

**CHURCH-STATE CONFLICT DURING THE RUN-UP TO 2002 GENERAL  
ELECTIONS IN KENYA: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MAINSTREAM  
PRINT MEDIA JULY - DECEMBER 2002.**

**BY**

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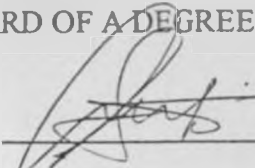
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A project paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for The Award of  
Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies

## DECLARATION

I DECLARE THAT THIS PROJECT TITLED IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED EITHER WHOLLY OR IN PART TO ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY FOR AWARD OF A DEGREE OR DIPLOMA.

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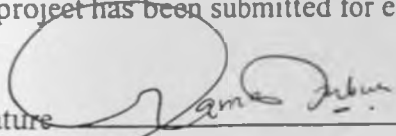
  
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## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to all the young boys and girls of the Raiji lineage. This is a challenge to you to pursue academic knowledge beyond the point that your uncle has reached. I will ever support you in the pursuit.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my gratitude to all those who assisted me through my academic journey, to accomplish this project paper. I thank members of my family who endured my absence in pursuit of my ambition; my dear wife Kanyiri for her endless encouragement that unravelled my indecision to enrol for the MA programme. What with the ever nagging pair of Kinoti and Mugambi whose preoccupation was more to do with my class position than my own dilemma to balance between demanding studies and working life. Neither can I forget their sister Kagwiria who spiced it all with her curiosity to know if a master's degree is the culmination of professorship.

I wish to thank my brother Riunga Raiji and sister Florence Gikunda too for their moral and financial boost at a time of belt tightening when the national economy recorded a historic negative growth rate. I acknowledge the support of the School of Journalism's fraternity particularly my Supervisor, Mr. Kamau Mubuu who worked on my scattered ideas moulding them into this piece of work.

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine how the Kenyan print media covered the church-state conflict during the run-up to the 2002 elections. It focused on three leading daily newspapers; *Daily Nation*, *Kenya Times* and the *East African Standard*. The broad objective of the study was to determine the extent to which the Kenyan print media professionally covered the church-state conflict. However, there were a number of specific objectives which include: to examine the nature of the conflict as portrayed by the print media, to determine peoples' perception in regard to the coverage of the conflict and finally, on the basis of findings thereof, make appropriate recommendations on how the print media in Kenya can be made more professional.

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source of data was interviews with fifty five members of the church congregation and fifteen media personnel to elicit their opinions. The secondary source of data included a content analysis of five hundred and fifty two copies of the dailies and the study and other available literature. Recent literature on media reporting and audience studies was reviewed to establish the relevance of the examination of the conflict as portrayed by the print media. Relevant communication and audience theories were also reviewed.

The major findings were that majority of the respondents perceived the coverage as inadequate and biased. The view of inadequate coverage is supported by findings of the content analysis that indicated a mere one hundred and forty five church-state conflict stories were covered within a six month period. Inadequate media reporting could be termed as self censorship and a form of bias.

One of the major conclusions of this study is that the print media failed to accord proportionate share of conflict coverage and where it occurred it was found to be largely biased. This is a failure on the part of the media to play its watchdog role of not only informing but also creating the much desired social, economic and political awareness as necessary ingredients for national development. The study recommends that there is need for continuous training of journalists and practice of modern management techniques in media houses in order to uplift the professional standing of the industry.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

This study seeks to examine the performance of mainstream Kenyan print media in respect to church state conflict during the run-up to the 2002 general elections. The study focused on the *Kenya Times*, the *Daily Nation* and the *East African Standard* newspapers which are expected to influence the opinion of sizeable public opinion by virtue of their wide daily readership averaging 8 Million.

The study was prompted by the by the fact that the press, the world over, has the basic task of providing accurate information to the public. The media enjoys this right on the premise that information is a basic ingredient of democracy without which citizens may not effectively organize, plan or agitate for their basic rights such as food, shelter and health. Secondly the mass media are seen as playing the role of the fourth estate; the guardians of democracy and defenders of public interest popularly referred to as the watchdog role. The "fourth estate" in media literature is frequently attributed to Edmund Burke (1729-1797), a British Politician. The phrase coming from a quote in Thomas Carlyle's book,

*Heroes and Hero Worship in History* (1841) states;

"...that there were Three Estates in Parliament; but in the Reporter's Gallery yonder there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is literal fact... printing, which comes necessary out of writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy is inevitable..... Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is that he has a tongue, which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite"

Carlyle here describes the newly found power of the man of letters, and, by extension, the newspaper reporter. In his account the press is a new fourth estate added to the three existing estates of power running the country; the Priesthood, Aristocracy and Commons. In modern day society, this

arrangement remains much the same, with the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary exercising executive power though in varying degrees and the press playing its watch dog role.

The challenge of the media especially in young democracies such as Kenya, is on the execution of its role as societal mirror while at the same time guarding against the compromise of conventional principles of journalism such as objectivity, fair play and balanced reporting. Experience all over the world has shown that, media agenda is not all times set by media houses, rather by other entities who wield political power or have vested interests. The general implication of this is often the dictation of media sway through deliberate distortion of news, facts, figures and are carefully orchestrated propaganda strategy. Notably, media has also been known to employ other unethical practices for distortion of information, among these are:-

- News may be compiled from random facts and presented as whole, or partial truths are cobbled together to form the appearance of completed truth.
- Facts may be presented in a manner meant to cause misinterpretation by implication
- At worst, the media have been known to maintain silence on facts and actions presumed to be of little interest to the public. This way manipulation is often done on the unmentioned facts with omissions on not only the vital details of a story but even the entire story itself.

This way manipulation is often done on the unmentioned facts with omission on not only the vital details of a story but also entire story itself.

Biased portrayal of news events is most evident especially by the western press reports about Third World countries, more so Africa. But even African states have political interests in controlling the activities of the press within their jurisdiction. African states have become part of the press through state owned radio and T.V. networks and ownership of newspapers. The question that often comes

up in such scenario, is how reliable then would that press be in its watch dog role of informing the masses of the activities of the state

The Kenyan situation is no different from the rest of Africa. In the last decade alone, Kenya has witnessed a media development trend, which implies relative independence and openness. However, these developments have been faced with numerous challenges of political, legal, professional and moral nature that have remarkably held up the tempo for transformation of the mass media. Arising of these concerns, beckons the need to examine the performance of the three dailies in a conflict situation during the run-up 2002 elections. Key among this are the concerns that are apart of the objectives of this study that dwell on professionalism, audience concern and the media as an industry. This is with a view to conform to the universally acknowledged press objectives, which McQuail (1999) briefly summarizes as provision of accurate, objective information for analysis in the exercise of civil rights, keeping close watch on activities of power elites in the performance of their duties as mandated by the masses and provision for a forum for discussion in regard to decisions taken in the sphere of politics, economics and social life that have a bearing on the lives of citizens. When news portrayal lacks these attributes, there are certain concerns that call for deeper examination of media performance as a medium for mass communication and a catalyst for development.

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This study is guided by the following questions:

- i) To what extent can the print media be trusted to professionally cover conflict situations involving the state and other entities?
- ii) What are peoples views of media coverage?
- iii) Can the print media be more professional and accountable?

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Kenya as an emerging democracy has strived to hold its general elections regularly in spite of notable malpractices. The 2002 general election are critical in the sense that, the tenure of then head of state, was constitutionally coming to a close after 24 years of one party rule. Consequently, what was inevitable, was that a new leader would assume the mantle of leading the nation after the election. This proved a challenge to a young democracy and other instruments of public mobilization such as the media. In 2002 the three dailies under study dominated the print media market in terms of readership though in varying degrees. The *Daily Nation* topped with a daily readership of 5 Million, the *East African Standard* 3.5 Million and the *Kenya Times* 5,00,000 respectively (Audit Bureau of Circulation, July 2002). This readership impacted in all areas in a country with relatively high literacy levels.

Over the years, because of the steady growth of general print media, the Kenyan public have largely depended on the three dailies for information about issues affecting their daily lives. With limited growth and access to television, the print media remains the main source of durable and credible information. Media globally and historically has proved a key catalyst for democratic growth and national development. When abused, it has explosive potential to fuel up conflict or calm it down.

In spite of the power media wields on the public as regards to informing on critical issues affecting their lives, there have been concerned that, largely, the local print media have not fully taken this advantage to objectively carry out this role. While it is true that the number of media houses as well as media training schools has risen steadily in the last two decades, the same cannot be said of the media information with regard to integrity. Issue of who owns which media house, media owners' alignment to political power elites, professionalism, media regulation and accountability have all given rise to the view that an interrogation of media performance is necessary. It is in this regard that

this study seeks to examine the performance of the print media in its coverage of the state church conflict during 2002 general elections. The study also seeks to examine the audience perception of the media coverage.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

The main objective of the study was to examine how the church-state conflict was covered by three mainstream dailies during the run-up to 2002 general elections in Kenya with a view to uplifting standards of news reporting, media credibility and ensuring the right of citizens to be informed objectively.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives were to:

- a) Determine the extent to which Kenyan print media professionally covered the church-state conflict during the run-up to 2002 general elections
- b) Examine the nature of the church state conflict as portrayed by the print media.
- c) Determine peoples' perception in regard to the coverage of the church state conflict during the run-up to 2002; and
- d) On the basis of funding thereof make appropriate recommendations on how the print media in Kenya can be made more professional.

### **1.4 Study Hypothesis**

This study was based on the hypothesis that:-

1. The three mainstream dailies did not adequately cover the church-state conflict with regards to its importance.
2. In covering the conflict, there was poor observation of professional principles and journalism ethics.

3. The conflict coverage was biased.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

The media industry in Kenya has grown tremendously in the last two decades in terms on numbers, diversity and audience ratios. As indicated in the *Audit Bureau of Statistics December 2002* report there were sixteen (16) radio broadcasting stations (both national and regional), five (5) television broadcasting stations, five (5) national daily newspapers and over thirty five (35) magazines. All the media mentioned had combined personnel one thousand five hundred (1500) during the same period.

There is need for the understanding of the role of print media and its impact on the immediate needs of people and the development of a society. Though information is generally available from previous studies it is hardly adequate to assess the impact of media coverage on the various sub-sectors of the society. Moreover, without a clear policy guideline on when and how media performance should be carried out, the available information may not be current enough to serve the needs of a dynamic society as ours.

The findings of these studies could be used to assist media stakeholders in formulating policy guidelines for the purpose of developing communication structures that would stimulate journalist and media institution to steer society towards national development and human rights goals. The study findings may also be used to generate academic knowledge and curiosity to examine the coverage of other areas of social interest such as crime, corruption, defilement etc. The study finding could be used as a case study and a wake up call to members of fourth estate to sharpen their skills through continuous training to achieve greater heights of professionalism.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.6.1 Agenda setting**

This merely prescribes that the selection, treatment analysis and displays of news and information if done repeatedly by the mass media put premium on issues in question. In other words, the increasing emphasis on a topic in the mass media leads to increased relevance of that topic to the public.

### **1.6.2 Civil Society**

This means an organization of people outside government inspired by civil democracy to assert the rights and duties of citizens; or the grouping of citizens for a cause.

### **1.6.3 Church**

This is a congregation of believers with common spiritual goals.

### **1.6.4 Conflict**

This is a deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others. It is a social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or threat of violence.

### **1.6.5 Democratic Governance**

This can be described as a systematic rule and control of state affairs by government as mandated by citizens through selected representation.

### **1.6.6 Fair play**

This is one of the journalism code of ethics that refers to the publishing of information affecting reputation or moral character without opportunity given to accused to be heard; the right practice thus demands the giving of such opportunity in all cases of serious accusation outside judicial proceedings.



### **1.6.7 Freedom of the Press**

This refers to people rights to true information including the right of people to express themselves freely through the media of communication.

### **1.6.8 Journalism Ethics**

This refers to a set of principles based on journalism that serve the public by aggressively seeking and reporting the closest possible truth about events and conditions of concern to people, a journalism that collects and deals with information and conscientiously interpreters and explains the news so it makes sense to people.

### **1.6.9 Media Ethics**

These are the moral principles set to guide the media professional.

### **1.6.10 Mass Media**

This refers to any organization concerned with dissemination of information and news for profit.

### **1.6.11 Mass Communication**

This is the process of transmitting and receiving information, thoughts or feelings, on a particular topic through words, actions and signs aiming at reaching a mutual understanding. The mass media is a means of transmitting messages to large audience through various media as follows;

- Print media: newspaper, books, magazines and direct mail
- Electronic media: radio, television, films, tapes and disc recording
- New media: the computer and computer networks.

#### **1.6.12 Multi-partism**

This refers to a democratic exercise involving many political parties as opposed to legitimized one party political control.

#### **1.6.13 Propaganda**

This is dissemination of ideas and information for the purpose of inducing or intensifying specific attitudes and actions

#### **1.6.14 Portrayal**

This refers to the art of portraiture, drawing a portrait of someone or something. A portrait is a representation. This suggests the existence of a gap between the real and the depiction, no how true to reality a portrait is drawn.

#### **1.6.15 Post Colonial**

This refers to political emancipation in the period after the British colonization but under self rule.

#### **1.6.16 Ufungamano**

This is a building owned by the national Christian council of Kenya along State House road in Nairobi that hosted many opposition political meetings during the period under study.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

Scholars such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Niccolò Machiavelli who have written extensively on the origin and nature of the modern state, conclusively demonstrate that the state entails a class society. Historically, states are known to employ various instruments of power to ensure loyalty and adherence to law. Armed forces, judicial and administrative systems, churches and media are some of the commonest state organs used to enforce state rule and in some cases propaganda. The church as part of the civil society has had a symbiotic relationship with the state, at times as part of the state machinery, other times as foes, thus creating a moderating relationship with each other. However, this kind of relationship is usually highly dependant on the type of rule exhibited by the state vis-à-vis the ideological position of the church and the political environment of the time.

#### 2.2 Conflict and its Medium of Communication

Conflict, best described as a situation in which two or more parties are in incompatible goals has always been a societal problem both in medieval and modern times. Conflicts are usually expressed in words and actions. In the context of social relationship, conflict is created, sustained and abolished through the exchange of messages. Communication and conflict are intimately related with certain institutionalized pathways of communication strongly associated with related exchanges. The world over, news media remain key channels of communication of conflict. Media is drawn in virtually every kind of conflict because in some basic sense, conflict is news. The potentiality of conflict is such that if not controlled or managed, it may escalate and become destructive, with the potential of even spilling over to new frontiers. Further, scholars of conflict generally agree that there are no general theories of conflict that cut across all the institutions. Every conflict has its own individual

historic character though issues in most conflict situations evolve around competition for political power, which tends to follow ethnic, social economic, ideological and religious trends.

For instance, typical of sources of conflict in the African context are;

*African presidency*, characterized by personal rule as well as supremacy and immunity of the holder.

The presidency makes it difficult to resolve emergent conflicts as it always strives to impose its position on daily issues.

*African state* itself is a serious source of conflict. It is an institution used by dominant classes to wield coercive power over other classes they seek to rule, dominate or exploit. It is not an "impartial arbiter" whose role is to promote national interest in economic growth, efficiency and social welfare.

This is so as the state itself is a focal point for competition and as such is a major actor in the conflict.

*State terrorism* designed to protect the interests of the ruling class, elites, ethnic groupings at the expense of others considered "undesirable" who can be physically or psychologically terrorized causing fear, despondency, resentment thus further breeding bitterness and attitudes that spurn conflicts.

Imbalanced resource allocation has always been a source of conflict and so is unfair resource distribution. The Kenyan situation depicts many aspects of typical African state conflict scenario with ethnicity and unfair resource allocation being the most visible. Though the civil society has played a recognizable role in championing serious democratic and governance deficiencies over the last one decade, of the church has always locked horns with the state on issues of governance and human rights of the citizenry. Consequently, the mass media, both mainstream and even the gutter press has always highlighted state excesses and in turn suffering consequences by the state such as, enactment of punitive media legislation and even physical assault of journalists.

### 2.3 Development of Mass Media in Kenya

The development of mass media in Kenya and the print media in particular can be traced back to the colonial times. *The African Standard*, a monthly publication was set up in Mombassa by A.M. Jeevanjee in 1902 and was the first Kenya's newspaper. The paper changed hands and became *East African standard*. It was dominantly pro-white in content. In Nairobi, *British East Africa*, a weekly newspaper was established in 1908. In 1910, *East African Standard* moved to Nairobi, published on weekly basis for ten days and going daily there after. The paper intensified its pro-white stand becoming very popular among the white settlers and Indians. In 1958, on behalf of the Aga Khan, Michael Curtis set up a publishing company that published the *East African Standard* that acquired the *Taifa* newspaper with the whites at the helm. In 1960, *Sunday Nation* and later the *Daily Nation* publications were set up. The newspaper became very competitive challenging the right-wing *East African Standard* with its liberal and pro-nationalist stand. Many Africans got admitted to work for the *Daily Nation* with Hilary Ngweni becoming the first African Editor-in-Chief of the Nation Group of Newspapers in 1964. *Daily Nation* took the leading position in circulation, a feat that stands to date, with average daily circulation of over 5 million copies.

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In the 1980s, Kenyan main dailies and political magazines became increasingly critical over the government excesses in issues of governance, human rights and poor democratization of institutions. The government reacted by deliberately influencing editorial policies through appointment of politically correct media managers in leading newspapers. The *Weekly Review*, a weekly publication equally critical of the government, found itself in financial trouble with credit banks following a government order to the National Bank of Kenya to recover all monies owned by the publication company in shortest time possible. The *Nairobi Times*, a publication also owned by the same company as the *Weekly Review* found it difficult to survive under the tight KANU government

crackdown thus selling the newspaper and its printing firm, the Stella scope to the ruling party KANU. This marked the first direct government effort to thwart the African effort to invest in mass media and to intensify its quench for control of mass media instruments. To accomplish this venture, a partnership between KANU and Robert Maxwell the proprietor of London Mirror group was signed establishing the Kenya Media Times Trust, which went further in 1988 to set up Kenya's second television company, the *Kenya Television Network* (KTN).

In terms of editorial approach and ideology, the station was not very different from the government owned *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation* TV and radio in terms of propagating government tailored media news. By and large, the performances of the three mainstream newspapers under this study, the *Daily Nation*, *East African Standard* and the *Kenya Times*, have over the years been dependent on three major factors; type of ownership, financial resource base and the country's political power structure. This scenario according to Paul A.V. Ansah is typical of media structures in the rest of Africa as they are characterized by state ownership, political party ownership, foreign ownership and local ventures of various shapes and interests.

News portrayal under these circumstances is bound to lean towards the ideology positions or propaganda intentions of the ownership group. This contradicts the universally acknowledged press objectives, which McQuail (1999) briefly summarizes as provision of accurate, objective information for analysis in the exercise of civil rights, keeping close watch on activities of power elites in the performance of their duties as mandated by the masses and provision for a forum for discussion in regard to decisions taken in the sphere of politics, economics and social life that have a bearing on the lives of citizens.

## **2.4 Advent of Multi party Politics**

Since the advent of multi-party politics in Kenya in early 1990s and consequent political liberalization, the media has all along played a pivotal role in championing the rights, expectations and aspirations of society. Likewise political parties, the civil society, human rights groups, the church and individual multi-party party advocates have been involved in the clamour for change. In the 1990s, Kenya was a country deeply rooted in an ethnic-based plutocratic regime buttressed by an insensitive corrupt and repressive elitist clique forming around the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU).

Democratic governance, which multi-partism implies, is established on various principles among which are freedom of thought, expression and action. People should have free access to political formation; they must be free to hold and express political ideas, support, criticize and oppose political figures and programmes, associate for political purpose, seek political and public office and cast free ballots in honest elections. They must be free to engage in politics without fear of peril or punishment from government or opponents (Chritension et al, 1981). Central to the structure of democracy is the principal that the only legitimate basis for ruling people is their consent to be ruled. Governance by force or coercion is undemocratic. In essence, by embracing democracy as a form of governance, Kenya has thus accented to the wide principles that are embodied therein. The repealing of Section 2A of the Constitution of Kenya in 1990 paved way for multi-party politics and forced the political establishment to stubbornly succumb to pressure and allow this kind of political change.

## **2.5 Role of Media in Political Mobilization**

Developments of such magnitude could not have the impact they had without due highlighting by the media in their noble goal of informing and educating the society. Notably, one of the expectations of mass media is to promote visions of common purpose and destiny for a nation. Positive mass media

engagement in the political process can bring about national cohesion and purpose and ease tensions that may boil to potential conflicts of interest, thereby inhibiting development process of a country. As part and parcel of civil society, access to the mass media is critical to actors involved in the politics of transition from single to multi-party democracy. The role of the media in this enterprise can be greatly enhanced by the support of other democratic social forces in society. Both institutions need each other as they try to influence the direction, pattern and issues of democratic transition. The media in essence acts as bridge between other civil society associations, the rest of society and the state or government.

For communication to have impact, it must be carried out in the public realm. It is this way that the public is made aware of the issues being debated and contested. This is the role that the mass media are best suited to undertake and or facilitate precisely because of their wide reach. This is why governments and ruling elites in general, and indeed political contenders in a democratic political system strive to control channels of mass communication. Thus, over time, especially in the last decade, there has been a recursive relationship between Mass Media and political process with the media influencing the pace of political liberalization and in turn facilitating media growth, pluralism and relative independence.

This is in line with the vision of a UNESCO conference held in Windhoek in Namibia in 1991 on "Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press". The mass media in Kenya and more so the print media have played their part in the process of political liberalization. The thrust of that conference was primarily the maintenance and fostering of an independent pluralistic free press as an essential component of the development and maintenance of democracy. This is also consistent with the theory linking politics of identity with pluralism and diversity in the market place of ideas. But as scholars of the "Gate Keeper theory" would argue, the Journalist exercises bias in selecting and



reporting news. The ability to “mirror” the society or not, or whether the news is biased towards this or that idea depends on the efficacy of the gate keeper’s news values and the predisposition of the media institution towards free expression. When the values are well chosen and well applied, the results will be better news. Better news is balanced news. Walter Lipmann (1922) stresses that:-

*The better the institutions the more all interests concerned are represented, the more issues are disentangled, the more effective criteria are introduced, the more perfectly an affair can be presented as news. At its best, the press is a servant and guardian of institutions. At its worst, it is a means by which a few exploit social disorganization to their own ends.*

Following the political developments of the 1990’s especially with the repealing of section 2a of the constitution, multi-party politics became a reality in Kenya. However the immediate out come was violent inter-ethnic conflicts in some parts of the country mostly Rift Valley Province during the 1992 and 1997 general elections and also parts of Coast Province following the 1997 general elections. These so called ethnic clashes which are openly known to have been planned and executed by well-placed people in the then KANU government left thousands of people displaced. Nonetheless, both internal and external pressures by Human Rights groups, politicians, Journalists, the church, donor and diplomatic community prevailed upon a stubborn political regime to accept and embrace the broad principles and practices of liberal democratic governance.

The resultant general elections of 1992 and 1997 though held under these principles were but just a mockery of democracy and justice. As independent poll monitors, both local and foreign had it, massive intimidation through politically inspired ethnic clashes, harassment and persecution of advocates of good governance by a compromised Judiciary, biased Provincial Administration and massive election rigging ensured that the ruling party would do anything to preserve and maintain the status quo. The struggle for a just government that came to be commonly referred to as the “Second

Liberation” was at a time when the country was experiencing worst performances in all the sectors of political, economic and social life. That poor performance for instance culminated into the country recording negative growth in the year 2000 with fifty per cent (50%) of citizens living below the poverty level. The last decade was one of the country’s darkest periods after the British colonial rule. With a tight iron fist rule in the person of Daniel Moi under KANU government, political oppression became the order of the day. Political murders, mysterious disappearance of persons and suspicious political deaths continued to make headline news in the media

The mysterious murder of the then Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Robert Ouko in 1990, the suspicious death of Anglican Bishop Alexander Muge in a car accident in Busia in 1991 and the 2001 death of Fr. John Kaiser of the Catholic Diocese of Ngong, aroused anger and condemnation of the otherwise careful treading spiritual community, the church. At no one time in independent Kenya did the church come so united to mount pressure on the government to end atrocities against its own people and by extension its flock. Ideological differences notwithstanding, the Catholic Church, Protestant churches under the umbrella body, National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK) and the Muslim Community relentlessly fought an abrasive war of words with the State, giving way to an all open hostility and mistrust between the Church and State. That scenario bred an environment of mistrust between the church and state. The church found governance wanting as well as the imbalances in the distribution of power and national resources that were manifested along ethnic lines. Human rights violations, economic disparities and weak democratic institutions were permanent features of the KANU rule that tended to exacerbate tensions at times leading to violence confrontations.

## **2.6 Emergence of Church-State Conflict**

Under such political circumstances the church became continually vocal against the state and through out the 1990s and the new millennium it joined hands with other advocates of change and formed a

formidable opposition front. The freedom of worship enshrined in the Constitution enabled the Church to speak out loudly against all manner of social evils meted by the government to its people. An example to this joint opposition against the KANU regime is best demonstrated by the frustrations of the alleged rigged general elections of 1992 and 1997. Forces of change realized that the only avenue left then for any meaningful change in governance was through calls for total review of the country's Constitution. The Constitution has had apparent loopholes that were mercilessly exploited by the KANU regime to continue entrenching itself in power. The Church supported the constitutional change call and through the so-called Ufungamano initiative, brought to ship all mainstream churches including the Muslims. Despite much intriguing and arm-twisting by the KANU regime, the initiative became a reality, and the united church was allowed membership into the historic Constitution Review Commission of Kenya mandated to review the Constitution.

The church thus identified itself as a strong symbol of liberation alongside other agents of change and together with the mass media worked towards the second political liberation of the country. Coupled with this was a deliberate and elaborate civil education programme mounted by the church that was able to attract donor funding and sponsorship by many NGOs. A massive civic education programme was consequently initiated and had impact even in remote areas of the country with minimal media and government presence. The church voter education programme was equally credited with the crashing defeat of KANU in the 2002 general elections.

It is against this background that an examination of media in a relatively liberalized democratic environment is compelling. It is equally imperative that an evaluation of the challenges media faced in pursuit of its role against other challenges of maintaining objectivity, responsibility and accuracy amongst others is made. Media ownership or acquisition the world over is not without a motive.

Ambition for power i.e. the desire to obtain political power to achieve an end is not uncommon. Issues of profit motivation or desire to influence public opinion for a cause also come hardy. Newspaper ownership, control and relationship between ownership and editorial linkages impact on certain key aspects of journalistic practice usually referred to as codes of ethics. These are responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, accuracy, impartiality, fair play and decency. These ideals that are vital for the profession are the same principles that were first adopted in April 1923 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and which to date have been endorsed by many media organizations globally as the "Code of Journalistic ethics". The mode of newspaper ownership may affect its integrity as perceived by its audience in so far as editorial policy is dictated by the owner to suit vested interests, both economic and political. Media influence in any society need not be overemphasized. Perhaps, when Edmund Burke first came up with the term, "Fourth Estate" in reference to the press, he had in mind the Commons, the Lords and the Clergy. Media importance still prevails in modern day societies as it were then, more so due to the sophistication of society and increased literacy levels.

It is worth noting that the three dailies under study came into existence at different historical times. Certainly their ownership and ideological lineage may have a linkage on the church –state conflict portrayal other factors notwithstanding. The *East African Standard* is the oldest newspaper in Kenya having been established in 1902 to serve the interests of the white settlers by then. In the 1980s and mid 1990s, ownership was by British investor Tiny Rowland, but over time, shares were also able to change hands and now the newspaper is associated with powerful barons in the former KANU regime. The *Daily Nation* on the other hand has remained foreign owned since inception in 1961 by the Aga Khan, a major foreign investor in Kenya. During the colonial times, the paper was able to identify with the aspirations of freedom fighters thus gaining popularity amongst the Kenyan public

and today it records the highest number of readers averaging 5 million daily. The *Kenya Times* has remained KANU's mouthpiece since the party bought it in the mid 1980s known then as the Nairobi Times. The paper has continued to propagate party ideals and perpetuated evil rule of a regime that had left its people more impoverished than they were thirty years ago.

## **2.7 Agenda Setting by the Media**

Media ownership in Kenya has a pattern of news selection for public consumption. As Herman and Chomsky argue, a propaganda approach to media coverage means; "A systematic and highly political dichotomization in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests. This should be observable in dichotomized choices of story in the volume and quantity of coverage ... such dichotomization in the mass media is massive and systematic; not only are choices for publicity and suppression comprehensible in terms of system advantage, but the modes of handling favored and inconvenient material (placement, tone, content, fullness of treatment) differ in ways that serve political interests" Hanson and Maxcy 1996:180).

The agenda model is supported by the Gramsci Hegemony theory that argues that a dominant social group has the capacity to control and build new social and cultural systems over the weaker social group. This is not necessarily through military power, Gramsci, in *Selections From Prison Notebook* agree that the best instrument to wield power is through a consent by ideology control of cultural production and distribution through mass media. Many other studies have examined the media ownership, characteristics of reporters and political influence on reportage. Herman and Chomsky explain why the media select and frame stories the way they do. The news in mainstream media system passes through various "filters" including the size, concentrated ownership and profit orientation of the media firms; their heavy reliance on advertising and dependence business and government sources of information and the overall dominant ideology within which they operate. Other studies have shown that other factors affect media coverage and portrayal.

## **2.8 Media Framing**

In telling the story, the news media retell and reinterpret versions of that particular story, as told by other powerful social and political situations. This further reinforces the argument that the media produce certain dominant notions of reality, just like all propagandists. The media seek to predetermine our perception of a subject with a positive or negative label. Therefore, the words used are critical to the understanding of the issue at hand. It is through words that people comprehend, experience and act upon social reality. Framing, in the case of news coverage, is the ultimate message. Framing information theory states that media do not present an objective view of the world. News frames exist at two levels as mentally stored principles for information processing and as characteristic of news text. This shows how the media resulting in a completely different outcome can manipulate similar incidents.

Effective media propaganda rely more upon framing rather than on falsehood. By bending the truth, rather than breaking it and by using emphasis, media create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy and without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity.

Framing is easily achieved in the way the news placement (front page or buried within, lead story or last) the tone of presentation (systematic or slighting), the headlines and photographs.

## **2.9 News Perception by Journalists**

Journalists who paste together pieces of information to make news, may themselves be part of the bias, committed either because of professional notions of how news should be structured or due to social views of the ideas it should convey, so argues Golding and Elliot (Marris and Thornham; 1996:411). This is given impetus by David Brinkley, the American newscaster who said "News is what I say it is."

News is not merely a collection of facts put together in narrative form; it plays an important role by providing the audiences with ways and alternatives of handling challenges within their environment. It is often argued that news stories are socially determined where the reporters' social interpretation of events takes precedence. Stories are produced within an environment in which individual journalists and their organizations determine events, occurrences or activities as newsworthy on the basis of both highly personal rationale and organizational imperative.

Ben Bagdikian, a Pulitzer –prize winning journalist, complains that a quest for “objectivity” tends to favour official sources of news and “Factual” events such as crimes and accidents, omitting the interpretation that readers often need.

The focus on events may obscure the general trends that are the key to the understanding journalist alongside other media workers educational, social and cultural background influence the content of what they produce.

## **2.10 Selection of News**

It is critical to unearth the basis upon which editors select news. Generally news can be described as unusual occurrence, the exceptional or something which is out of the ordinary which threatens, benefits, outrages, enlightens or titillates.

In a 1979 study of how America media “gatekeepers” select the news, sociologist Herbert J. Gans found out that the main themes of foreign coverage for instance were American activities abroad, foreign activities affecting Americans, Communist- bloc countries (focusing on their failures and according to Herman and Chomsky (1994) a propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in every state as worthy victims, whereas, those treated with greater or equal severity by its own government as unworthy. The more worthy the victim, the more coverage they are likely to get. They may not directly determine the tone of the story but depending on the event it can either be positive or negative framing.

## 2.11 Portrayal through Media Ownership

Media portrayal comes about as a reflection of economic, political, racial, class, gender and religious bias of the media owners and of the governing class. Herman and Chomsky (1988) contend that the media are drawn into symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interests. The media need a steady and reliable flow of information to meet the daily news demands and imperative news schedule that they must meet. However, they cannot afford to have reporters and photographers at all places where news breaks. They are thus forced to concentrate their resources where significant news often occurs, "where important rumours and leaks abound, and where regular press conferences are held" (Jarie and Maxcy, 1996).

Herman and Chomsky (1988) go further to describe this complex relationship between media owners and the government. They explain filters that affect news choices. The dominant media firms are large and controlled by wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners by owners and other market- profit –oriented forces; they are closely interlocked, and have important common interests, with major corporations, banks and government. This is a powerful filter that affects news choices.

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Media ownership or acquisition the world over is not without a motive. Ambition for power i.e. the desire to obtain political power to achieve an end is not uncommon. Issues of profit motivation or desire to influence public opinion for a cause also come hardy. Newspaper ownership, control and relationship between ownership and editorial linkages impact on certain key aspects of journalistic practice usually referred to as codes of ethics. These are responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, accuracy, impartiality, fair play and decency. These ideals that are vital for the profession are the same principles that were first adopted in April 1923 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and which to date have been endorsed by many media organisations globally as the "Code of Journalistic ethics". The mode of newspaper ownership may affect its integrity as



perceived by its audience in so far as editorial policy is dictated by the owner to suit vested interests, both economic and political. Media influence in any society need not be overemphasized. Perhaps, when Edmund Burke first came up with the term, "Fourth Estate" in reference to the press, he had in mind the Commons, the Lords and the Clergy. Media importance still prevails in modern day societies as it were then, more so due to the sophistication of society and increased literacy levels.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction to Sample Selection

This chapter outline the study methodology by discussing study site, sample frame, source of data, data collection procedures and data analysis. The methodology section enabled the realization of this study and attaining of the laid down objectives

#### 3.2 Selection of Nairobi

Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya is the was chosen for this study because it is the hub of the country's social, political and economic activities. Nairobi is host to headquarter of mainstream churches such as Roman Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal Church of East Africa and Africa Inland Church. It is home to nearly five (5) million residents as projected by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2002 annual report. All the three dailies under study are headquartered in Nairobi where printing of newspapers takes place and then distributed to the rest of the countries. It is thus deemed that newspaper readership and political awareness in Nairobi are higher on account of its metropolitan nature. With a national daily newspaper readership of eight million, Nairobi alone accounts for half of this readership figure. By combining factors of political awareness and newspaper readership Nairobi was thus selected as sample site of the study.

#### 3.3 Study Sites

Three site namely South B, Kenya Polytechnic and Westlands were chosen as study sites for the purpose of questionnaire administration. Kenya Polytechnic is at the heart of Nairobi city and as a training institution has both young and mature student as well as lecturers. Westlands which is about three kilometers (3) from Nairobi city has high population of Asians, European and Africans. The South B area has both Asian and African population and is home to a mosque, a catholic church and host of independent churches.

### **3.4 Sample Design and Sampling Procedure**

Primary data was gathered using questionnaires administered to media personnel and church congregation. The researcher set out to interview an optimum number of fifty people that included thirty five from the church congregation and fifteen from media houses. The sample size was arrived at due to high costs of interviewing. From each of the three sampled sites, twenty people both males and females aged eighteen years and above were selected for interviewing in Westland and Kenya Polytechnic whereas as fifteen were selected in South B. Each of the three media houses and five people each selected for interviewing.

### **3.5 Types of Data**

Both qualitative and quantitative data was utilized in this study. Details of the nature of information sought was obtained from face to face interview for the purpose of audience perception of the media coverage. For content analysis a sample of 184 copies of each of the three dailies were selected from July to December 2002. Data obtained from the content analysis was used to gauge the extent and nature of the media coverage.

To achieve the ultimate aim of the study, it was deemed important to design a questionnaire to standardize data collection procedure and consistency. The questionnaire design process started with a desk study that involved review of literature from relevant materials. The questionnaire were administered to each of the fifty respondents within a period of ten days. The emphasis of the questionnaire was on audience perception of the media coverage of the conflict.

### **3.6 Sources of Data and Data Collection Methods**

The data for the study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources: reading the existing written material on content analysis, audience studies, media behaviour and role of media in

development.. This involved a review of secondary data from policy documents, research reports content analysis of newspapers and various other sources. The primary data was collected through interviewing the selected respondents in South B, Kenya Polytechnic, Westlands and the media houses. A sample size of fifty respondents was selected as representative ratio.

### **3.7 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation**

After administering each of the two sets of questionnaires to different respondents, each questionnaire was given a number. The first set of questionnaire for church congregation had 1 to 35 and the second set of questionnaires for media personnel had 36 to 50. The researcher went through all the questionnaires to ensure all sections had been completed properly after receiving them back. Various section of the questionnaire were coded for instance giving code to question that gave information on respondent background, code on perception related views until all questions both structure and unstructured were coded.

In the content analysis of the dailies, the space given to church-state conflict story is taken as the total number of story in each of the six months covered by each newspaper and whose total of the three newspapers adds upto 100%. The study has not used centimeters or inches to measure the length of articles but gives a value of figures like 1, 2, 3 etc depending on the number of church –state conflict stories covered. Coverage of hard news, editorial, cartoon depiction and picture categories was done the same way.

Data elicited from survey respondents derived from media personnel and church congregation were coded. This way, it is possible to gauge the respondents' perception of each of the three newspapers and equally know the extent of bias as perceived by the respondent. By comparing the two sets of data derived from content analysis and the questionnaire conclusions are drawn pertaining church –

state conflict portrayal to some reasonable degree of accuracy. After all coding was done data was entered in a computer and processed using Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was grouped as per the codes given to enable processing and tabulation. Through use of SPSS programme, descriptive and inferential statistics was used to summarise data infer sample results to the population. Percentages and tables were used for describing differences between variables and for easy comparability.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.0 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter dwells with the research findings of the content analysis of the three newspapers and the responses of church public and media personnel. Table 4.2 to 4.8 dwells on the findings of data results of the content analysis. Table 4.9 to 4.16 dwells on findings of data results of media personnel whereas as Table 4.17 to 4.24 dwells on finding of data results of church congregation.

In the content analysis category, the three newspapers are listed from the period of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002. The frequency of coverage of church –state conflict story elements is given in absolute figures. The frequency of the coverage is further expressed in percentage form. This is done by taking the number of times the conflict story element is covered by an individual newspaper over the total number of conflict story element covered by the three newspapers and multiplied by 100 to give a percentage figure. All conflict story elements are further classified into four categories of hard news, pictorial, editorial and cartoon depiction. The total number of these conflict story categories are indicated separately for each newspaper and the total in each category expressed in absolute figures.

As per the procedure provided for in the methodology the story elements are framed as either positive or negative in each newspaper. The total number of both positive and negative story elements are equal to the total number of church -state conflict stories recorded as frequency rates. The questionnaire results are equally presented from both closed and open ended questions

**Table 4.2: Newspaper Story Element Distribution for July 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	6	40%	4	1	0	1	5	1
The Standard	5	33%	4	1	0	0	2	3
The K. Times	4	27%	3	0	0	1	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

In the first month of the study, July 2002 and just 6 months away to the general election, there were a total number of 15 church –state conflict stories covered by the three dailies combined with the *Daily Nation* taking the lead at 40%, followed closely by *East African Standard* at 33% and *Kenya Times* at 27%. In terms of story element categorization, in the form of hard news, *Daily Nation* had 4, the same as *East African Standard* with *Kenya Times* having 3. In the pictorial category, both *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* had each 1 whereas *Kenya Times* didn't have any. None of the dailies had the conflict story highlighted in its editorial for the entire month. In the cartoon category, both the *Daily Nation* and *Kenya Times* had 1 each and the *East African Standard* none. By depiction of all story elements as either positive or negative for the entire month, the *Daily Nation* had highest number of positive coverage of the conflict with 5 elements while both *East African Standard* and *Kenya Times* had 2 each. The *East African Standard* topped the list of negative stories with 3, followed by *Kenya Times* with 2 and *Daily Nation* with 1. Overall the month recorded a total number of 9 positive conflict story elements from the three dailies and 6 negative story elements. By further breaking the four news categories of the three dailies, hard news had the highest slots at 11, with both pictorial and cartoons recording 2 each for the entire month. There was no editorial on the conflict coverage for the month.

**Table 4.3: Newspaper Story Element Distribution for August 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	10	36%	9	1	0	0	10	0
The Standard	12	43%	8	4	0	0	8	4
The K. Times	6	21%	4	2	0	0	5	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>

Unlike the previous month, more conflict stories, 28 in number were covered by the three dailies. The *East African Standard* topped the coverage with 43% followed by *Daily Nation* at 36% and *Kenya Times* at 21%. However it was only the hard news and pictorial that dominated this coverage with 21 and 7 story elements respectively. There was no coverage in the form of editorial or cartoon. By evaluation, a total of 23 story elements from the three dailies were classified as positive and 5 as negative.

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**Table 4.4: Newspaper story Element Distribution for the Month of September 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	13	35%	8	5	0	0	8	5
The Standard	15	41%	11	4	0	0	13	2
The K. Times	9	24%	4	3	2	0	6	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>

In the third month under study, September 2002, a pattern is emerging showing a relatively higher coverage of conflict stories at 37 by the three dailies. Perhaps, with the election fever building as the election month neared there were heightened political activities than in the previous two months. Consequently, there was a record number of conflict story coverage. There were 27 positive and 10



negative stories unlike the previous month of August 2002 that recorded 28. However there was no cartoon illustration in all the three dailies, *Kenya Times* carried out 2 editorial story elements.

**Table 4.5: Newspaper story Element Distribution for the Month of October 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	9	41%	8	1	0	0	9	0
The Standard	8	36%	6	2	0	0	7	1
The K. Times	5	23%	3	2	0	0	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>

In this month of October, total conflict story coverage reduced drastically to 22 with the *Daily Nation* topping with 41% followed by the *East African Standard* at 36% and *Kenya Times* 23%. Unlike in the months of August and September there was no cartoon illustration about the conflict. All the three dailies recorded 1 negative conflict story each while a total of 20 positive stories were recorded with the *East African Standard* having the highest at 7 followed by the *Daily Nation* with 4 and *Kenya Times* 2.

**Table 4.6: Newspaper story element distribution table for the Month of November 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	5	31	3	2	0	0	4	1
The Standard	8	50	6	2	0	0	7	1
The K. Times	3	19	3	0	0	0	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>

Over all, conflict story coverage in this month dropped dramatically to 16. The *East African Standard* had most at 8 followed by the *Daily Nation* at 5 and *Kenya Times* at 3. Like in the previous months

the hard news category continued to dominate with 12 story elements followed by pictorial with 4 but none in the other categories of editorial and cartoon. A total of 13 positive stories were recorded as compared to 3 negative story components.

**Table 4.7: Newspaper story element distribution table for the Month of December 2002**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>				<u>Depiction</u>	
			Hand News	Pictorial	Editorial	Cartoon	Positive	Negative
D. Nation	13	48%	10	3	0	0	8	5
The Standard	10	37%	7	3	0	0	9	1
The K. Times	4	15%	2	1	0	1	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

December being the actual election month, a relatively higher number of conflict stories, 27 was recorded in the 3 dailies. This was a significant improvement from the previous month that recorded only 16. The *Daily Nation* topped with 13 story elements followed by the *East African Standard* with 10 and *Kenya Times* 4. Unlike the previous four months from July to November, a cartoon illustration was recorded by the *Kenya Times* and like the previous two months of November and October there was no editorial on the conflict story. Over all 18 stories were recorded a positive and 9 as negative by the three dailies.

**Table 4.8: Total conflict story coverage and framing from July – December 2002**

<u>Paper</u>	<u>Total No of Conflict Stories</u>	<u>Positive Frame</u>	<u>Negative Frame</u>
E.A Standard	58 (40%)	46 (42%)	12 (34%)
Daily Nation	56 (37%)	44 (40%)	12 (34%)
Kenya Times	31 (21%)	20 (18%)	11 (32%)
Total	145	110	35

The table shows the distribution pattern of all conflict stories by each daily and the total for all dailies together. It also illustrates the nature of framing as either positive or negative. Thus *East African Standard* had the highest coverage of conflict stories at 58, followed closely by *Daily Nation* at 56 while *Kenya Times* had 31. Despite *Kenya Times* having the least number of total conflict story coverage at 31, however, it had almost an equal number of negative stories with the rest of the newspapers despite their relatively higher conflict story coverage. In percentage form *Kenya Times* had least number of negative stories at 32%, the *Daily Nation* 34% and the *East African Standard* 34%. However the *East African Standard* recorded highest number of positive stories at 42%, while the *Daily Nation* had 40% and the *Kenya Times* had the least with 18%.

**Table 4.9: Memory of Church State Conflict**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	5	100%
East African Standard	5	100%
Daily Nation	2	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

All the 12 respondents recalled their being church –state conflict during the run-up to 2002 elections. This is not surprising as all the respondents worked in their respective media houses that are the basis for this study

**Table 4.10: Source of Church-State Conflict**

<u>Source of Conflict</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	11	92%
Others	1	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

Asked about the source of the conflict, 98% responded that it was political and only 2% cited other reasons. This being an open ended question, respondents gave varying responses for instance political, failure to write a new constitution, partisan electoral commission and tribalism in government appointments etc. Being an election period, political awareness was relatively high because of the significance of the outcome of the election.

**Table 4.11: Individual Newspaper Bias**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	22	44%
East African Standard	15	30%
Daily Nation	13	26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Asked about their perception of general bias by each individual newspaper, *Kenya Times* topped the bias with 44 %, followed by *East African Standard* at 30% and closely followed by *Daily Nation* at 26%.

**Table 4.12: Newspaper Bias in Favour of State**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	12	86%
East African Standard	2	14%
Daily Nation	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the coverage of the conflict 86% of the respondents agreed that *Kenya Times* was most biased towards the state followed by *East African Standard* with 14%. None of the respondents thought the *Daily Nation* was biased. Interestingly it's worth noting that even *Kenya Times* and *East African Standard* media personnel responded that the *Daily Nation* was not biased. Possibly owing to the issue of ownership, *Kenya Times* could not run away from that perception, though more still, its general news angle more often than not appeared to favor the state, even when the general view of other newspapers was different.

**Table 4.13: Newspaper Bias in Favour of the Church**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	0	0%
East African Standard	2	14%
Daily Nation	12	86%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Contrary the earlier perception on bias toward the state, most respondents, 86% thought *Daily Nation* was biased towards the Church. None thought so about *Kenya Times*, whereas 14% thought *East African standard* was biased towards the Church. Again issues of editorial policy and ownership may have played a role in this perception.

**Table 4.14: Reason for State Bias**

<u>Source of Conflict</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	10	84%
Business	1	8%
Other	1	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

This being an open ended question, responses varied but could largely be categorized as political or business. Still there were other reasons given such as general anti-government feelings. All in all 84% of respondents gave their reasons as political, whereas 8% thought it was business.

**Table 4.15: Reason for Church Bias**

<u>Source of Conflict</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	8	67%
Business	3	25%
Other	1	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

A relatively lower percentage, 67% as compared to table 4.2.13, thought the reason for bias towards the church was based on political considerations, whereas 25% thought it was business. A partly 8% thought of other reasons for the bias.

**Table 4.16: Ethical Practices of Journalism**

<u>Journalistic Ethics</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Agree	3	25%
Disagree	9	75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

With regard to whether the media houses under study fully observed ethical practices of journalism in conflict situation involving the state and other parties, a large percentage, 75% said No, whereas 25% thought that was observed. It is ironical to note the media personnel themselves agreeing that observance of ethical journalistic practices are not observed when covering this nature of conflict.

**Table 4.17: Memory of Church State Conflict**

<u>Response</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Yes	24	86%
No	4	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

A good number of respondents 86%, admitted having memory of the church –state conflict. Only a meagre 14% could not recall.

**Table 4.18: Source of Conflict**

<u>Source of Conflict</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	25	89%
Other	3	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

A large number of respondents, 89% associated the conflict to political events while 11% gave other reasons besides politics. This shows a great degree of awareness of the political events engulfing the country then.

**Table 4.19: Individual Newspaper Bias**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	11	39%
East African Standard	9	32%
Daily Nation	8	29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Just like the media personnel the pattern of perception is similar with the church public. 39% of the respondents thought *Kenya Times* was most biased in regard to the general coverage of the conflict. *East Africa Standard* follows at 32% while the *Daily Nation* has a bias of 29%. Again issues of newspaper ownership and ideology might have had some significance, giving rise to this kind of perception by the respondents.

**Table 4.20: Newspaper Bias in Favour of State**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	25	80%
East African Standard	3	10%
Daily Nation	3	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Kenya Times* led in this pack with 80% perception by the respondents. Interestingly both *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* tied at 10%, meaning their bias was viewed in the same way by the respondents.



**Table 4.21: Newspaper Bias in Favour of the Church**

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Kenya Times	1	5%
East African Standard	7	35%
Daily Nation	12	60%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

The respondents' pattern of response is the same as that of media personnel but with varying proportions. 60% of the respondents perceived *Daily Nation* as biased in favor of the church, 35% for the *East African Standard* and a partly 5% for the *Kenya Times*. Perhaps the *Daily Nation* came out more boldly in championing the cause of governance and other democratic rights and could easily identify with the masses.

**Table 4.22: Reason for State Bias**

<u>Source of Bias</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	27	96%
Business	1	4%
Other	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Politics was attributed as the greatest reason for bias at 96% and business at only 1%.

**Table 4.23: Reason for Church Bias**

<u>Source of Conflict</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Political	19	68%
Business	9	32%
Other	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

None of the respondents thought the reason for bias towards the church was any other except politics and business. Thus 68% thought it was political while 32% thought it was business.

**Table 4.24: Ethical Practices of Journalism**

<u>Journalistic Ethics</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Agree	10	36%
Disagree	17	61%
Abstain	1	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Majority of respondents, 61% thought the three dailies did not observe journalism ethics in pursuit of and coverage of the conflict. However, 36% were convinced ethical practices were observed. Only 3% of the respondents could not decide either way.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the factors that influence low coverage of the church-state conflicts as well as negative perception of the coverage by the respondents. The analysis is based on 35 respondents who submitted back questionnaires as well as findings of the content analysis of the three dailies for comparative purposes. According to the study findings, and in the content analysis category a total number of 184 daily newspapers under study were covered, stretching from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2002. All the three newspapers yielded 145 conflict stories with the *East African Standard* having the highest at 58, the *Daily Nation* 56 and *Kenya Times* 31.

In the questionnaire category targeting the church congregation and media personnel a total number of 50 questionnaires were administered to both females and male adults yielding a response rate of 80%. Separately in the media personnel category comprising the three newspapers under study, 15 questionnaires were administered, yielding a response rate of 80% whereas thirty five (35) questionnaires were administered to the media public yielding a response rate of 80%.

#### 5.2 Portrayal of the Coverage

It is interesting to note that the average monthly conflict stories coverage was relatively low. Thus with a monthly average of 24 conflict stories at such a historical moment, the coverage falls short of expectation. Even at individual newspaper level, the figures are dismally low with the *East African Standard* having 10, the *Daily Nation* 9, and the *Kenya Times* 5.

In terms of key story elements, hard news was covered most by the three newspapers at 71%, pictorial 26%, cartoon 2% while editorial was only 1%. With regard to framing a total number 110

news elements from all the three dailies were framed as positive while 35 were found to be negative. The *East African Standard* had the highest positive story elements at 46 while the *Daily Nation* had 44 while *Kenya Times* had 20. In the negative framing category both the *East African Standard* and the *Daily Nation* recorded 12 negative stories each while *Kenya Times* had 11.

The month of July 2002 recorded the lowest number of conflict stories at 15 as compared to September, 2002, which recorded 37. Perhaps, this is explained by the climax of political temperatures and euphoria in the month of September following the coming together of 15 constituent opposition political parties to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). It is this coalition that eventually dislodged KANU from power following the December 27<sup>th</sup> 2002, general elections. Arising thus from the anxiety this political milestone caused, there was more than casual interest in the ensuing political scenario with wide media coverage of the political events of the day prompting such a higher number of coverage of the church – state conflict stories.

Unlike in the month of July 2002, when political line ups were not clearly spelt out, by September, 2002, clear signs of political alignments were evident, what with the fallout of a splinter group from KANU, that later bought out a political party, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) following serious disagreements over controversial choice of KANU's presidential candidate. A fallout was inevitable then, and with it renewed political interest and realignments. The church, whose frequent confrontation with the government had become a way of life, never looked back in its desire to back the new NARC coalition. This was demonstrated on the day of the announcement of that historical development when none other than the Secretary General of the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK) led the prayers during the event before one of the largest crowds ever witnessed at the Uhuru Park.

Notably, and from known historical reasons, the apparent low coverage of such conflict stories may be attributed to deliberate censure on the part of the media houses to avoid possible confrontation with the state. The state-media relations by then had been abrasive since the start of the clamor for multi-party politics in the early 1990s. The media had suffered its share of excess of state tyranny. By carefully avoiding generous coverage of church-state conflicts, in a way, the media would keep away from potential trouble with the state unless the conflict was seriously hot news. In any case, other than the *Kenya Times*, the *Daily Nation* and to some extent the *East African Standard* were perceptionally branded opposition sympathizers by the government of the day. Thus any coverage of such conflict had to be undertaken with utmost care; lest the specific media houses would experience the full wrath of state force through its various media muzzling machinations, both judicial and extra judicial.

In terms of the number of conflict story elements, it is apparent that the *Kenya Times* had the least, 31 compared to the *East African Standard* 58 and *Daily nation* 56. This perhaps can be explained by the fact that Kenya Times, a KANU publication censored many stories by deliberately avoiding coverage, since many of the stories cast the government in bad light.

Self-censorship by the media is professional negligence and negation of social responsibility. The effects of this can impact negatively on the media as audience loose faith and develop bias traits towards the news organisation. An example of such scenario has been witnessed by the folding up of several magazines and newspapers in the last 15 years and particularly the low sales experienced by the *Kenya Times* upon ownership by KANU in 1985.

The study results of media respondents show similar trends with those of church public. However, being actual personnel working for the three media houses, it's no wonder that all the respondents could recall fully, 100% of the existence of church-state conflict as compared to 86% of the church public. Interestingly, 92% of the media respondents associated this conflict with politics. Likewise 89% of church public too thought this conflict was political in nature. These results in a way may confirm the political awareness experienced in the country, since the 1990s when the clamor for multiparty took root and with it, other offspring's of democracy namely representation, political accountability and new political order by way of constitutional reforms. The church, a key component of this study never tired in educating its flock of their rights, obligations and expectations. Through a well coordinated and publicized civic educational programme, the church in collaboration with NGOs achieved this feat with resounding success, if anything the results of the 2002 general elections were a manifestation of these efforts.

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### 5.3 Reason for Bias Coverage

In terms of perception of bias by the readers, patterns of response are similar. Both media and church public felt that the *Daily nation* was the least biased in the coverage of the conflict, recording 48% and 43% respectively. *Kenya Times* was found to be most biased at 100% by media respondents and 57% by the church public. The *East African Standard* recorded bias of 52% with the media personnel and 44% with the church public. These trends of bias though confined to studies of one aspect of news category, conflict, may hold water for other story parameters. The general perception of the three dailies by the audience has more to do with history, ownership trends and professionalism. Whereas historically the *Daily Nation* was associated with the aspirations of African liberation struggles against the colonial government, the same can not be said of the *East African Standard*, the oldest of the three. Being seen as an elitist publication identifying with the colonial and neo colonial class system, the paper has never exactly been warmly embraced by the

general readership as is the case with the *Daily Nation*. The *Kenya Times*, on the other hand has continued to propagate KANU's idealism, a party associated with oppression and insensitivity of the plight of the citizens. Being run largely along political and propaganda lines at the expense of viable commercial options, the paper has over the years failed to attract talented media personnel and keeps on losing the few and experienced professionals to other media houses, seriously compromising professionals standards.

#### **5.4 Ownership Trends as Influence Factors**

Ownership and professional trends have continued to critically shape the character of the three newspapers other factors notwithstanding. It is not surprising that from the study findings of both media and church public, the trends are similar and appear to be dictated by these factors. Media portrayal is done for specific reasons. It reflects economic, political, ratio, class, gender and religious bias of the media owners and of the government class. Herman and Chomsky (1988) contend that the media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful source of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interests. The media need a steady and reliable flow of information to meet the daily news demands and other tight schedules. Reader response trends are not very different in relation to bias patterns as demonstrated by ownership trends. It is perhaps for this reason that media respondents agreed 100% that *Kenya Times* was biased in favor of the state and also a higher number, 89% of church public concurred. It would be interesting now to find out what the results would be that political changes have resulted following the outcome of 2002 general elections. The *East African Standard* recorded a low bias of 25% in favor of state by media respondents where as it recorded a mere 11% by the church public. The *Daily Nation* is perceived least biased towards the state by church public at 11% and no bias at all by the media respondents. The *East African Standard* recorded an equally low bias towards the state at 25% by media respondents and 11% by church-public.

Bias recordings in favor of the church show that the *Daily Nation* was most biased at 100% by the media personnel and 43% by the church public. The *East African Standard* recorded a 25% bias in favor of the church by both media personnel and church public while the *Kenya Times* was perceived as the least biased at 4

Unless the aforementioned media enterprise factors are to change drastically, it is doubtful if these bias trends can appear differently. However, key among these factors are the ability of journalists to report objectively irrespective of the ownership mode of the media enterprise. Journalistic ethics being universal in nature will continue to dictate media growth patterns with regard to audience numbers and profitability. The average daily readership of 5 million for the *Daily nation*, 2.5 million for the *East African Standard* and 500,000 for the *Kenya Times* may further explain these underlying factors. The option for a newspaper to survive may well depend on how it can delicately balance between ownership, enterprise and professional practice.

The study findings further show that those who attribute the dailies with state bias think that the reason is political at 92% by media respondents and 96% by church public. Similarly, the reason for church bias is largely political at 67% by media personnel and 68% by the church public. Business interests are also recorded but at relatively low levels, at 25% by the media respondents'. Reason for bias towards the church is 32% by the church public respondents. However, none of the church public respondents thought that bias by the newspapers towards the state is out of business considerations, but 8% of the media personnel respondents thought so.



### **5.5 Economic Determinant and Professionalism**

With politics having taken centre stage in the national daily menu since the 1990s at the expense of economic activity, no wonder majority responses on reason for bias is political. The economy having practically collapsed as recorded in the year 2000 with a negative growth rate; it would be prudent to assume that the peoples' hope for continued survival lay with political reorganization. This is so since good politics breeds an enabling environment for economic growth and prosperity. Politics is likely to be a dominant feature of the lives of the people until such a time that its practice can spur corresponding economic gains.

Ironically with the church congregation, who may not be well versed with the actual journalism principles and ethics, a higher number of respondents agreed that there was little application of these principles. Only 36% responded that the three dailies observed ethical practices of journalism, while 61% disapproved.

Among the media personnel respondents, the outcome is even more pronounced with 75% admitting non-observance of sound journalistic practices and only 25% approving of the same. Hypothetically, the assertion that media ownership dictates the kind of media practice reinforces these responses. The media houses globally are served by journalists who owe their possession to the allegedly rational internal bureaucratic norms of the sector of the employer for which they happen to work. As Golding and Elliot (Marris and Thornham; 1996: 411) argue, some times news is simply as a result of the bias of individual journalist, committed either because of professional notions of how news should be structured or to the social views of the ideas it should convey as dictated by the ideological position of owners of the media house. This practice not only undermines the ideals of objectivity as professed in the media profession but also serves as propaganda channels of media directors. As Ben Bagdikian, Pulitzer-prize winning journalist asserts, "objectivity" tends to favor official source of

news and "factual" events such as crimes and accidents, omitting the interpretation that the readers often need.

This global view tends to apply in the Kenyan situation as evidenced by the media result of this study. Performance of the Kenyan media in terms of credibility and profitability can be said to be linked to sound professional practices as per the order of the responses recorded of the three dailies under study. The *Daily Nation* that is seen as the least biased in conflict story coverage leads this pack with regard to readership at 5 Million copies followed by the *East African Standard* at 2.5 Million with the *Kenya Times* trailing with as few as 500,000 copies of daily sales.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The outcome of this study reveals a number of issues that are in agreement with earlier stated hypothesis. Media framing has been put on the spot in telling the story as it is other than what it ought to be. In telling the story the news media retell and interpret versions of that particular story as told by other powerful social and political situations. This view reinforces the argument that the media produces certain dominant notions of reality. Like all propagandists, the media seek to predetermine our perception of a subject with a positive or negative label.

Frames are developed by providing repeating and thereby reinforcing words and visual images in references to some ideas and not others. These frames work to make some ideas more salient and others less salient while others entirely invisible. It is imperative therefore to note that media frames which are largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world for the journalist who reports it and to some extent, to the media audience who rely on their report. Chief among these hypothesis that tend to concur with the study findings are; the coverage of the conflict was less than adequate in relation to its importance. This implies deliberate bias in the form of self-censorship to kill the truth

in the story on the part of the journalist and the media house publishing the story. As repeatedly stated, media mirrors the society and as the fourth estate is expected to lead in informing, educating and entertaining the public to enable informed choices. This inadequacy is a big test for media's social responsibility. The media clamor for free and self-regulating press may not have the necessary public support if the media itself is seen not to equal the task

In portraying the coverage, the study findings show that the print media was biased. Bias portrayal runs contrary to ethical media practices. This may spell doom on the profession and the media enterprise. When readership numbers decline there is usually a proportionate decline on advertising revenue. With over 20 years of existence, *Kenya Times* has perhaps suffered this negative experience which explains its low newspaper readership numbers of 500,000 and almost no advertisement interest in a country boasting of over 35 Million citizens.

M Samwilu Mwafisi, in "Ethical Issues in News Selection and Processing", argues that for journalists, the big question is, "To publish or not to publish"? The professional life of journalists, he continues, revolves around making ethical decisions. Like rainbow, ethical decisions come in many colors. But journalist must make decisions which they will have to justify with defensible reasons by way of empirical definitions of a news event, identification of operating values in news reporting, making an appeal on ethical principles and taking responsibility for their overall action. Journalism ethics, which is the general hypothetical thrust of this study can not be easily wished away. As argues Francis P Kasoma in "Journalism Ethics in Africa", 1994, journalism ethics is the soul and heart of profession. Without it, journalism is dead, it a force for liberation. It make journalist free to serve people, their country and the world.

Despite the challenge to uphold journalism ethics, lies the opportunity to educate journalist especially the young and upcoming to understand and put in practice the moral principles of journalism. More importantly, it is time teaching of journalism ethics is made part of curriculum for journalism and communication schools. As emphasized elsewhere in this study, the success of a democracy to a large extent depends on how responsible journalist and other media people practice their journalism.

As an industry, media investment on the part of the media personnel ensures a cutting edge style of practice of journalism that is always way ahead of audience expectation. A well-groomed media personnel cultivates professional confidence that can fight off influences exerted by ignorant media owners. This transforms the journalist from a mere gatekeeper of information to an active participant in professional decision making for the good of all stakeholders.

If the experience of the performance of Kenya's mass media in "A New Democratic Error? Kenyan Media Performance in the Democratization Process, (1992) Magayu K. Magayu and C. Kibisu Kabatesi and in "The Media Environment in Kenya since 1990 (2002)", Lewis O. Odhiambo, is anything to go by, compliance with modern day business practices are best options for media success. In an economy that is struggling to be on its feet with an ever unpredictable political environment and an apathetic reading public, the best media manager scoops the top prize.

### **5.7 Recommendations**

Having examined the coverage and portrayal of the church-state conflict, it is expected that the findings will help media enterprises and journalists to reflect on how they carry out media business. Scholars and students of mass media audience studies will have a better insight and curiosity to further explore the depths of media performance in other areas of social concern. This coverage is reflective of professional underperformance on the part of the print media. Aspects of professional

malpractices such as biased reporting and under-reporting have a bearing on audience interest, sales, advertising and perception.

Public demand for objectivity in journalism and intra-professional demand for factual balanced and full coverage of events and issues usually translates to the quest for ethical behavior among journalists in the discharge of their duties. Media credibility is the peak of successful media operations, which every aspiring media enterprise should desire to achieve. Credibility enhances audience confidence and reader interest. In order to build and sustain audience confidence, deliberate feedback strategies and interactive engagements should be natured. Past media studies and experience point to the fact that prudent management style and basic ethical practices are best ingredients for a flourishing media business even under hostile market and political environment.

Media business ought to operate like other business ventures with the objective of making returns on investments. Any media that spring up to propagate partisan sponsor interests have no place in a modern dynamic business environment. They stand to fold up once the sponsor fatigue sets in or the operating political environment changes. An ideal professional outfit should thrive under all seasons by carefully upholding professional and ethical principles. This should be in order to avoid the widely acknowledged adverse media perceptions that have bedeviled the profession in Kenya in the last 15 years, namely;

- That journalists are seen as instruments for legitimizing, stabilizing and practicing authoritarian rule
- That the fact that media are anchored in capitalist business prevents ethically clean journalism, hence objectivity

- That a good proportion of journalism practitioners are blissfully ignorant of ethics of the trade
- That many journalists are poorly remunerated that they can't practice ethically clean and professionally competent journalism let alone operate an independent "fourth estate".
- That many journalists lack job security, thus they are dangerously exposed to the hiring and firing frenzy of corporate despots.
- That due to general lack of internal press freedom within and outside newsrooms, there is interference by media owners on ethical and professional issues.

It is strongly recommended that in order for journalism to maintain its professional integrity and play its rightful role the following may need to be enacted:-

- A strict code of journalism practice enforced by an independent regulatory body.
- Professionalism through training and accreditation of media practitioners.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of media practice.
- Policy on media advertisement.
- Policy on media ownership.

It is hoped that if these recommendations are taken into account, journalism and media industry at large can be more professional in its discharge of its noble role of informing, educating and entertaining.

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