

# International Journal of Communication and Public Relations (IJCPR)

Assessment of Community Radio Social Impact in Tanzania

Gasper Mpehongwa



**Assessment of Community Radio Social Impact in Tanzania**



Gasper Mpehongwa

Department of Behavioral Sciences, Kilimanjaro  
Christian Medical University College (KCMUCo),  
Moshi, Tanzania

**Article History**

*Received 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

*Received in Revised Form 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

*Accepted 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024*



How to cite in APA format:

Mpehongwa, G. (2024). Assessment of Community Radio Social Impact in Tanzania. *International Journal of Communication and Public Relation*, 9(3), 34–47. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ijcpr.2496>

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This paper assessed social impacts of three community radio stations located in three different social-economic zones in Tanzania namely, Kilosa in the Eastern Zone, Karagwe in the Lake Victoria Zone and Orkonerei Community Radio (ORS) in the Northern Zone.

**Methodology:** The study used cross sectional design whereby data were collected at one point in time. Purposive sampling methods were used to obtain 585 (48% female) respondents based on whether the area was well covered by community radio broadcasts or otherwise. Data were collected interview schedule, in-depth interview of key informants, systematic observations and focus group discussions. Key informants included community radio management and journalists working in the community radios. As for focus group discussions, four discussions were held (two in each community radio) with a total of 40 respondents.

**Findings:** The study found that 51% of the respondents viewed community radio stations as enhanced access to information (news, current affairs and educational informational). On popularity, the study found that on average, community radios were more popular with local audience than other radio stations. This was due to broadcasting local contents. An analysis of sex and education levels of people who preferred community radio showed that 53.4% were men and 46.5% were women. As for education levels, 57% of those who preferred community radio broadcast had primary education followed by those without formal education at 24%. However, contrary to the theory of community radio which asserts that community radios focus on local social economic development, the study found that the most dominant theme was music and general entertainment.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The study found that community radio stations have enhanced information flow (news, current affairs and education). They are also most popular with local audience compared to other radios. This indicates that if tailored to address contemporary local development issues, community radio can have huge impact. However, the study found that, the most dominant themes in studied stations was music and general entertainment. This is contrary to the theory asserting that community radio should focus on local social development issues. This calls for further investigation on circumstances leading community radios deviation from the popular theory.

**Keywords:** *Community Radio, Social Changes, Social Impact*

©2024 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## INTRODUCTION

The assessment of community radio's social impact in Tanzania is a multifaceted discussion that encompasses various aspects of societal development. Community radio stations play a pivotal role in disseminating information especially in remote and rural localities where traditional media reaches with difficulties. The stations are envisaged to promote social development in its broad sense including agriculture, gender equality, environmental protection, and good governance and the like (Banda, 2003, Alumuku, 2006). Challenges such as financial constraints, regulatory issues, and technical capacity, however, continue to impede their full potential (AMARC, 2007, Mpehongwa, 2023). The ongoing discourse emphasizes the need for increased support and investment in community radio to enhance its role in community mobilization and participatory communication for rural development.

Over the past three decades, Tanzania has witnessed growth of community radio stations owned by communities through trusts, community-based organizations and training institutions or cooperative societies especially in the rural areas. Currently, 42 community radio stations operate in various places majority serving rural and periphery communities. Community radio initiatives differ considerably in terms of ownership, content, management and geographical patterns in such a way that it is not easy to define them using a single definition (Alumuku, 2006). This paper borrows a widely accepted definition of a community radio which is described as participatory broadcasting service pursuing social development agenda, whose ownership or management draws from the community it serves (MISA, 2000, AMARC 2007, Fraser and Estrada (2001).

Emergence of community radio broadcasting in Tanzania was a direct outcome of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) of the late 1980s and early 1990s which among other things, advocated for liberalization of radio air waves and pushed for democratic reforms (Fraser and Estrada, 2001; Peterson, 2004). Policy liberalization witnessed proliferation of commercial radio stations and reorganization of the state broadcasting service into public broadcasting model which, according to Peterson (2004) created a vacuum in the sense that the former concentrated in making money while the later focused on broad-national issues. This, when compounded with poor infrastructure and low literacy level, few radio stations are interested in the rural areas.

The primary function of community radio stations is to address informational, educational and entertainment needs of the community it serves (Alumuku, 2006). They enhance the community's capacity to dialogue, debate and exchange ideas on various dimensions of developmental issues such as democracy, freedom of expression, accountability, transparency, gender issues, civil rights, community health, local government politics, environment conservation and related topics (TCRA, 2007). In sum, the theory of community radio posit that they are participatory mass media, capable of facilitating information flow, enhance local identity and give marginalized people a voice in general (AMARC, 2007; Fraser and Estrada, 2001).

### Statement of the Problem

Despite the growth and mushrooming of community radio stations in Tanzania over the past three decades, no empirical comprehensive study assessed social impacts of the radio stations in the country. Further, although theories state that community radio programs address development needs of the society they serve, it is unclear whether the same is true in Tanzania. This study therefore, attempted to fill the aforementioned knowledge gap by assessing the three



community radio stations located in three different social-economic zones in Tanzania namely, Kilosa in the Eastern Zone, Karagwe in the Lake Victoria Zone and Orkonerei Community Radio (ORS) in the Northern Zone. It investigated four research questions;

1. What are the most significant social changes brought by community radio stations in Tanzania?
2. To what extent community radios are popular among local audience?
3. What are the dominant themes in the community radio's programs?

## **LITERATURA REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory first developed by Everett Rogers in 1962 guided the study. The theory explores how new ideas, products, or practices spread within a society or community. In the context of assessing the social impact of community radio in Tanzania, this theory is pertinent because it helps analyze the process through which innovations, such as new information, behaviors, or social norms, are disseminated through radio programming. By examining the rate and pattern of adoption of community radio initiatives within Tanzanian communities, researchers can gauge the radio's effectiveness in influencing social change and promoting community development.

### **Empirical Review**

A number of studies have explored social impact of the community radio stations in Tanzania. DFID (2005) used a case of ORS Community Radio in Manyara Region to investigate the role of such medium in rural communities. It found that the community radio had successfully encouraged remote communities to send their children to school (from 36% to 48%), persuaded pastoralists to reduce their stock, and in general enhanced access to information in the areas where it operates. This study however, used a case of only one radio station and thus limited in scope. The social changes associated with presence of community radio station such as increased primary school enrollment is not specific and could be a result of other central government interventions. In addition, the author, did not go beyond the general statistics to indicate how the radio has induced social change. Further, the study is weak in the methodology, as it did not use participatory research methods, which are necessary when evaluating participatory media like community radio.

Jallov and Lwanga-Ntale (2007) also studied ORS community radio. She reported that the station provided forum for marginalized community to air their concerns. However, the study was in the form of life stories purported to indicate social change. Nevertheless, they seem too localized to be generalized to the whole of Tanzania. In addition, the study was not designed to include other community radio initiatives in the country to enable comparisons of experiences to warrant generalization.

The only study that had national focus was that of Mrutu (2008), which attempted to assess how community radio enhances information flow in rural areas. Nevertheless, the study failed to produce empirical evidence on how community radio facilitates information flow because it used a methodology that narrate histories of five community radios without much on their social impacts. Further, the study produced highly generalized statements based on a very small sample size (in some cases, the generalization was made after interviewing as few as eight individuals).

Mpehongwa (2011) did a comprehensive study on the role of community radio stations on access to information and social accountability in the decentralized local government authorities in Tanzania. The study examined two community radio stations, one near Lake Victoria and another in Central Tanzania. He found that community radio stations indeed enhanced access to information but since local government authorities were reluctant to utilize the media citing lacking permission from the central government, their role in enhancing social accountability was limited. The study did not interrogate the question of social change as facilitated by community radio stations.

Another study on community radio was that of Ng'atigwa (2013) who did a comprehensive study for a PhD Thesis but mainly focused on religious community radio stations

### **Research Gaps**

The above reviewed studies exhibit weaknesses in scope, methodology and analysis. They generalized social impact of community radios without providing water tight empirical evidence to back up the claims. The present study therefore, attempted to widen the scope of community radio studies by inclusion of more stations in the three different zones of Tanzania. Also, the present study employed participatory data collection methods where the community radio audience had a chance to evaluate the stations through interview schedule and focus discussion groups.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Study Design:** The study design in the research was cross sectional whereby data were collected at one point in time. It employed a modified version of the “Most Significant Change” methodology. This is a form of participatory research method where stakeholders are involved in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analyzing the data (Davies and Dart, 2005). Essentially, the methodology involves the collection of ‘significant change stories’ emanating from the field level and the systematic selection of the most significant stories by panels of designated stakeholders. The methodology is used in situation where there is no baseline to compare as it is the case with community radio stations in Tanzania. Further, the methodology was considered useful because assessing participatory initiative like community radio require not only capturing statistics, but also how it has brought about shifts in public values and social norms leading to social progress (AMARC, 2007).

**Study Areas:** The study was conducted in three community radio stations;

- 1) Orkonerei Community Radio, popularly known as ORS in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region (Northern Tanzania). ORS Community Radio started on June 2002 and is operated by the Institute of the Orkonerei Pastoralist Advancement (IOPA) which is a voluntary community membership organization located about 90 km east from the Arusha city
- 2) Kilosa Community Radio in Kilosa District in Morogoro Region (Eastern Zone of Tanzania). The second station is Kilosa Community Radio in Morogoro Region. It was established on March 2006 through collaborative efforts of UNESCO, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and local communities. After experiencing management problems involving multiple stakeholders, it was resolved that the Kilosa District Council, take over its day-to-day operations.

- 3) FADECO Community Radio in Karagwe District in Kagera Region (Lake Victoria Zone). It went on air on July 2007 and run by *Family Alliance for Development and Cooperation* (FADECO), which is a local membership NGO.

**Sampling Procedures:** purposive sampling was done to obtain the respondents based on whether the area is well covered by community radio broadcasts or otherwise.

**Data Collection Methods:** Primary data were collected using interview schedule, in-depth interview of key informants, systematic observations and focus group discussions. A total of 600 respondents (200 in each community radio) were interviewed. Out of the 585 respondents who returned questionnaire, 304 (52%) were men while women comprised the remaining 281 (48%). In additional, interviews with 20 key informants were conducted to clarify issues that were not captured in the survey. Key informants included community radio management and journalists working in the community radios. As for focus group discussions, four discussions were held (two in each community radio) with 40 participants.

## RESULTS

### The Most Significant Social Changes Brought by Community Radio Stations in Tanzania

In order to find out the most significant social change associated with the existence of community radio stations, respondents were asked whether there was any social change that can be positively associated with existence of community radio in their areas. This question was important because for any development to be qualified as social change, it must be perceived so by large sections of the community (Todaro, 2000). Results show that 49% of the respondents were of the view that community radio had impact on their lives while 34% said it had no impact. Only 17% were not sure. In this regard, about half of the respondents perceived community radio as an important change agent. Those who said that community radio had brought social change in their communities were asked to name the most significant social change associated with the station. On average, 51% mentioned information (news, current affairs and educational information) flow, 37% said it has enhanced education on various social issues, 6% said community radio strengthened community hood through greetings, 4% mentioned community radio enhanced recognition of local culture including culture, 2% mentioned entertainment (Table 1).

**Table 1: Social Change Attributed to the Existence of Community Radio Stations in Kilosa, Karagwe and Simanjiro (N=286)**

Sn	Social change perceived by respondents	FADECO Community Radio (Karagwe District)		Kilosa Community Radio (Kilosa District)		ORS Community radio (Simanjiro District)		Mean
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	
1	Information flow (news and current affairs)	54	(50)	52	(71)	34	(33)	47 (51%)
2	Enhanced education on various issues such as livestock keeping, crop production, water use, farming, health etc	52	(48)	4	(6)	58	(56)	38 (37%)
3	Strengthened community hood by increased interaction through greetings	2	(2)	10	(13)	3	(3)	5 (6%)
4	Recognition of local culture including language	0	(0)	4	(6)	6	(6)	3 (4%)
5	Entertainment	2	(0)	3	(4)	2	(2)	2 (2%)
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>95</b> <b>(100%)</b>

This result indicates that out of many programs aired by the community radio stations, information and current affairs was most important to the audience. This is because while in urban areas people have abundant means of getting information and current affairs such as newspapers, radio, television, internet, and word of mouth from the policy makers, such media are almost non-existent in the rural areas. The present of community radio, therefore, was an important development in terms of information flow in such setting.

Furthermore, these results confirm theoretical assumptions that community radio stations are development radio services because despite all the challenges associated with content production, still the respondents believe that social change is happening mostly in aspects of information flow and education.

In an attempt to understand further the perception of the community regarding most important social change, stories narrated by the respondents were collected. All the shared stories underlined the role and the impact of the community radio for the Kilosa, Karagwe and

Simanjiro communities. Different groups of people shared different experiences; however, there was a lot of agreement on the main changes, which had happened to the community because of the community radio stations. In the Kilosa community radio, one member of focus group discussion in Tindiga village, about 15 kilometres from the Kilosa town, had these to say about the impact of community radio:

*“With community radio we get almost anything that takes place in the District headquarters...if there is a visiting national leader, immediately we know the timetable. If a disaster or deaths occur in some parts of the District or country, immediately everyone is informed. ...It is as if we no longer live in the village. Before the community radio, most of the information reached the village in the form of either rumour or through hamlet leaders who were very slow to circulate the information”*

Another discussant from Terrat in Simanjiro District talked about how the community radio revolutionized information exchange:

*“One greatest social change that has happened since the radio started is our ability to harness local information and to use it for both information and decision-making. Sometimes you hear that a child has lost. On other occasions, you may hear someone losing his or her cattle. In most instances, after such losses have been announced on the radio you also hear other people announcing what they have found. It saves us time and it keeps us in touch with one another as a community”*

Moreover, in Karagwe District, a young woman in Kishao village was quoted as saying:

*“When our loved ones are hospitalized or pass on we can immediately share the news with those who are near and far”*

### **Popularity of Community Radio among Local Audience**

An investigation on extent to which community radios are popular with the local audience reveals that with the exception of FADECO Community radio in Karagwe District, majority of the respondents in Simanjiro and Kilosa districts preferred community radio stations. The lower percentage of the respondents listening to FADECO Community Radio in Karagwe was attributed to erratic nature of its programs and constant link up with other radio stations such as state-owned Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) instead of broadcasting local programs, which appeal to the audience. Despite the said disparity, on the average, 48% of the respondents preferred community radio stations. Since there is no other single radio that has attracted such level of popularity in Kilosa, Simanjiro and Karagwe Districts, the community radio stations, therefore are the most preferred among local audience.

Investigations as to why respondents preferred community radio produced different results in the three districts. In Simanjiro District, 51% liked community radio because it used an ethnic language *Maasai*. In Kilosa District majority, 39%, preferred community radio because of music and in Karagwe District, audience preferred FADECO Community Radio 66% liked community radio because of news and current affairs (Table 2).



**Table 2: Reasons for Preference of Community Radio (N=284)**

	Reason for preference	ORS community radio (Simanjiro District)	Kilosa Community Radio (Kilosa District)	FADECO Community Radio (Karagwe District)
1	Uses ethnic community languages	60 (51%)	0 (0%)	2 (2)
2	Educational programs	17 (14%)	3 (3%)	11 (14)
3	Music and general entertainments	11 (9%)	33 (39)	2 (2)
4	Good programming	6 (5%)	20 (24)	11(14)
5	It easy to tune to community radio	18 (15%)	11 (13)	0 (0)
6	Greetings and community messages	7 (6%)	13 (15)	0 (0)
7	News and current affairs	0 (0%)	5 (6)	53 (66)
8	Sports news	0 (0%)	0 (0)	2 (2)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>119 (100)</b>	<b>84 (100)</b>	<b>81 (100)</b>

The above results show that an ethnic language, *Maasai* features as the major reasons attracting the audience to the community radio in Simanjiro District. This indicates that such community, have serious problem in accessing other mass media, which do not use Maasai language. The findings are also similar to an earlier study by the same author, Mpehongwa (2009), who reported that 54% of the residents in the Simanjiro District problems in understanding Swahili language which is presumed to be a *lingua franca* in Tanzania Interestingly, despite an obvious Swahili language problem in Simanjiro District, the government through Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) continued to insist on the use of Swahili in the ORS Community Radio. The TCRA maintains that the use of other languages may invoke tribal loyalty hence erode national unity (Broadcasting Services Act, 1993 and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act, 2003).

However, empirical evidence from elsewhere in Africa does not indicate that the use of ethnic community language is synonymous with tribal clashes. Blankson (2005) for example reported that Zambia and Ghana use more than 10 ethnic community languages in radio broadcasting, yet there is no evidence of tribal loyalty and conflict. On contrary, Somalia and Burundi with one language are languishing in tribal conflicts and civil wars. Thus, long held fear among policy makers that the use of ethnic community languages in radio broadcasting may invoke tribal conflicts is not supported by available literature.

The ORS Community Radio manager was asked how he operates in a community where half of listeners do not understand national language, Swahili. He said that through persistent begging, TCRA eventually allowed them only one hour of Maasai news bulletins once a day. Ironically, it is that one hour in Maasai that induced the audience to listen to the ORS Community Radio. This implies that language is the main barrier for the Maasai community in Northern Tanzania.

In the FADECO Community Radio, the district (Karagwe) is highly isolated when it comes to information and communication flow. Radio broadcast is the only reliable means of getting

national and local information. The establishment of community radio enabled any occurrence, be it local or national, to be known in a wider community within hours. Further, FADECO Community Radio stipulated clearly in its mission statement that aims to a 'development radio', hence even its audience recognize it that way because of such content.

In Kilosa Community Radio, music and general entertainment featured as the major reason why community radio was preferred. This is because, when analysed separately, majority of the respondents (in Kilosa District) [158 out of 79%] were young men below 35 years of age. Literature shows that this age group is attracted by entertainments than serious development information (Dominick, 2002).

A further analysis was done among the respondents who preferred community radio stations to determine their sex and education levels. Results showed that 53.4% were men and 46.5% were women. This indicates that more men are attracted to community radio broadcasting than women. This could be explained by the fact women in rural areas are embedded in tedious production and home chores, which leave them with little time to listen to the radio. However, with such percentages, it indicates that women isolation is not very much serious when it comes to community radio listenership. With regard to education levels, majority of the respondents who preferred community radio, 57% were primary school leavers, followed by those without formal education 24%. These results show that people with basic and those without formal education tend to be attracted by community radio stations than those with higher formal education qualifications. This trend could be because people with higher formal education tend to have wider network of relationships, which translates into channels in which they get information, hence do not see community radio as the only source. On the contrary, people with basic education and illiterates seem to regard the community radio as one of the important sources of information as they do not have alternatives. In sum, these results indicate that still the community radio stations are the most preferred broadcasting service in rural areas.

Furthermore, the popularity of community radio may be due to its closeness to the audience. The existence of radio station in the neighborhood has the tendency to attract the audience because apparently, the community knows newsmakers and announcers (Peterson 2004). Prior to the establishment of the community radio in Simanjoro, Jallo and Lwanga-Ntale (2007:28), for example, noted that most people thought that a radio must be some very huge and special machine with a sophisticated structure, which enabled it to send out people's voices and information. There was also a belief that those who spoke on radio were like super-humans.

*"The first shock for us when ORS began broadcasting...was when we heard the voices of people who we actually knew – some of them were our neighbors and others were children who had grown up in our community. We even became more excited when we began seeing some of the very people who were running the radio – doing similar things and speaking a similar language as we spoke"*

Ibraimo and Driscoll (2008) reported similar results in Dondo and Monapo districts of Mozambique where virtually all citizens in preferred community radio stations because they offered what the community needs in terms of educational programs and other local issues also reported similar results. Furthermore, these results confirm popularity of radio broadcast in rural Africa than with other mass media. Long time ago, Hachten (1974) acknowledged the unique position of radio in Africa when he said:

*In Africa...the first contact the ordinary man has with any means of mass communication is the radio. It is the transistor, which is bringing the people of remote villages and lonely settlements into contact with the flow of modern life (Hachten, 1974).*

### **The Dominant Themes in the Community Radio's Programs**

In order to find out the dominant themes in community radio's programs, all weekly schedules in the three community radio stations were obtained and analysed. Results show that on average, music and general entertainments was given largest allocation of airtime per week at 32%, followed by educational programs 29%, news and current affairs 17%, greetings and community messages 16, religious affairs 3%, and sports 2%. However, when analysed separately, one radio station FADECO Community Radio in Karagwe allocated 46% of its weekly airtime on educational programs, which is the highest than any other community radio. The dominance of music and general entertainment is contrary to the theory of community radio as expounded by Alumuku (2006), AMARC (2007), Peterson (2004), and Fraser and Estrada (2001). The assumption is that community radio, in marginalized rural communities, will focus on development issues and have less of entertainment. Apparently, the trend of focusing on entertainment is similar to that reported in commercial radio broadcasting which allocate large part of their time on entertainment to lure young listeners' who are targets of commercial adverts (Dominick, 2002).

This trend could be explained by fact that there are other factors affecting choice and adoption of community radio programs rather than mission statements and the audience desire such as availability of human and material resources, and technical knowhow of the staff.

One may wonder why community radio in an information and development hungry society concentrates on entertainments than serious development news. Some may argue that in development communication discourses, entertainment is part of the educative information package (Waisbord, 2004). The application of entertainment in order to educate is technically known as entertainment-education strategy. In this method, a serious educational message is packaged in an entertaining 'envelope' such as drama, or music to attract audience before it is delivered. Nevertheless, there was no evidence in Simanjiro, Kilosa and Karagwe that entertainment and music was used as part of entertainment-education strategy of delivering messages. Even so, local music is an important element in the whole effort to empowering local artistes and creating local identity as reported by Jallo and Lwanga-Ntale (2007). Indeed, observations indicate that more than half of the music and entertainment originated from the local communities. However, seven out of ten discussants in focus discussion group, especially older citizens complained that community radio played music most of the time, indicating that not all citizens desired the practice.

Further, none of the mission statements of the three community radio stations highlights entertainment as critical need of the community necessitating special attention of community radios. The mission of Kilosa community radio, for example, was to enhance information flow among the community. The ORS community radio mission was to have an envisioned, well informed, and knowledgeable pastoral community in development in order to improve lifestyle of the community through information, communication, and education on development issues and to empower the community to make informed decisions. FADECO Community Radio's vision is to stimulate rural development by facilitating access to and dissemination of information, learning resources and communication technologies in Karagwe District; and to

become the leading community radio contributing to the economic and social development of the Karagwe communities and the nation at large.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary**

The study established that 51% of the members of the community where community radio operates perceived the stations as an important social change agent. They mentioned community radio as enhanced access to information (current affairs and educational information). On community radio popularity, the study found that with the exception of FADECO Community radio in Karagwe District, majority of the respondents in Simanjiro and Kilosa districts preferred community radio stations. The lower percentage of the respondents listening to FADECO Community Radio in Karagwe was attributed to erratic nature of its programs and constant link up with other radio stations such as state-owned Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) instead of broadcasting local programs, which appeal to the audience.

On why communities preferred community radio more than others, it was revealed that in Simanjiro District, 51% liked community radio because it used an ethnic language *Maasai*. In Kilosa District majority, 39%, preferred community radio because of music and in Karagwe District, audience preferred FADECO Community Radio 66% liked community radio because of news and current affairs. This indicates majority of the community members in Simanjiro District had problems in understanding Swahili (*lingua franca* in Tanzania) and preferred the community radio which was allowed one hour in Maasai language.

An analysis on sex and education levels of community members who preferred community radio showed that 53.4% were men and 46.5% were women. As for education levels, 57% of those who preferred community radio broadcast had primary education followed by those without formal education at 24%. These results show that people with basic and those without formal education tend to be attracted by community radio stations than those with higher formal education qualifications.

An investigation into the dominant themes in community radio's programs revealed that, on average, music and general entertainments was given largest allocation of airtime per week at 32%, followed by educational programs 29%, news and current affairs 17%, greetings and community messages 16, religious affairs 3%, and sports 2%. However, when analysed separately, one radio station FADECO Community Radio in Karagwe allocated 46% of its weekly airtime on educational programs, which is the highest than any than any other community radio. The dominance of music and general entertainment is contrary to the theory of community radio as expounded by Alumuku (2006), AMARC (2007), Peterson (2004), and Fraser and Estrada (2001).

### **Conclusions**

The study concludes that, community radios in Tanzania contributes to social change albeit in a small way. Since they are attracted by people with low education, and living in rural and periphery areas, it has huge potentials if utilized systematically by local governments, development organisations as well as the communities for social economic development.



---

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends targeted use of community radio stations to reach the marginalized in Tanzania. This is because the media is more popular among people with basic or no formal education. Central and local government authorities, development agencies and other stakeholders should take the opportunity to utilize community radio stations for social change. Also, in the light of participatory development models, where local development is emphasized instead of the national, centralized approach, there is a need to rethink of the use of ethnic community languages for rural community radio initiatives to speed up information flow, communication and creation of local content. The mandatory use of the national language (Swahili) may be a hindrance in this endeavour in community radio was found to be a hindrance to access in Simanjiro District.

## REFERENCES

- Alumuku, P.T. (2006). *Community Radio for Development: The World and Africa*. Paulines Publication Africa, Nairobi
- AMARC. (2007). *Community Radio Social Impact Assessment: Removing Barriers increasing Effectiveness*. AMARC, Montreal
- Banda, F. (2003). *Community Radio Broadcast in Zambia: A Policy Perspective*. Thesis for Award of PhD Degree at the University of South Africa.
- Davies, R & Dart, J.(2005). *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*. Care International, London
- Dominick, J.R. (2002). *The Dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in the Digital Age*. Boston, McGraw Hill.
- DFID (2005). *Community Television for the Poor– A Scooping Study*. Gamos LTD London
- Fraser, C & Restrepo, E. (2001). *Community Radio Handbook*. UNESCO. Paris
- Hachten, W. A. (1974). *Mass Media in Africa*. In: Mass Communications: A World View. (Edited by Wells, Alan), National Press Books, Palo Alto
- Ibraimo, F.S & Driscoll, B. (2008). *Communication for Empowerment in Mozambique: An Assessment of Communication and Media Needs At the Community Level*: [<http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdfs/mozambique-research-report.pdf>] site visited on 11.2.2024]
- Jallov B & Lwanga-Ntale C (2007). *Impact assessment of East African Community Media Project 2000-2006: Report from Orkonerei Radio Service (ORS) in Tanzania and selected communities*, SIDA. Stockholm
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). (2000). *Community-Level Baseline Research into Community Media Attitudes and Needs in Zambia and Namibia*. Windhoek
- Mpehongwa, G (2009). Using 'National language' to Facilitate Communication in Communities which do not Understand it: The Case of Simanjiro District, Tanzania. Paper presented at the Third Annual National Science, Technology and Innovation Conference and Exhibition held at the AICC, Arusha 5-7 November 2008.
- Mpehongwa, G (2023). *Community Radio and Public Sphere in Tanzania: Theory and Practice*. Safi Publishers, Moshi
- Ng'atigwa, F.X. (2013). *The Media in Society: Religious Radio Stations, Socio-Religious Discourse and National Cohesion in Tanzania*. Dissertation submitted to Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) and the Department of Media Studies, Bayreuth University in the Partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies
- Peterson, S.E (2004). *Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam: State Control, Broadcasting and National Development*. Dissertation for Award of MSc Degree at University of London
- Todaro, Michael P. (2000). *Economic Development*, (7th edition) Addison-Wesley, London

---

Waisbord, S (2001). *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication*. Rockefeller Foundation, London