

**Ethnic Stereotypes among Major Ethnic Communities in Eldoret Township, Kenya****Martin Situma<sup>1</sup>, Kirigia Eliud Kiruji<sup>2</sup>, Mahero Evelyn Ondisa<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Department of Language, Kipkaren Secondary School, Eldoret, Kenya<sup>2,3</sup>Department of Literary & Communication Studies, Laikipia University, Kenya**\*Corresponding author***Martin Situma***Article History***Received: 06.10.2017**Accepted: 12.10.2017**Published: 30.10.2017***DOI:**

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**Abstract:** The objective of this paper is to discuss the types of ethnic stereotypes and their role in fuelling ethnic conflicts at Langas estate in Eldoret Township. Ethnographically inspired qualitative research design was adopted for the study. The Relevance theory propagated by Daniel Sperber and Deidre Wilson (1986/95) was used in this study. The following research instruments: structured and semi-structured questionnaires, open-ended questionnaires, oral face-to-face interviews and observation schedules were used for data generation. There was a purposive sample of five clusters of ethnic group concentrations from which a random sample of twenty respondents, four from each group were chosen from a diverse population of the majority and minority communities living at Langas estate in Eldoret Township. The population is estimated to be one hundred and five thousand, one hundred and twenty five (105, 125) people – comprising the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo and Kisii communities. Each cohort of respondents was randomly drawn from the local secondary schools, churches, local leadership, hospitals, administration, Jua Kali industry, hawkers, idlers and public transport. This study's findings showed that there are three main types of stereotypes by one community against another community in Eldoret Township, namely; tribal, gender and cultural stereotypes. It is hoped that the results of this study will benefit; researchers in applied linguistics, social psychologists, political scientists, policy makers and the public.

**Keywords:** Ethnic stereotypes, hate speech, prejudice

**INTRODUCTION**

Ethnic stereotyping has often been cited as a contributory factor to ethnic conflicts. This phenomenon is not only a problem in Kenya but it also affects the East African region, Africa and other parts of the world. However, it is not quite clear what role ethnic stereotyping actually plays in social conflicts. Stereotypes are specific beliefs about a group such as description of what members of a group look like, how they behave or their abilities, [1]. They are considered as salient part of our culture. Stereotypes are usually exemplified through agents of socialization such as parents such as parents, teachers, peers, and mass media among others through language.

Language offers a means of storing stereotypic beliefs at a collective consensual level, [2]. By most historical accounts, Lippmann [3] introduced the term ‘stereotype to refer to the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group. Whereas early research conceptualized stereotyping as rather inflexible and faulty thought process, research that is more recent emphasizes the functional and dynamic aspects of stereotypes as simplifying a complex environment. Stereotypes are cognitive schemas used by social perceivers to process information about others [4]. Stereotypes not only reflect beliefs about traits characterizing typical group members but also contain information about other qualities such as social roles, the degree to which members of the group share specific qualities and influence emotional reactions to group members [5]. In general, stereotypes produce a readiness to perceive behaviors or characteristics that are consistent with the stereotype.

At the earliest stages of perceptual processing, stereotype consistent characteristics are attended to most quickly. For instance, because cultural stereotypes associate Black people with violent crime in the United States, white people are quicker to recognize objects associated with crime e.g. a gun, when primed with a Black person than a white person [6]. According to Holtgraves [7], stereotypes develop, as the individual perceives his or her environment. The perceived information about the social groups is interpreted, encoded in memory and subsequently retrieved for use in guiding responses. As mental representations of the world, stereotypes influence what information is sought out, attended to and remembered about members of social groups as well as influence social behavior. Stereotyping which can be used positively and negatively, is something everyone uses every day.

It is found in humor how people describe one another and beliefs. People stereotype without knowing it; it is a way we use to help us understand a group. Everyone is a victim of stereotyping and have stereotyped before. It is a worldwide issue that continuous every day. The knowledge on stereotypes is usually passed orally. Members of a community not only share the information on the characteristics of the community representatives but also evaluate it. Stereotypes are passed on and reinforced by the language used at home, school and mass (literature, radio, television, press and advertisement). By stereotyping, we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have [8].

### **Tribal Stereotypes**

Tribal stereotyping is a misinterpretation of a tribal group using what are thought to be representative characteristics of members of that ethnic group. Tribal labels are images that are used to misrepresent a tribe and they relay underlying messages about status, behavioral patterns and group think of an ethnic group. Tribal stereotypes can serve to reinforce positive values that benefit a group over another and on the other hand, these stereotypes can be a hindrance to social cohesion and national integration and coexistence. Ethnic stereotypes tend to persevere for both cognitive and social reasons. Cognitively, people often discount stereotype discrepant behaviors, attributing them to situational factors, while making dispositional attributions for stereotype-consistent behaviors [9]. Socially, people behave in ways that elicit stereotype-confirming reactions, creating self-fulfilling prophecies. Biased expectancies influence how perceivers behave, causing targets, often without full awareness to conform to perceivers' expectations [10].

### **Cultural Stereotypes**

Stereotypes deep rooted in a given culture are handed down from generation to generation in the process of socialization. They create areas of common knowledge, which exerts influence on the community members' behaviour and attitudes towards stereotyped people. Knowledge on stereotypes is usually passed orally. Members of a community not only share the information on the characteristics of the community representatives but also evaluate it. Stereotypes are passed on and reinforced by the language used at home, school and mass media (literature, radio, television, press and advertisement).

Social norms and roles have a great influence on shaping stereotypes. There is a tendency to attribute certain qualities to people playing certain roles without paying attention to the fact that their behaviors do not result from their personalities but roles imposed to them. Generalizations are a necessary part of the way our brain functions. We are bombarded with a tremendous amount of information on a daily basis and our brain, to function effectively, creates categories to help us organize all the data being received [11].

The culture of a person will influence the way they perceive gender (male/female), ethnicity, religion, youth, age, disability, sexuality, cultural diversity, social class and work. A cultural assumption is when we assume that a person has particular values and attitudes based on their cultural background. Cultural assumptions are an important aspect of understanding context. Culture is a system of beliefs, customs (usual habits and practices), values, attitudes and lifestyles of a particular people. Culture can refer to groups of people such as nations or more specific groups such as sporting teams.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

Gender roles are closely linked with gender stereotypes [12]. Stereotypes are overgeneralized beliefs about people based on their membership in one of many social categories [13]. Gender stereotypes vary on four dimensions: traits, role behaviors, physical characteristics and occupations [14]. For instance, whereas men are more likely to be perceived as aggressive and competitive, women are more likely to be viewed as passive and cooperative. Traditionally, men have been viewed as financial providers, whereas women have been viewed as caretakers. Traditional gender stereotypes are most representative of the dominant (white, middle-class) culture. Hope asserts that although race and social class may not be mentioned when inquiring about gender stereotypes, most people will make assumptions about these categories.

Gender roles and stereotypes affect men and women in other ways specifically; men and women may be judged by how well they conform to traditional stereotypes. In his theory of masculine gender role strain, Pleck [15] asserted that boys and men are pressured to fulfill a standard masculinity. Boys and men, for example, who do not fulfill the standard, often suffer from low self-worth [16]. Gender stereotypes can also affect men and women's performance. Stereotype threat is defined as an individual's awareness that he or she may be judged by or self-fulfill negative stereotypes about her or his gender or ethnic group (Lips 2001:33). Research indicates that stereotype threat can negatively affect performance by increasing anxiety. For example, Steven Spencer, Claude Steele and Diane Quinn, [17]

found that women performed significantly worse than men in a math test when the participants were led to believe that the test would probably produce gender differences. In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences.

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others. When people automatically apply gender assumptions to others regardless of evidence to the contrary, they are perpetuating gender stereotyping. Many people recognize the dangers of gender stereotyping; yet continue to make these types of generalizations.

Traditionally, the female stereotypic role is to marry and have children. She is also to put her family's welfare before her own; be loving, compassionate, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic; and find time to be sexy and feel beautiful. The male stereotypic role is to be the financial provider. He is also to be assertive, competitive, independent, courageous, and career-focused; hold his emotions in check; and always initiate sex. These sorts of stereotypes can prove harmful; they can stifle individual expression and creativity, as well as hinder personal and professional growth.

The Kalenjins, Kikuyus, Luhyas, Luos and Kisiis form the majority of the population of people residing in Eldoret Township. This region has had an experience of ethnic strife on several occasions especially just before and after general elections. One of the major contributory factors to the ethnic animosity has been ethnic stereotyping, christened hate speech. The Kalenjin community is the majority community in this region. The Kikuyu people whose origin is central Kenya have settled in this area and for a long time, the Kalenjins have always viewed them with a lot of suspicion because they believe that they are land grabbers due to them being the most powerful economic, social and political ethnic group in Kenya. The Luhyas, Kikuyus, Luos and Kisiis are also perceived negatively by the Kalenjins. As a result, ethnic stereotypes are traded among these communities and hence leading to ethnic clashes.

The absence of efforts to debunk negative perceptions and cultural stereotypes in Kenya is a major cause of ethnic tension that has led to bloodshed and displacements in Kenya for many years, the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) report states. For a long time cultural stereotyping has not only been used on the political arena to discredit politicians from other communities, but it has also fuelled targeted and barbaric forms of violence against members of such communities. Such violence was meted out especially during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. This has resulted to lack of social harmony amongst most Kenyans.

According to TJRC there have been negative attitudes towards individuals and social groups. For instance, for as long as there has been a kind of perception about the pastoralists like Maasai and the Ogiek as always primitive. The Somalis are seen as being warlike. The Kikuyu are perceived as thieves while the Luhya and Kamba are at times referred to as very loyal. The Luos have been said to be proud while the coastal people are deemed lazy. It is a problem of perceptions, myths and stereotypes about each other. Negative ethnic stereotypes have caused exclusion, political discredit, economic marginalization and violence against members of the stigmatized ethnic communities.

TJRC report further says that the colonial government initially propagated most of the negative perceptions and stereotypes that are present today in Kenya. Besides employing the divide and rule tactic, the colonialist government also perpetuated ethnic stereotyping. For example, the colonial government hired large numbers Luos to work on white farms to replace "untrustworthy" Kikuyu and included disproportionately large numbers of the Kamba community in the army. However, this has not come without an expense as cultural stereotyping has been extremely damaging to ethnic relations in Kenya. Indeed, some ethnic groups partly attribute their historical economic marginalization to stereotypes that have all along been perpetuated about them. The KANU government took cue from the colonial government and used divide and rule tactics in the 1980s and 1990s. The tactics pit ethnic communities against each other. The policy became particular evident in the early 1990s after the re-introduction of multi-party politics in the country. The introduction of multi-party politics and elections coincided with a wave of ethnic violence.

### **Statement of the problem**

There has been a renewed concern in Kenya on the role of ethnic stereotypes in fueling ethnic tensions. Stereotypes traded among individuals in communities living together often result in isolation, discrimination and violence as witnessed in places like Eldoret in the past, the most recent being the near genocidal violence in 2007/2008. Although ethnic stereotypes have been blamed in case of ethnic tensions and violence, no in depth study exists on their role and impact in fomenting ethnic tensions and violence in Kenya and particularly a hot spot such as Eldoret. The aim of this study was to examine how stereotypes are manifested in Eldoret Township and how they affect people's lives.

## METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was drawn from Langas Estate in Eldoret Township. A purposive sample of five clusters of ethnic group concentrations from which a random sample of twenty respondents, four from each group were chosen. The primary data was obtained from one of the researcher's native knowledge of the usage of ethnic Luhya stereotypes and secondary data from the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luo and Kisii communities by use of secondary sources. The researchers used qualitative research techniques in conducting the research because the research was not a controlled one, and thus dealt with data in form of words and not numbers and statistics. The secondary data was obtained from radio stations namely "Mulembe," "Kameme," "Inooro," "Kass," and "West FM," Internet, Facebook, e-mail and SMS. The internet is very rich in ethnic stereotypes. The collected samples of stereotypes were used to create a master list, assigning every stereotype an entry. The researchers settled for a number of stereotypes suitable for the study.

### Theoretical Framework

Relevance Theory is a cognitive approach to communication proposed by Sperber [18] and Wilson [19]. Stereotyping is a communication process between interlocutors or addresser and addressee and therefore Relevance Theory, which is a cognitive approach to communication, was suitable for this study. This theory centres on the importance of intention in every communicative act. According to this theory, communication is pictured as an ostensive inferential activity that adjusts, in parallel, the explicit content of utterances, the premises implicated, what conclusion is arrived at, and the contextual information required to obtaining them.

Relevance Theory centres on the importance of intention in every communicative act and must satisfy the following requirements [20]:

1. Attract the listeners' attention.
2. Speaker purposefully gives a clue to the hearer, ('ostensifies'), as to what she wishes to communicate. That is clue to her intention.
3. The hearer infers the intention from the clue and the context mediated information. The hearer must interpret the clue, taking into account the context and summarize what the speaker intended to communicate.

Inference can fill the gap between the semantic representation of utterances and the message that each utterance eventually communicates [21]. They emphasize the role played by the communicators in manifesting both their communication and informative intention with the utterance, while the hearer tries to work out different hypotheses as to what the correct interpretation is.

In this study, Relevance Theory has been assumed to be a powerful tool for explaining interpretation of all kinds of verbal communication, stereotypes included [22]. The Relevance Theory has four basic components:

- **Relevance and Cognition**

Utterances raise expectations of relevance because the search of relevance is a basic feature of human cognition.

- **The Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

Human cognition tends to be geared towards maximization of relevance.

- **The Communicative Principle of Relevance**

According to this principle, some relevance is guaranteed from communicated information.

- **Relevance-guided Comprehension Procedure**

This procedure is summarized as follows:

- The hearer should take the decided linguistic meaning
- follow a path of least effort
- He should enrich it at the explicit level
- and complement it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectation of relevance.

Yus [23] posits that the comprehension procedure includes the explicit interpretation of the speaker's utterance, the speaker has implicated interpretation and the right amount of contextual information needed to obtain the explicit and implicit interpretation. The cognitive principle of Relevance Theory helps in doing all the interpretation. According to Ritchie [24], both the interlocutors; deviser of an utterance (speaker) and the interpreter (hearer), follow a cognitive principle.

Stereotypes in this study were analyzed basing on two mappings as follows:

### How stereotypes are manifested in Eldoret Township

In Eldoret Township, stereotypes are manifested in metaphors and anecdotes.

### (a) Stereotypes manifested in Metaphors

A metaphor is one of the figurative languages used daily in language. Wilson and Sperber [25] states that metaphors and other tropes are cases where the meaning covered by use of a word goes beyond the linguistically encoded since they simply mean that metaphors communicate in implicated meaning. Marmaridou [26] views metaphor as a cognitive mechanism of the human mind, that enable cross-domain mappings. In this case, metaphor is a cognitive semantic approach. Leech [27] says that metaphor envisages two more things not normally thought of as being connected with each other, are brought together and fused in the imagination of the other. The understanding of metaphors as a figurative language depends on the context and it works on implicature.

#### S T No.1 Kikuyus stereotyped as thieves

*Wezi wote huku Rift Valley wachomwe* (“All thieves” (a stereotype for Kikuyus) in Rift Valley should be burnt).

The inference made from the above stereotype is that members of the Kikuyu community are thieves. A thief is a dangerous person. The metaphor ‘thief’ is used to refer to various kinds of thieves namely; pickpockets, armed robbers, land grabbers etc. It is shown by the world of knowledge that in Kenya, the punishment meted out to a thief is burning using fire. The Kikuyus in Rift Valley are considered as those who steal land that belongs to Kalenjins and therefore, the Kalenjins people on several occasions have burnt their homes, killed them and vandalized properties in order to chase away the Kikuyu from the Rift Valley as witnessed in electioneering periods of 1991 and 2007/2008.

#### S T No. 2 Kikuyus stereotyped as weeds

In this stereotype, Kikuyus are referred to as *Sangari* (weed)

*Sangari* is a type of weed that is not required by farmers especially in maize plantation. This weed is dangerous to the survival of a crop and it is upon the farmers to uproot it before it suffocates the crop. If a farmer does not weed them out then the yield will be very low. In this metaphor, Kikuyus in Eldoret Township are like *sangari* (weed). The Kalenjins have always felt that they are domineering in business and farming, denying them opportunities in their own land. This is why occasionally they would rise up against the Kikuyus, fighting them fiercely to remove them from their land.

#### S T No. 3 Kalenjins stereotyped as arsonists and backward

In the following stereotype, Luhyas and Kikuyus stereotype Kalenjins by the following terms;

- (i) Luhyas – (a) Kalenjins, *Bosyanju* (those who burn houses)  
(b) *Lekhana nende bekamarandule bano babe. Sebalinende kamakesi tawe. Kamakesi kabwe kacha nende kamaru.*  
(Leave alone the people with tone ears. They are fools because they think using their mutilated ears)
- (ii) Kikuyus - *kabila choma* (people who burn houses)

These tribal stereotypes by the Luhya and Kikuyu portray the Kalenjins in a negative way. The word “bekamarandule” (those with torn ears) is derogatory and very annoying and provocative to the targeted group. The metaphor “bekamarandule” refers to foolishness and backwardness. Anybody with mutilated ears is assumed foolish because he/she cannot understand anything taught. The inference in this stereotype “kabila choma” is that Kalenjins are people who are not friendly, violent, destroy other people’s property through arson and kill those they feel are their enemies, more so political enemies. During elections, especially in Eldoret, Kalenjins will demand that other communities always referred to as outsiders, should vote for political candidates along with the natives. This has been witnessed in the past and in the August 2017 general election where by Kikuyus, Luhyas, Luos and Kisiis were told to vote for one particular gubernatorial aspirant, failure to do so, they face the wrath of the natives.

#### S T No. 4 Non Kikuyus stereotyped as animals

The following tribal stereotype is by the Kikuyu towards other tribes: Kalenjins, Luos, Luhyas and Kisiis; *The kikuyus refer to other communities; Kalenjins, Luos. Luhyas and Kisiis as Nyamu cia ruguru* (animals)

According to this stereotype, Kikuyus refer to other communities as animals. This stereotype is offensive because it equates other communities to animals. Such like stereotypes have often left the targeted communities annoyed, as it is demeaning and offensive. The inference drawn from this stereotype is that Rumbwa” (those who eat dogs), which is provocative and thus, the Kalenjins retaliate through violence. Animals are uncivilized, dirty, uncouth, stupid and primitive.

### **(b) Stereotypes manifested in anecdotes**

Anecdotes are very short stories that are significant to the topic at hand usually adding personal knowledge or experience to the topic. They are common and highly effective devices. Anecdotes are usually employed in a way that will make the audience laugh. These are insights into human frailties, characteristics and qualities that could not be shown as vividly any other way.

#### **S T No. 5 Luos stereotyped as violent**

The stereotype discussed below is about the Luo people by the Kikuyus:

*Wajaluo tukishindwa lazima tungoe reli, turushe mawe, tuchome maduka, turushe mawe kabisa had mungu wetu Raila Agwambo aje atuambie tuwache. Nachukia wezi wa mashamba!* (If we Luos lose in the elections we must uproot the railway line, throw stones, burn shops, throw stones until our god Raila “Agwambo” tells us to stop)

Generally, Luos are stereotyped to be unruly and violent especially during general elections. In this stereotype, there is an explicit call to loot, engage in unlawful behavior by members of the Luo community against Kikuyus. This stereotype is driven by traditional cultural beliefs and practices. It is dangerous and leads to animosity.

#### **S T No. 6 Kalenjins stereotyped as suspicious**

*Kikochangaa bikab bunyot goroni nyo* (There are so many outsiders in our land)

This stereotype is by the Kalenjin towards other communities living in Eldoret Township. The word “Bunyot” is not derogatory, though depending on the context in which it is used, it may portray negativity and cause harm. The Kalenjins appreciate their neighbors. In return they require nothing else but respect and recognition because they are the indigenous. According to the Kalenjins, past violence towards other communities in Eldoret Township, especially towards Kikuyus, is because of disrespect. When their neighbors from other communities disrespect Kalenjins, a *Bunyot* becomes an enemy of the community.

#### **S T No. 7 Luos stereotyped as uncircumcised**

*Mjaruo akitaka kutawala hi nchi ni heri aende akatahiri kwanza* (If a Luo wants to rule this country the he should go and get circumcised first)

The Luo people are stereotyped as uncircumcised ones. Such a stereotype driven by traditional cultural beliefs and practices are dangerous lead to animosity. Men from communities that do not practice circumcision have always been stigmatized as lesser and weaker people. Therefore, they are incapable of or unsuitable to take political leadership of the country. During electoral period, some leaders have gone public saying that Raila Odinga cannot lead this country because he is uncircumcised. This stereotype has not only been used on the political arena to discredit politicians from communities that do not practice male circumcision, but it has also fuelled targeted and barbaric forms of violence against members of such communities. Such violence was meted out particularly to the members of the Luo community in 2007/2008 post-election violence at Kisumu Ndogo area within the larger Langas Estate in Eldoret Township.

### **How ethnic stereotypes impact on people’s lives in Eldoret Township**

Ethnic stereotyping leads to prejudice. According to Allport’s scale of prejudice, there are five stages ranked by the increasing harm they produce [28].

#### **Stage 1: Antilocution**

Antilocution is often believed to be harmless. “You would say that sticks and stones will break your bones but names will hurt.” Directing derogatory speech commonly known as hate speech and making ethnic jokes about another community is part of antilocution. Antilocution can harm the self-esteem of the people of the targeted group and can clear the way for more harmful forms of prejudice. For several years now, Eldoret Township has experienced this. Local politicians have been heard referring to other communities as *madoadoa and kwekwe*. The locals to express dissatisfaction against other communities living with them in this area use this term. The Kalenjins refer to other communities; Kikuyus, Luhyas, Luos and Kisiis using all sorts of derogatory terms such as, thieves, weeds etc. In retaliation, the other communities refer to them as primitive, dirty, backward, etc.

#### **Stage 2: Avoidance**

This is a situation where members of another group actively avoid a group of people. Harm is done through isolation and preparing the way for more harmful acts. Business premises, schools and places of worship are avoided because members of a certain community do not like members from other communities. This happened in Eldoret Township during 2007/2008 post-election violence. Other places in Kenya, namely Nakuru, Nairobi, Kericho and

Naivasha have also been affected in the past. Across the borders, avoidance was common during apartheid in South Africa, Former Yugoslavia and in Germany during Hitler's time.

### Stage 3: Discrimination

A group of people is discriminated upon by denying them equal access to opportunities and services. Discrimination is intended to harm a group by preventing it from achieving goals, getting education or jobs. During KANU regime before multi-partism in Kenya majority of job opportunities in the government, disciplined forces and parastatals were given to members of his ethnic community while denying other communities.

### Stage 4: Physical Attack

People from targeted groups are attacked and beaten. Their properties are vandalized. Villages and homes are destroyed through acts of arson. In Eldoret Township, fights have been experienced in the past mostly, Kikuyus against Kalenjins; Kikuyus against Luos and Kalenjins against the other communities. In 1992, Kalenjins fought the Luhyas, Kikuyus and Kisiis in the whole of Uasin Gishu County.

### Stage 5: Extermination

This is when a group of people is exterminated through genocide, ethnic cleansing e.tc. In 1992 and 2007/2008, Kenya experienced near genocidal tribal clashes. The worst was the 2007/2008 post-election violence. More than 1000 people lost their lives, a good number coming from Eldoret Township. The 1994 Rwanda genocide where more than 800,000 Rwandese lost their lives was as a result ethnic stereotyping.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussions in this paper, it is clear that ethnic stereotyping is common in Kenya. Most ethnic stereotypes among the Kalenjins, Kikuyus, Luhyas, Luos and Kisiis in Eldoret Township are negative expressions that show contempt, insults and sometimes-outright contempt about the target communities. Coded terms are used in stereotyping. These terms are historical and deep rooted in the sense that they have been passed on from one generation to another.

Prejudice comes about because of ethnic stereotyping. The targeted communities are subjected to all sorts of spoken abuse-degrading names, verbal attack etc. Avoidance also comes in whereby people of a certain community are avoided by members of another community causing harm through isolation. This discrimination of a community prevents its members from achieving goals such as earnings from farming activities and business ventures. Physical attack-vandalism of property, lynching and violent attack; extermination-members of a community(s) are killed through genocide, ethnic cleansing, tribal clashes, as it happened in Eldoret Township in 2007/2008 post-election violence where hundreds of people lost their lives, thousands displaced and property worth billions of shillings destroyed.

Ethnic stereotyping through hate speech has been extremely damaging to ethnic relations in Kenya. This paper came up with possible suggestions to eradicate ethnic stereotypes in Kenya: We need to embrace a culture of freethinking individuals, "tribal thinking" robs us of a lot of rational reasoning and a keen observation will show you that as individuals, we all regard each other as brothers but once people from the same ethnic groups come together then our tribal woes begin.

Kenyans should rid themselves of ethnic badges and identify people with their personal traits and attributes. This culture of identifying people with their tribes, *yule kijana mluhya*, *yule mjaluo*, *yule mkisii* robs us of our identities as individuals and ties us to an ethnic group. The government should enforce strict laws that regulate discriminatory practices among communities in Kenya. Kenyans should be encouraged to accept and accommodate customs and practices that are different are different form theirs.

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