

ABSTRACT

Kenya has 42 ethnic groups which all speak different languages, inhabit diverse ecological zones, and differ significantly in their cultural practices. In spite of this diversity, Kenya has remained a unified nation since independence in 1963. However, the recent interethnic conflicts reported in some parts of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces, together with what is often referred to as tribalism or ethnic favouritism, raise the question as to whether there can be any form of lasting ethnic integration. Nor does the formation of ethnically based political parties with the reintroduction of multipartism work in favour of integration. Nonetheless, the present author argues that integration based on cultural diversity is possible in Kenya and that Kenyans should endeavour to minimize feelings of ethnocentrism and emphasize instead the idea of cultural relativity, with each group appreciating the other's values and differences. He highlights some of the factors which can work in favour of cultural integration in Kenya. These include education, the fact that there is one official language (English), the Kenyan love of sports, intermarriages, participation in cultural festivals, economic interdependence, and the existence of a national government.