

# **The constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the changing roles of newspaper editors as gate keepers: a case study of four daily newspapers- the nation, the standard, the people & the star newspapers.**

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of the new Kenyan Constitution on the media and journalism practice in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study include: to establish if there are any new policies in The Nation, The Standard, The People and The Star newspapers established in respect of the Constitutional requirements in regard to media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information to determine the kind of filtering system of information used by the gate-keepers in both The Nation, Standard, The People and The Star newspapers; to determine how the internal structures/house styles/code of conduct conform to the requirements of the Constitution especially with regard to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information. This is a descriptive study that was carried out through a cross sectional survey of editors drawn from The Nation, The Standard, The Star and The People Daily newspapers, all of which were in existence prior to the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya in August 2010 and whose content has a direct impact on the implementation of the constitution. The population for purposes of this study are 188 editors working as gate-keepers in The Nation, The Standard, The Star and The People newspapers in Kenya. The study was carried out in Nairobi where headquarters and newsrooms of the four newspapers are based. A sample of 70 editors was randomly selected to participate in the study. The respondents were newspaper gate-keepers comprising of Managing Editors, Associate Editors, News Editors, Features Editors, Business Editors, Foreign Editors, Sports Editors and Sub-Editors who are all individuals knowledgeable with the questions at hand. The sampling procedure adopted in this study were in two fold; first stratified sampling design was used to obtain eight strata; managing, associate, news, feature, business editor, foreign, sports and sub-editors who were further subjected to simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. A structured question guide was also formulated for selected Key Informant Interviews (KII) and a qualitative and quantitative data was collected using a semi-structured questioner and analyzed. The study findings were that the media has taken steps towards embracing the spirit and the letter of the current Constitution of Kenya (2010) in their day to day operations. The study also found kind of filtering system of information used by the gate-keepers in the four newspapers had greater influence on media ownership, code of conduct, advertisers, the constitution and inhouse policies. The study found that house styles and code of conduct, conform to the requirements of the Constitution. The study therefore concluded that the media in Kenya has taken steps towards embracing the spirit and the letter of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) in their day to day operations. The study recommended the fast tracking of the enactment of the necessary legislation and domestication of the provisions of the constitution in their internal structures.

