili and English except in a few limited two hours a day. 79 respondents forming 19.75% were convinced lack of finance stability was another challenge affecting the smooth running of operations of the community radios in their deliberate attempt to change the mindset of the cattle rustling. Other 35 respondents representing 8.75% complain of poor infrastructure as a challenge to the CRs. Political interference was cited by 32 respondents comprising of 8%, as one of the challenges posing threat to smooth running of radios in their attempt to changing perceptions of cattle rustling communities in Turkana. 24 respondents making up 6% reported that poor network connectivity was also of a challenge. Those citing unavailability of electricity in the radio stations as a challenge were 10 respondents constituting 2.5%. And 9 respondents (2.25%) were excluded from the final analysis.

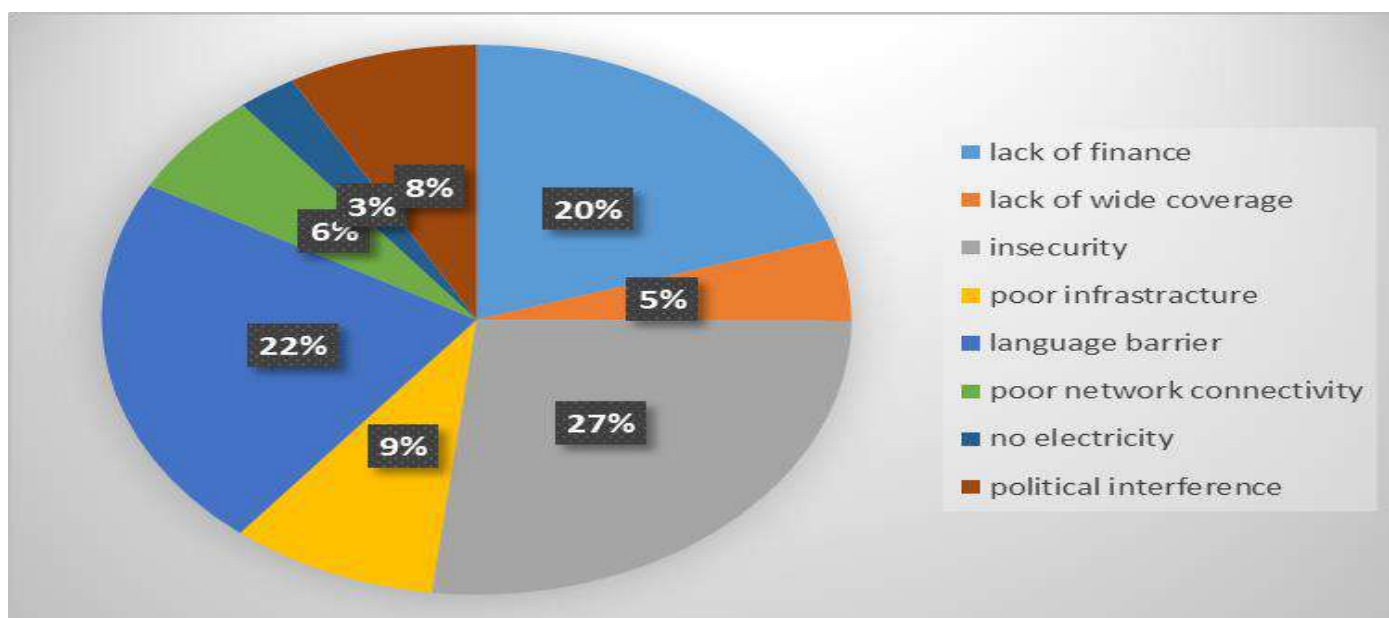


Figure 4
Challenges Hindering Community Radio Stations

4.2 Discussions

The study established that community radios have a key role to play in regards to changing the perceptions of the cattle rustling communities in Turkana County. From the findings in the Research Objective One, there was a majority approval of the respondents indicating the radio programmes play a key role in changing the mindset of the pastoralist communities on cattle rustling. It therefore means there should be a deliberate move by station managers to produce programmes that are well designed, highly participatory, tailored and all-inclusive of all the interests the community needs to address through such programmes. One of the radio's producers said "the radio's core programmes are well designed and decided upon together with community members. Topics that are of interest to the community typically include health, education, drug abuse, youth unemployment, teenage pregnancy and cattle-related conflict management and peace-building." He continued to say calls-in and other feedback mechanisms are then used to organize content that provides solutions for issues frequently faced by communities, typically by leveraging on the skills and wisdom of community members themselves. Key community leaders are regularly brought on air to provide advice, expert opinion piece on culturally-sensitive issues like cattle rustling.

On realizing Objective Two, the study investigated and found out that radio stakeholders, have a big role to play in providing enabling environment in helping community radios to seriously pursue the change of social behaviour on cattle rustling communities. The majority of respondents believed stakeholders, including government and its partners in the sector, can support radio stations for example, in conducting public awareness to socially influence the cattle rustlers and bandits to stop the practice. Government and its agencies can also devise programmes on alternative livelihoods especially to benefit the whole community but more specifically targeting the reformed warriors who will be the lead agents in championing for the social behaviour change. According to Gerald (2021), Community radio is a form of media that is independent, community owned and managed media. It is an alternative medium to public and commercial media, and therefore important for a pluralistic media ecology as it helps prevent concentration of media ownership and allows people to exercise their right to freedom of expression. Their clear definition and recognition in law are necessary for them to operate legally and without ideological, political or economic pressure. Quarmyne (2006) stated that government and other stakeholders may actively promote community radio media by offering different support such as, reserving specific parts of the radio frequency spectrum for community radio, preferential prices for licenses, public funding, among others so as to provide that enabling environment for them to meaningfully reach out to this cattle rustling community in Turkana.

On Research Objective Three, the study findings identified the many strategies stakeholders ought to put in place to leverage community radios to solidify and strengthen the pursuit to change attitudes and perceptions of communities on cattle rustling. Strengthening communications on early warning systems to aid in early detection and response to avert revenge and constant flare-ups was key. Next was the involvement of local leadership on matters of interest to the community, such as cattle rustling, among others. In addition to that was constant sharing of security updates and organizing frequent security patrols to inform communities of any looming attacks. Community radio becoming a reliable source of information, the respondents believed expanding the signal reach of radios to cover other sub-counties that are prone to cattle-rustling in Turkana would greatly reduce the practice. Of significance was sharing the correct number of stolen livestock to avoid exaggeration of numbers for easy recovery and return to the owners. The respondents were insisting; short of that, they would continue exacerbating and fuelling animosity between the warring communities. All community radios should broadcast their programs in the local language. This, they said, would increase awareness on sensitive topics that need to be adequately addressed. Last but not least was the use of scheduled talk shows, radio dramas, and skits spiced up with traditional dances and songs that bring them closer to the radio. In so doing, the respondents argued, it helps in creating awareness about matters of socioeconomic and cultural undertakings. In addition to this, one of the radio editors testified on how he has continued to be a change in the cattle rustling communities. "I am pleased to see how I'm gradually changing people's lives and giving them self-esteem and courage, especially on scary topics like disorientating cattle rustling practices and early teenage pregnancies in hostile communities like Turkana," she explains. "They are changing their social behaviour and creating hope for a changed lifestyle altogether." According to UNESCO (2024), supported *Mtaani Radio* and says community radios have played a very big role in ensuring communities stay at peace, especially during difficult moments. They exist in the biggest informal settlements across the country. Community radios mobilize community networks and leaders, create spaces for diverse opinions and conversations on key issues to the community, and share information directly with the community as they work and live in the very communities they serve.

The study's fourth objective evaluated key challenges bedeviling CRs and found out there are enormous challenges that have thrown spanners in the works of community radio stations in their endeavor to be agents of change in cattle-rustling communities in Turkana. According to the findings, it revealed insecurity as a key challenge frustrating the efforts of the CR. Cattle rustling is in itself insecurity to communities and to CRs. Insecurity inhibits community radios, for example, to carry out outreach programs that enhance public awareness campaigns. Language

barriers were becoming an issue. The respondents said most of the programs are either in Kiswahili or English. Low finances are affecting their resolve to deliver programs according to the interests of the community. The poor infrastructure makes CRs not effective as expected. There is a lot of political interference from the top leadership. Poor network connectivity from the service providers hinders at a great deal the performance of the CRs in their attempt to work for the communities (Gerald, 2024). Power outages from time to time make radio stations off air. If at all insecurity persists, stations would have otherwise, apart from closing down.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Based on this study, it is evident community radios have been powerful community media that has demonstrated to influence people's attitudes and behaviour. On the occasion of World Radio Day 2024, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of radio, special tribute is paid to this timeless medium that continues to stay closest to human hearts and minds. Whether in times of normalcy or crisis, radio has uniquely stand out as a key vehicle for freedom of opinion and access to information. Even amidst a fast-digitizing information ecosystem, it continues to preserve and grow its role as a bridge between online and on-ground communities and conversations. The triumph of trust and accessibility embodied by community radios in Turkana points to the need to continue safeguarding and promoting radio as a foundation of inclusive knowledge societies. Community radios in particular live and breathe among the communities they serve, help minority language speakers to receive information and participate in democratic processes, and ensure that the means of civic participation remains available to all individuals regardless of identity, financial means or personal circumstances.

Residents of Turkana are agreeing that community radios are paradigm shift to bringing social behavior change to end cattle rustling in Turkana County. Community radios are the only catalyst to positive attitude of mindset, to change the habits and perceptions of pastoral communities in regards to cattle rustling.

While challenges exist, the solutions lie within the community radio sector. By adopting innovative strategies, fostering collaborations, and prioritizing community needs, community radio stations can overcome hurdles and thrive in their mission to serve and empower local communities on their matters of interest.

5.2 Recommendations

The community radios must improve on programming design, focusing on local content and community needs. With well-designed programs, social behavioural change campaigns must strategically change the perceptions and mindsets of pastoralist communities on cattle rustling. Such programming, for example, should target the promotion of cultural dialogues and values against cattle rustling practices. There is a lot of concurrence with Kimani P. (2020) that recommended scholars should continue to develop communication theories and policies that predict and explain community media consumption of the public from sociological, psychological, and cultural perspectives. This shows the radio has a future, but community radio, community, and government must always work in harmony to develop relevant content.

The Turkana County government and other stakeholders must establish the Community Media Fund (CMF) that provides critical philanthropic support to enhance citizens' access to information that enables the public to support public policies and practices that promote inclusive economic and human development.

The county government should formulate and implement the legal regulatory framework that provides an enabling environment and recognizes the unique role community radios play. Additionally, the Turkana County Government must legislate those laws that outright outlaw cattle rustling and provide punitive measures to deter the perpetrators from the vice.

Both governments and community radio stakeholders must provide viable alternative livelihood development programs in the pastoralist communities through the introduction of sedentary lifestyle activities such as irrigation, farming, development of water points, and construction of schools at specific shared locations. For this reason, local communities should be empowered to provide home-grown solutions to the problems affecting them.

The national and county governments should work together and purposely invest heavily in the security sector. In the same manner, national governments must carry out voluntary community disarmament to enhance security countrywide. National security is subject to the authority of the Constitution of Kenya and it should therefore be pursued in compliance with the law and with the utmost respect for the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. This way, community radio's won't find insecurity as a key challenge that bedevils their efforts in changing perceptions of the cattle-rustling communities in Turkana.

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