

The Contribution of Radio Broadcasts in the Absorption Process of Illiterate Ethiopians in Israel

ABSTRACT

The Ethiopian Jewish community always dreamed of coming (back) to Jerusalem. Their dream of *aliyah* [immigration to Israel] was finally realized during the 1980s and 1990s in two large-scale operations: “Operation Moses” (November 1984-January 1985) and “Operation Solomon” (May 1991). The disparity in culture and technology relative to Israel and their inability to read or write presented the community with large obstacles to overcome in an effort to easily acculturate and assimilate into Israeli society.

Goals of the research: The research seeks to examine the extent radio broadcasts assisted in the absorption of illiterate Ethiopians to a modern state of Israel.

methodology

The methodology employed in this research is based primarily on two recognized approaches, quantitative and qualitative analysis. To approximate results that most closely reflect the meaning of each piece of data the initial stage of the collection of the data and its analysis in the qualitative approach, which will serve as the central and guiding approach which its qualitative analysis, I will use the quantitative approach in an effort to analyze the data derived from the survey I conducted.

Hypotheses of the research:

1. Radio is the efficient vehicle for advancing the absorption of illiterate immigrants.
2. Radio is the least expensive vehicle of media/communication to operate and easily accessible/available to the wider public particularly in comparison to television.

Research question: what was the contribution of Radio Broadcasts in the Absorption Process of Illiterate Ethiopians in Israel?

Conclusion

For many the Ethiopian Jewish *Aliyah* was comparable to the Exodus for Egypt. Due to the uniqueness of the Ethiopian society, culture and in combination with the exposure to the Israeli culture shattered the glass ceiling for the Ethiopian Jewish *Olim*. The absorption of the Ethiopian Jews was more difficult than any other immigrant group. It is exactly this point, that the influence and contribution of the Amharic language radio broadcasts for the Ethiopian Jewish *Olim* can be evaluated. From the survey conducted, it became clear that the influence of the Amharic language broadcasts was one of the most important factors that greatly “eased” the burden of the Ethiopian Jewish *Olim* community experienced during its absorption to Israel. The Amharic language broadcasts were a critical factor for the survival of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel. By extension, the results of this research study demonstrates that the existence of native (mother tongue) language radio broadcasts is a critical factor for immigrants seeking to be absorbed into their new country’s culture. While this research greatly assists to understand the contribution of the Amharic language radio broadcasts to the absorption of the Ethiopian Jews, we hope that future research will more deeply evaluate and examine the causes and factors that created the dramatic failures of the absorption of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel.