

**THE IMPACT OF WOMEN GROUPS ACTIVITIES ON THE ROLE AND STATUS
OF WOMEN.**

A STUDY OF NGONG DIVISION - KAJIADO DISTRICT. //

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DEDICATION

To my children Patrick Gathigi and Lucy N. Nyathira, who had to bear lonely evenings during the writing of this work.

DECLARATION

This is to certify that this Thesis is my Original work and has not been presented in any other University.

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DATE: 28/4/2000

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

PROF. COLLETTE A. SUDA

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ABSTRACT

Women groups in Ngong division are one of the strategies that women use for both economic empowerment and improvement of their roles performance. Traditionally during the Pre-colonial period, reciprocal labour assistance groups existed among both the Maasai and the Agikuyu who are the subjects of this study. These work groups ensured that women performed their roles more efficiently and completed tasks in time.

During the colonial days there emerged a change and shifted from the traditional barter market economies to the world monetary economy. African's labour was commercialized, initially for payment of colonial taxes; Livestock and agricultural products were also commercialized and individualization of land that was traditionally owned communally set in (Kituyi, 1990). These changes affected the traditional social organization. As men moved to urban centres and settlers' farms for wage labour, women were left to perform some of the roles that traditionally belonged to men. Such roles include herding of livestock, heading households (as de facto heads), Construction of houses and the hard farming tasks among others. Women takeover of these roles led to an increase in their workload. On the other hand, as men's labour gained monetary value in the market economy, women's labour, which was on a subsistence level, was devalued, resulting to their relegation to a low socio-economic status.

Kipuri (1989) maintains that, though Kenya gained her political independence in 1963, the modern state did not represent a significant break from the colonial administration. It only perpetuated the structure and form of the colonial government. The modern state undermined indigenous structures for national development purposes, but did not destroy them. This fact explains the existence of some traditional survivals such as women groups activities, though in

a deformed manner. The then head of state adopted the National motto of 'Harambee' which was in line with the traditional assistance work groups. Its aim was to achieve collective effort, cooperative enterprises and all forms of self-reliant endeavours in the country. In the area of those study endeavours included reciprocal labour assistance work groups in farm work and firewood collection; Income generating activities such as livestock rearing; acquisition of group farms; operation of flour mills; sale of charcoal and consumer goods and kiosks operation among others - Group members were further involved in merry - go - rounds, through which they purchased for each other on a rotational basis household items, water tanks, improved house structure or gave cash to the beneficiary for payment of school fee or meet other financial needs. In resource acquisition activities groups either purchased or were allocated by the government agricultural land or commercial plots.

In 1970s Kajiado district saw the commencement of registration of women groups, though at a low note. By 1984, the number had increased to 206 groups. As from 1985, following the Nairobi International women conference, the number began to shoot up. By 1989, there were 437 registered women groups in Kajiado districts. An increase of 112% from the 1984 figure. The probable explanation to this increase could be attributed to the prevailing radical feminism, which acted as a catalyst in the sensitization of women in competition for the diminishing resources. In the area of study, introduction of the universal monetary economy had replaced the indigenous pastoral economy in the district. The pastoral Maasai had been pushed to the more arid land to create room for the white settlers, while some of their remaining pockets of the fertile land had been purchased by their Gikuyu neighbours for settlements and agricultural farming. Among the Maasai, economic competition was further

extended to social-differentiation between men and women, elders and juniors (Kipuri, 1989). Women found their identity through formation of women groups through which they assisted each other.

The apparent increase in number of women groups in Kajiado district was a striking phenomenon, which evoked interest to find out how women groups activities had impacted on members roles and status. Of major concern was how the activities had impacted on women's heavy workloads, access to the limited resources, emotional insecurity and development stagnation.

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

- How does cultural background, ecology and the market situation influence choice and participation in different women groups activities?
- Upon participation, how do group activities ease members' role performance?
- How has participation improved members' socio-economic status?

Objectives Of The Study

The study's objectives were:

- To assess the influence of socio-cultural, ecological and market situation on women's choice and participation in different groups' activities.
- Assess the impact of women groups activities on members roles and status.

Methods of data collection

Different methods of data collection were used. Survey method, using standard interview schedule was used as the main research tool in the study. A total of 130 standard

questionnaires consisting of 65 questions, both closed and open ended, were administered to both officials and ordinary members of 55 different women groups in the four locations of Ngong division.

To fill in the gaps of information left out by the standard questionnaire, subsidiary research methods in form of focus group discussions, key informants and non-participant direct observations were used. Focus group discussions were held with leaders of the 5 amalgamated women groups in the division.

Key informants consisted of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake organization divisional representatives and the Netherlands Development organization representative women advisor Kajiado district ASAL programme. Other main key informants included divisional assistant officers in community development, social work, cooperative and agriculture.

Extra information that could not be obtained verbally was obtained through non-participant observation method.

Research Findings

In the study, 3 hypothesis were tested using both descriptive (percentages) and inferential statistics in form of chi-square (X^2) test, for tests of associations between variables. Multiple regression analysis was further used for hypothesis three (H3) to measure correlation between dependent variables and each of the independent variables.

In hypothesis 1, it was hypothesized that "women group activities enhanced efficiency of members' role performance and reduced their workload." Reciprocal labour assistance and

merry-go-rounds were considered as the key activities under this hypothesis. From a total of 130 members that were interviewed, 81% (105) reported to have had a heavy work load, with an average of $12\frac{1}{2}$ working hours being spent on both domestic and occupational roles. Fuel wood and water provisions were said to be the most time consuming roles. In North and South Keekonyokie, 14 hours were spent per day to provide 20 litres of water. On average 8 hours (in the 4 locations) were spent per day for provision of a bundle of fire wood.

To cope with the heavy workload, group members were involved in reciprocal labour assistance in fuel wood collection and farm work. Others got free assistance from fellow members during times of need.

From the calculated χ^2 value of 6.355, a significant statistical association between members participation in reciprocal labour assistance to reduce workload was obtained. The χ^2 value was significant at 98.8 % confidence level. The working hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Merry-go-rounds were also cited as an important activity in enhancement of roles performance by 51.5% (67) of the members. The calculated χ^2 value of 6.43 was significant at 99% confidence level. This indicated a positive statistical association between members participation in merry-go-rounds to enhance roles performance. Therefore, acceptance of working hypothesis.

In hypothesis two (H_2), it was hypothesized that "women groups activities improve members' socio-economic status." The key activities that were considered under this hypothesis were

income generating and resource acquisition in form of agricultural land and commercial plots. From the 130 respondents, 60% (78) were involved in income generating activities in form of livestock rearing, farming projects, building constructions among other small businesses. However from the 60%, only 51.5% (67) participated in income generating activities with the aim of improving their socio-economic status. 8.5% participated with the aim of enhancing roles performance particularly in households food security. The calculated X^2 value of 4.780 indicated a positive insignificant statistical relationship between participation in income generating activities and improvement of socio-economic status. The X^2 value was not significant at 71.2% confidence level, of 95%. While statistically the null hypothesis was accepted, the 51.5% of the participants in the activity for improvement of socio-economic status mean that the activity cannot be totally ignored. Other factors such as respondents educational level, job placement and spouse's scale of income could have had more impact in their economic status.

A total of 50% (65) members stated that, they had improved their economic status through acquisition of resources in form of agricultural lands and commercial plots. From these resources, they said to have reduced poverty through improvement of household food security, provision of shelter and a source of income. However, there was no statistical significance between participation in resource acquisition and improvement of members economic status. Therefore, the working hypothesis was statistically rejected.

In hypothesis 3 (H^3) it was hypothesised that, ecology, culture, and the market situation were some of the factors that either facilitated or constrained women groups activities participation.

From the statistical association test on choice of participation in income generating activities as determined by ecology, culture and market suitability, a χ^2 value of 29.66, significant at 100% confidence level was arrived at. This indicated a non-chance occurrence, therefore accepting the working hypothesis that the 3 factors facilitated participation in income generating activities. The agricultural Gikuyu women lived in the high production zone and were involved in agricultural farming and construction of commercial buildings. Ready market for both their agricultural and pastoral products, as well as commercial buildings was equally available to both groups of women.

Participation in resources acquisition as determined by ecological and cultural factors also indicated a significant statistical association of X^2 value 15.072 significant at 99.8% confidence level. The Gikuyu women who were from a cultural background where women were not expected to own individual land had developed an enterprising group spirit in acquisition of this resource. Being from a highly productive farming zone, and confronted by a land scarcity crisis, the Gikuyu women were the majority in acquisition of this resource. The Maasai women being from a pastoral society where individual ownership of land was not as yet a crisis, were not extensively involved in acquisition of agricultural farming land. Only in North Keekonyokie location, that they had acquired 202 hectares of land for 9 farming project. Acquisition of commercial plots also ranked higher among the Gikuyu women, though this resource was fairly distributed among the Maasai women in the semi-arid zone. The working hypothesis was accepted.

Further statistical association was tested on participation in reciprocal labour activities as

determined by ecology and culture. While the Maasai women were extensively involved in fuel wood collection reciprocal labour assistance, the Gikuyu women were involved in farm work labour assistance. The calculated χ^2 value of 13.65, significant at 99.7% confidence level, presented a significant influence of ecology and culture on choice and participation in reciprocal labour assistance activities. Under these factors too, the working hypothesis was accepted.

Further statistical analysis using stepwise multiple regression co-efficient on participation in income generating activities was done. Choice of activities that were culturally convenient to both roles and status emerged as the best predictor. It explained 28% of the variation while operating individually. Ecological suitability of the activities explained 15.5% of the variance, while the market situation explained for 5% of the variance. While operating jointly, the three predictors (cultural convenience, ecological suitability and market suitability) had a joint explained variation (R^2) of 48.5%. This meant that while the above three factors were important in choice and participation in income generating activities, there were other factors that were not considered in the study that explained for the remaining 51.5% variation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the increased women participation in-group activities in Ngong division were influenced by the three factors. First the existence of the traditional assistance work groups among the Maasai and Gikuyu - namely 'Ematonyok and "Gwatio" respectively from the two communities. Secondly, Women's situation approach to the word's economic changes from the traditional barter market to the modern market economy, that

emerged during the colonial and post-colonial period.

The third factor was women's response to the modern radical feminism that swept the country as from 1985. Following intervention by international agencies to involve women in the development process, the Canadian government and the Netherlands among others stimulated formation of women groups in Ngong division, as their financial, material and advisory assistance was evident in both North and South Keekonyokie.

Women's participation in groups activities was found to have impacted positively on their roles performance particularly in completion of farm work in time, provision of fuel wood, provision of household items, improvement of shelter structures and water tanks and improvement in household food security. Though statistically groups activities did not appear to have impacted significantly on women's status, qualitative data indicated improvement through their acquisition of both agricultural and commercial land, involvement in income generating activities through businesses, livestock rearing, construction of rental houses among others. Their participation in community projects and public activities helped to increase their (women's) visibility on the government side as targets of development process.

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CHAPTER ONE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN GROUPS AND THE GENERAL

SITUATION OF WOMEN AS APPLIES TO THEIR ROLES AND STATUS

1.1.0 HISTORICAL BACK GROUND TO WOMEN GROUPS

1.1.1 EARLY PERIOD

The history of women groups dates back to the early period where membership was ascribed. One became a member of a particular group by virtue of birth, age, and adoption into a kin or territorial unit. There existed the traditional mutual assistance groups among different Kenyan ethnic groups, which formed the nucleus of the prevailing women groups. Such groups were known as ngwatio among the Agikuyu, mwethya among the Akamba, ematonyok among the Maasai, konvri kendi or saga among the Luo and Obwasio among the Abaluyia (Mbithi, 1988). In the agricultural cultivation areas, the above groups were a form of the cooperative working group. Women assisted each other in planting, weeding, harvesting, firewood collection and other chores. From such mutual assistance, women were able to play their roles as farmers effectively as well as that of food provision in the household.

Monson (1985) discusses the existence of cooperative rotating credit schemes among the Yoruba of Nigeria. These, are parallels of the contemporary merry-go-rounds of Kenya, since the pre-colonial times. The 'Esusu', a rotating credit association among the Yoruba, is documented as dating back to 1843. This credit society was formed by a core of Participants who agreed to make regular contributions to a fund given either in part or in whole to each contributor in rotation. The societies had a credit function and the success of each association was determined by the continued participation of each member until each one of them had her

turn to receive the fund. The first member to receive the funds became a debtor to all the other members and remained one until the last contribution had been made. On the other hand, the last member to receive became a creditor to all the other members throughout. The other members moved in turn from creditors to debtors. The funds obtained from these associations augmented women's meagre incomes and could be used to boost business, meet their household's daily needs or other forms of investments.

1.1.2 COLONIAL PERIOD

During the colonial period in Kenya, between 1940 - 1960 the colonial authorities established more women clubs. The aim was to promote women participation in the country's development. The clubs that existed prior to 1940 were East African Women league (1917) and Kenya Girl Guides (1920). Among those that were formed between 1940 – 1960 were Maendeleo ya Wanawake 1952, the Nairobi businesswoman 1955 and Mother's Union 1955, the National Nurses Association 1958, among others (Were, 1985). Though most of the early clubs and associations were dominated by the wives of white settlers and African administrators, they worked within the framework of the traditional groups on mutual assistance. These clubs became focal points in protecting and furthering women's interest. In 1955 an agricultural, health, nutrition and hygiene training for African women was started under the umbrella of Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation. The Clubs were further used as a means of developing skills essential to their participation in the political sphere.

During the peak of the Mau mau uprising there began to emerge rural women groups in the country. Women members consisted of those who lost their husbands or those whose husbands had left their homes for liberation struggle. Their efforts were mainly directed towards shelter and home improvement in general (Browne, 1975). With such joint efforts, these women hoped to assume their husband's previous roles on top of their expected ones.

1.1.3 **POST COLONIAL PERIOD**

After Kenya attained independence in 1963, the national motto of 'Harambee' adopted a similar line to that of the traditional mutual assistance groups and the Yoruba 'Esusu' - cooperative rotating credit schemes. The national motto called for collective effort, cooperative enterprises and all forms of self-reliance endeavour in the Country. The result was formation of various self-help projects and groups all over the Country. Women began to organise themselves along formal lines of women groups. Through these groups, they would be able to promote their interests.

In the 1970's, Kenya experienced widespread formation of women groups. In 1975 the Women's Bureau under the Ministry Culture and Social Services was formed. It was charged with responsibility over women groups activities. Its formation was a reflection of the Government's official acknowledgement in efforts being made by women in rural development (Ogutu, 1985). Following the efforts of the Women's Bureau there was a shift from women groups activities being organised on purely home improvement and social Welfare activities to encompass income generation activities. The aim was to enable women improve their economic status and that of their families through the income obtained.

1.2.0 **AN OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE CONSTRAINTS FACING WOMEN IN KENYA.**

There has been widespread popularisation of women groups and their general acceptance from both the Government and development agencies as an appropriate channel of enhancing roles performance and uplifting the general status of the poor women. This move has been contributed by the prevailing situation of women who experience various constraints in

fulfilling different roles and in making efforts to better their status. Among these constraints are the limited time in the face of competing responsibilities, lack of access to resources, low income or even lack of it, lack of access to credit, lack of education and market among others.

1.2.1 **LIMITED TIME**

Throughout Africa, and Kenya in particular traditional households were characterised by interdependent but distinct roles and responsibilities between men and women. This situation was disrupted by the market economy whereby men had to migrate to urban centres for wage labour, leaving their responsibilities to women. In most agricultural communities, men and women had different labour responsibilities. This depended on crops and tasks. Women's roles as family caretakers centred, and still do, on food provision and child care. A woman's traditional obligations as a wife were to care for the husband and relatives who were part of her household members. While these responsibilities remain, their scope and complexity have increased as a result of the economic, social and cultural change. In most cases women face demands that exceed their available time and income. This increases their workload. Similarly, men and women had separate budgets derived from their different sources of income and expenditure responsibilities.

1.2.2 **FOOD PRODUCTION**

The growing land scarcity is a key constraint in women's efforts to perform their role as food producers. They work for long hours, often without achieving much productivity. This is due to lack of modern farming implements, fertiliser, high yield seeds among others. To improve the household food security they have to spend most of their time on food crop production to the negligence of childcare or home maintenance. Others may choose to join women groups

so as to benefit from group labour or even purchase group land through joint effort. A study carried out by Krystal and Gomme (1979) indicate that women spend thirteen to fourteen hours per day working. One third of the day is spent on tasks related to food preparation, while the rest of the time is spent on water and fuel wood provision, farming, animal care and marketing. Water provision alone may take two to four hours per day (GOK and UNICEF, 1984).

Food security is further affected by land scarcity following population pressure that the country experiences. The increased shortage of arable land has led to the fragmentation of land holdings, rising number of landless or near landless people and movement of people from land scarce areas to more marginal areas where productivity is too low (World Bank 1989). Those affected are venturing into business. According to the Government of Kenya, a family using traditional farming techniques requires 1 to 2 hectares of high potential land so as to be self-sufficient in food. Yet by the year 2000, it is projected that there will be less than 0.25 of a hectare of high potential land per person (World Bank, 1989). This could lead to a worsening situation for women in their effort to ensure household food security.

1.2.3 LIMITED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY IN WATER SUPPLY

Lack of appropriate technology both in water and fuel supply is another constraint that women currently experience in Kenya. There are only a few rural areas, which are with served with safe and clean water either through water points or through pipes. It is estimated that nine out of ten people in the rural areas depend on streams and springs for their household water needs (World Bank, 1989). Rural women being the primary providers of water continue to walk long distances and even queue for hours for unprotected sources of water, which may be a health hazard. In areas where one short trip to and from the water source takes an average of

45 minutes, an average of three and a half hours per day are spent to find water amounting to 87.5 litres. But where long distances have to be covered, an average of five hours, fifteen minutes per day are spent to find 49.5 litres (Krystal and Gomme, 1979). Therefore, in areas where water is easily accessible, women make extra trips to the water source. Some of this water is used for the production of vegetables and chicken for sale. It is evident that availability of water does not only ease women's role in water and food provision, but also enables them to spend time on other activities which could improve their economic status.

In response to the water crisis in some parts of the rural areas, the Government and development agencies have embarked on programmes for the supply of water in some areas. The programmes include construction and maintenance of new supplies as well as rehabilitation of existing schemes. The local populations too have been involved in self-help water projects, where women are ready to provide both labour and finances. But, in most instances, women's approach to this problem of water involves the harvesting of accumulated water on roof catchment systems, particularly at the village level. Through women groups efforts, members do raise contributions on a rotational basis to purchase tin roofs that enables the harvesting of rainwater, or buy water tanks for each other to store water. The time saved in water collection may be spent on other activities such as childcare, food preparation, income generation or group activities.

1.2.4 LIMITED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY IN FUEL SUPPLY

The increasing desertification and pressure on forest resources for energy has led to the other energy crisis of fuelwood availability and cost in Africa. This fuel crisis is a reflection of a situation of deforestation caused by widespread land clearing for agricultural purposes,

overgrazing, population expansion and other land use practices. The impact of environmental degradation on rural energy is such that, available wood resources are not able to meet the minimum fuel requirements. At the same time the labour input of women, who are the major providers of fuel-wood for domestic consumption, has become very striking.

In her West African study, Ardayfio-Schandorf (1985) points out that production in the savannahs involves heavy outlay of time, with fuel-wood being the most demanding domestic task after food processing and cooking. Women walk between 4 - 8 kilometres every day to procure fuel wood. They usually spend between 5 to 15 hours on fuelwood provision alone in savannah areas. But in the forest areas, firewood provision take between one to one and half hours per week. In the above cases, ecology is a key factor that affects the rate and level of women's participation in the provision of fuel-wood.

The social class is also another factor in fuel-wood provision. Women in regular employment, well established farmers with regular incomes and more lucrative businesses like trading in manufactured goods tend to spend less time on fuel-wood provision (Ardayfio Schandorf, 1985). They find it more convenient to pay for fuel wood, charcoal, paraffin or sawdust, than invest time searching for it. The educated women too in the village according to Ardayfio Scandorf (1985), do not spend much time on fuel wood provision. As a result of the long distance involved in the provision and shortages in supplies, women adopt various survival strategies. They make use of dry elephant grass stems, maize, sorghum and cassava sticks from the nearby farms as fuel. When the situation is critical trees are cut indiscriminately for fuel including the economic trees.

Food and fuel are highly complimentary and one is not useful without the other. Fuel-wood shortages affect nutrition in different ways. In Nigeria, the most popular and nutritious soups and stew are less often found in the family menu, when there is shortage of fuel. Families that serve three meals in a day tend to serve less because of unavailability of fuel wood. The more time women spend in fuel provision, the less time is spent on cooking. It is observable that the actual time devoted to cooking is affected by fuel availability and what is being prepared.

The climatic and / or seasonal variation is also an important factor in determining the relationship between food and fuel. Fuel availability and food are related to the agricultural cycle, which depends on the various seasons. Fuel requirements are higher after the rainy season, when there is heavy demand on time for food production or other activities. In order to reduce the stress, women tend to reduce the quantity of fuel consumed during peak labour period or depend on the corporate solidarity of the family or women groups. Those women that can afford usually opt to substitute woodfuel with charcoal, paraffin stoves, gas, electrical cookers or saw dust. In Kenya women, groups have embarked on projects that are concerned with the making of energy saving 'jikos'.

1.2.5 WOMEN'S LIMITED ACCESS TO LAND

Women's access to land appears to be worsening as compared to the period of African traditional societies. Most of the women who have access to land have got only usufructuary rights over their husband's land. Being the ones with title deeds, it is the husbands who allocate land informally to their wives. This means that women have no legal ownership of such land. Though legally permitted to buy land, very few women can afford to do so. The prices have sky rocketed and with women's limited independent income and low employment possibilities, very few women have the choice for the option (Feldman, 1982). Consequently,

in Kenya, not more than 5% of women own land, and most of those who own have their fields in small pieces and scattered, making them less economically viable (ILO, 1986). The implication of these small scattered pieces of land is that, it is impossible to use machines on them, a lot of time is wasted while travelling from one piece to the other and it is not possible to make maximum utilisation of these pieces by growing cash crops. The current land reform in Kenya emphasises the structural points of allocation and inheritance of land to the disadvantage of women's **usufructuary** rights. They are not automatically guaranteed such land upon the death of a husband on grounds of lineage. In addressing themselves to the problems of uncertainty of food provision for the household, insecurity for shelter and lack of credit facilities, able women do form groups that engage in purchase of land. The acquired group land is later sub-divided among members and individual title deeds obtained.

1.2.6 **THE EFFECT OF CASH-CROPPING ON WOMEN**

The market oriented agricultural economy has also imposed some constraints on women. Not only has it led to women's increased workload and devaluation of their labour, but also affected their role in food production. In Kenya, as in many third world countries, the Government has been looking for appropriate balance between cash crop production for generation of foreign exchange and food production for domestic consumption. In certain parts of the country, more emphasis has been placed on the production of cash crops other than food crops production. This has been based on the assumption that income generated from their sale will be used to meet food needs for the household. But in most cases women have little access to such income, since men have more control over them. The emphasis that is placed on cash crop results into serious competition between food crops and cash crops in terms of both land and labour. As the legal owners of land, men tend to do give first priority

to cash crops. The end result is a decline in food output, creating an imbalance between food production and population growth. The most affected victims are women who though they play a crucial role in food allocation within the family, their own food intake is less than that of men, both in absolute terms and in nutritional requirements (World Bank, 1989). The end result of this market oriented agricultural economy has eventually led to improvement of men's economic status.

The situation of married women who are de facto heads of households is worsened by gender discrimination. These women are restricted in registering as members of farmers marketing cooperatives. Only their absent husbands who are recognised by cooperatives as the legal members. Consequently, wives cannot receive seeds, fertilisers, credit or payment though they are the practical farmers. This situation means that women cannot improve their productivity in food supply, neither can they be able to advance their economic status. They therefore remain subjected to low socio-economic status, and are ineffective in performing their roles as food producers.

1.2.7 ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER INCOME

Women's situation as income earners was also a setback to their endeavour in development process. In the rural areas, where most of the women were smallholder, they highly depended on the market to satisfy their consumption needs. Most of the smallholder families purchased an average of 50% of their food. But those with less than two hectares purchase higher proportions (Government of Kenya and UNICEF, 1984). The opportunity for women to earn and control income was therefore quite important in regard to their ability to purchase food, household items, hire labour, and buy family clothing and farm inputs, among others. Their main source of income is primarily from sale of surplus agricultural produce, which they may

have had control over. Off-farm income sources included petty trade in sale of food and beverages, charcoal, vegetables, crafts, tailoring, remittances, gifts, casual employment and employment for the lucky few. Even those under regular employment, a majority of them were in the low-income bracket. The well paying jobs that went with power and prestige were mainly occupied by men who are decision-makers (World Bank, 1988 b). About a third (33%) of the family's incomes is obtained from off-farm sources and another 10% from remittances. 40% of all smallholder families mainly depend on off-farm income for their survival (GOK and UNICEF, 1984). To a great extent the level of off-farm income influences both the ability and willingness of smallholder women to hire labour to assist them fulfil their role, improve their homes and farms and participate in group activities. Lack of financial ability means non- participation in-group activities and a lot of strain in roles fulfilment.

While women provide the bulk of on-farm unpaid labour, only 6% of them above the age of fifteen are employed for pay or profit, compared to 30% for men. Women overwhelmingly do participate in work activities and put in longer aggregate hours. But this work is never reflected in the Gross National Product (GNP) because it is not valued (World Bank 1986).

Women's limited access to wage employment is a worse situation for the de jure heads of households who in general, have less access to income. Without husbands from whom they can obtain remittance, they can only receive income transfers from other family members. Such members too may be farmers or low income earners who have families of their own. It then becomes difficult for these mothers to fulfil their roles effectively and uplift their low socio-economic status. In cases where women are faced with landlessness, they usually resort to low paying casual agricultural labour or off-farm labour, as an economic necessity. Women

comprise about a third of casual workers overall, a much higher proportion than among regular workers (ILO, 1986). Most of these mothers who are casual workers are de jure heads of households who have no other means of supporting themselves.

1.2.8 **LIMITED ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES.**

Further constraint is experienced in getting access to agricultural training and extension services, whose aims are to improve agricultural productivity and increase the output. This is done by providing information on technologies, production methods of different types of crop, cultivation requirements by motivating farmers and helping them overcome their constraints. But for a very long time there has been persistent and pervasive bias in the delivery of agricultural services. The reasons for this are that men have always been perceived as the decision-makers, while women's domestic roles have in most cases been an obstacle to their participation in training activities.

Under the Training and visit system, 3,500 extension agents are said to serve 2.6 million farm families in Kenya's high potential Districts. Frontline agents work hand in hand with the Ministry of Agriculture staff at the Provincial, District and Divisional levels. These agents are trained once every fortnight by subject matter specialists (for example, in poultry, bee keeping and vegetable gardening) This information is further disseminated to selected women contact farmers and women groups fortnightly. For those present, it is hoped that they do disseminate the message to the neighbouring communities. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, women contact farmers constitute less than 10% of all contact farmers. Most of these women that are reached by these services are de factor households heads because their husbands are not on the farm on a full time basis, are wage labourers and a way from home. At the same time extension, agents are increasingly working with women groups as a composite contact

farmer (that is groups that are engaged in farming projects). Disseminated information is hoped to further the success of their projects through improvement of the crop quality as well as ensuring higher productivity yields. The same information is hoped to be applied by individual women farmers in their own farms. Through such visits the agents can increase their time on task and reduce travel time. They can also meet a much greater number of farmers at a lower cost. But the low proportion of women who are reached implies that most women farmers have very limited chances of improving their role as farmers.

1.2.9 LIMITED ACCESS TO CREDIT

Women do experience some constraint in obtaining credit, particularly from formal sources such as banks, specialised crop programmes and other financial institutions. This is due to discrimination in agricultural marketing co-operatives and lack of legally owned assets such as land, which can be used as collateral for credit. Consequently, it is estimated that rural women borrowers represent only about 10% of all loans (World Bank 1989). Among the leading formal crediting institutions is the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), major source for the farmers. These credit facilities are primarily available to large and medium scale farmers who are considered less risky. AFC requires title deeds or other forms of collateral, which very few rural women have. As a result of these requirements many women farmers cannot be able to improve their socio-economic status as farmers. Neither can they be able to increase their farm output by use of modern farming methods and farm inputs like fertilisers, tools and seeds.

The other formal sources of credit include the Co-operative Bank of Kenya, National Irrigation Board of Kenya and Kenya Tea Development Authority. But most willing women borrowers are unable to do so because of the requirements that are demanded by these formal

institutions. These include application, accounting and reporting procedures, which hinder most women who may not have had experience in such procedures. These difficulties are highly contributed by women's lag in education and literacy. But some of the women may receive credit indirectly through their husbands. This is in cases of cooperative production a credit scheme, where savings accounts are joint for both husband and wife. The situation remains the same for the de jure heads of households.

The Government of Kenya is lending money to women groups members. This group loan scheme is modelled along the lines of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (World Bank, 1986). Under the scheme, small amounts of money are lent to poor members within the group. Group members discuss the potential loans and are able to borrow in turns. Instead of collateral, the loaned only requires peer support and the group members ability to pay. This approach though good does have a limitation in the social reach. For those who are not groups members and are of low financial status, the situation remains unchanged.

Further efforts directed towards improving women's access to credit are made by the Kenya Women Finance Trust (K.W.F.T) which was established in 1981. This is a non-profit making organisation whose aim is to provide technical assistance, training and loans to individual women entrepreneurs and women groups in urban areas. Such emphasis on urban areas discriminates rural women who desperately need such facilities. The alternative for most of them is to obtain credit from informal sources. These include moneylenders, friends and relatives. The advantages of such informal sources include lack of collateral requirements and ease of transactions. Among the disadvantages are high interest rates, limitation of funds to only certain endeavours and the possibility of funds being limited by the lender's own financial

capacity (World Bank, 1989). The other alternative to credit is women's involvement in women groups merry - go - rounds. These co-operative rotating credit facilities are necessary for whatever endeavour women want to engage in, in their efforts to improve their social and economic status.

1.2.10 **FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

The prevailing patterns of male-migration to urban centres or farms for wage labour due to population pressure and land fragmentation, single motherhood by choice and unwanted pregnancies has led to an increasing number of female headed-households in the country. According to the 1979 census, 33% of women headed household (de jure female-headed households) fall in the poorest category of households in the country. They have few productive assets, less land and depend more on subsistence farming. Their mean annual income is significantly less than 19%, as compared to that of the male headed households (ILO, 1986). Despite remittances that de facto heads of households may receive, for some, it may not be enough to compensate for the households weak position in terms of labour availability. So, both categories may find themselves facing the same problem of heavy workload. Women groups may then be the only answer to cope with the work in reciprocal labour activities. The groups may further be used for social assistance and pooling of funds for purchase of items or resources.

1.3.0 **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Women groups activities are wide spread in Kenya as one of the strategies for economic empowerment and improvement of roles performance of the rural women. In Kajiado district registration of women groups begun in 1970. However, by 1984 only 206 groups had been

registered in the district. As from 1985, registration shot up to 251, an increase of 22% (Kajiado District Annual Report, 1985). In 1988, the number rose to 388 from 274 in 1987, an annual increase of 42% (Kajiado District Annual Report 1988). By 1989, the figure had risen to 437, giving an increase of 112% within a period of five years since 1984. This apparent increase of the number of women groups in the district was a striking phenomenon, which evoked interest to find out how women group activities had impacted on members roles and status.

The study was designed to answer the following three key questions:

- (i) - How does cultural background, ecology and market situation influence choice and participation in different group activities?
- (ii) - Upon participation how do group activities ease members' role performance and help improve their socio-economic status?
- (iii) - How has participation improved members' socio-economic status.

1.3.1 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.**

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- (i) Assess the influence of socio-cultural, ecological, and market situation on women's choice and participation in different groups activities.
- (ii) Assess the impact of women groups activities on members' role and status.

1.3.2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

A general survey of the literature on women groups in Kenya indicates that no adequate study has been done in Ngong division to analyse the impact of women groups on the role and status. Provision of this information would give insights to the suitability of women's groups as a strategy for improvement of rural living conditions. This information would be useful to development agencies and policy makers in cases of project design and implementation of programmes related to rural women.

General research has been carried out on women groups structures, organisation, general socio-economic contributions to national development and constraints that women do experience (Boserup 1970, Pala 1974, Mbithi 1977, NORAD 1974, Ndumbu 1985, Were 1990,) However, no specific study has been carried out in Ngong division on members roles and status. The study therefore seeks to generate empirical data on these two aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1.0 ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MAASAI AND THE AGIKUYU

A discussion of the Maasai and the Gikuyu ethnographies is important not only because these are the two major ethnic groups found in the area of research, but also because they formed the bulk of the respondents during field work. This literature creates a link between the field findings and particularly hypothesis (3), based on the cultural background in relation to group activities.

2.1.1 THE MAASAI

Background of the Maasai

Kajiado district is inhabited by the pastoral Maasai, who linguistically are Maasai speakers. They are said to have originated from a place called endigirr ee Kerio escarpment around 1750 AD. The Maasai are divided into two groups, the pastoral Maasai (Ilmaasai) and the mixed farmers (Iloikop). The Ilmaasai decided to proceed directly southwards to Kajiado and Tanganyika in search of fresh pastures, while the Iloikop moved to the East and West (Laikipia and Uasin Gishu) and became mixed farmers.

In 1890 the great rinderpest epidemic broke out and spread throughout the whole of Maasai land and surrounding areas. Those cattle that survived this initial attack succumbed to the severe drought that followed in 1891 leaving widespread famine. In 1892, Maasai families fell prey to the great smallpox epidemic. They lost nearly their cattle to rinderpest and drought and over half their human population during the smallpox epidemic (Jacobs 1963).

Following these calamities many pastoral Maasai, sought refuge from famine and drought with the neighbouring Gikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin speakers. The many close personal ties between individual Maasai families and other ethnic groups may be traced from the assistance given to them during this time. But the Maasai claim that many Gikuyu families mistreated them during this period. They held many Maasai women and children in bondage after they were eager to return to Maasai land. This hostility kept on reviving from time to time between the two ethnic groups, especially in 1961, 1991 and 1993, a factor that can affect development in the area.

2.1.2 **LIVESTOCK KEEPING**

Traditionally the Maasai were predominantly cattle keepers but they also raised goats and sheep. They practised a traditional form of selective breeding. Boran zebu bulls were selected for crossbreeding with Maasai grey cows in order to produce animals that were well adapted to the hot dry condition. These bulls were acquired by trading, or sometimes raiding the Samburu and Somali Galla pastoralists. Among the Maasai, livestock were owned by either nuclear or extended families. Most of the families were independent economic units possessing from 65 to 85 heads of cattle. But many of them owned between 200 to 300 head of cattle while a few wealthy families had thousands (Jacobs, 1963). Traditionally a man was considered 'wealthy' in the real sense if he had many heads of cattle and many sons. But a man with many cattle but few or no sons was considered poorer in comparison to the one with many sons but a small number of cattle.

2.1.2.0 FUNCTIONS OF LIVESTOCK

2.1.2. (A) Pre-Colonial Period

2.1.2.1 Cattle

The predominant cattle of the pastoral Maasai were the short horn 'East African Thoracic Humped Zebu', a traditional crossbreed. The main characteristics of these cattle were their general hardiness and ability to trek long distances, their good adaptation to hot arid environments, high resistance to indigenous livestock diseases, their relatively high calving rates but low calving intervals mostly 16 to 18 months, and their low milk yields but exceptionally high butter fat content (Jacobs, 1963).

Cattle were of practical importance to the Maasai in many ways. They were the main species used for investment, security and the building of social relationships. For subsistence cattle milk was the main diet of the pastoral Maasai. Meat and blood were rarely eaten. Meat was mainly eaten during ceremonial feasts or illness. Cattle blood was obtained by bleeding an adult bullock by puncturing the jugular vein with a blunt arrow. It was then consumed while still fresh or mixed with boiled milk. Cattle hides were used for making skin beds provide leather for thongs, sandals, rain cloaks, water bags and pack sandals. Hides and skins were tanned in cattle dung, which was also used as mortar for their mud-dung huts. Cattle sinew was used as a thread to stitch decorative beads on such leather goods as belts, earrings, calabash stoppers and skirts. During the dry season when water supplies were short, cattle urine was used for bathing, washing containers and curdling milk. Cattle fat was rubbed on the body to prevent chapping. The tails were used to cover axe handles and the horns were converted into tobacco containers or ritual containers.

Since cattle were the only source of wealth for pastoral Maasai, they formed the only legal tender for most social and economic transactions. Cattle or their equivalents were paid as

blood-price for homicide, inheritance and most civil fines. Cattle exchange as gifts between friends and kinsmen formed the social idiom of address. The beast so exchanged established a hierarchy of terms of address. Only men could exchange cows for such purposes because of their primary economic importance. The greatest prestige was attached to the exchange of heifers, bulls and adult milk cows, respectively. Sibling solidarity between brothers was expressed in cattle exchange. Elder brothers usually gave their younger brothers a heifer or bull, in order to address each other as Ndauwo or Poingon. Brothers of different mothers only exchanged bullocks and addressed each other as Emong.

A man could give his sister, his full brother's wife or his father's wife a bull-calf as a symbol of respect between the two. In reciprocal terms of addressed pashe was used. For a man to address his maternal uncle or his wife's brother as Pakiteng, he exchanged a bullock or milk cow. The more remote the relationship the less important the livestock exchanged. This could be either a goat or a sheep. Maternal cousins or distant clansmen exchanged goats and sheep to address each other as Pandare. To establish the bond of friendship between two close friends, a heifer was exchanged by one of them so as to publicly address one another as Ndauwo.

Among the Maasai, bullocks played an important ceremonial role. Though their significance was essentially practical in nature, their ritual was frequently surpassed by that of milk cows. All major ceremonial occasions among the Maasai were celebrated by a ritual meat feast. These feasts included marriage, birth of a child, initiation of a new age-set or a ceremony to avert misfortune. It was a taboo to feast simply for the sake of eating meat, and it was bullocks that were slaughtered during such occasions. Social ranking in importance was

evident during the distribution of meat. Elders were ranked first and were served with the fatty portions, warriors second and served with ribs and hind quarters, women third, and they got the flank and fore quarters and, finally, children who got the remains which were less nutritious.

2.1.2 (ii) **Sheep and Goats**

Sheep and goats were a vital meat reserve during periods of drought and food shortage. They were also used as a currency to meet the daily expenses and obligations. For the poor families, they were used to acquire a larger number of cattle through exchange. Sheep's milk was used by women and children during the dry seasons as a supplement to low cattle yields.

2.1.2 (iii) **Livestock Diseases**

Apart from rinderpest which devastated Maasai livestock in 1890, the two most prevalent and destructive cattle diseases were bovine-pleura-pneumonia (BPP) found in Kajiado district. The Maasai had their traditional treatment and preferred diseased livestock to graze with the rest of the herd. This was aimed at conferring natural immunity to the disease among the surviving animals. In modern times the veterinary department, on the other hand, insists on quarantining diseased animals. In most areas inoculation of the healthy herd is done. To control for tick-borne diseases and tsetse fly traditionally the Maasai burnt the grass though they were aware that constant burning of grassland led to deterioration of good pasture.

2.1.1(b) **Colonial period**

With the establishment of the colonial rule in the C19th, the Maasai did not only lose their land but also their livestock as well to the colonial administration. Between 1901-1910, this became the pacification period when colonial rule was completely established. Confiscation and punitive expeditions involving extreme brutality and burning of villages and livestock became the method of expropriation.

In 1901 the colonial government imposed taxation in kind (livestock among the pastoralist) till 1910. Thereafter, this was changed to cash to make collection more efficient. Since the pastoralists were believed to be more wealthy compared to the agriculturists, heavier taxes were imposed on them to meet the cost of world wars 1 and 2. With rising tax payments, the Maasai were forced into an emerging market economy where they sold animals and livestock products. The government organized livestock auctions for this purpose. The auctions were presided over by colonial chiefs who came with records of tax payments. This formalized the commercialization of pastoral production and symbolized a break from the pre-capitalist barter system of exchange to the world monetary form (Kipuri, 1989)

Restrictions on the movement of livestock across reserve boundaries and imposition of permanent quarantine were put in effect to protect the settlers livestock industry. Trade between pastoralists in the North (Somali) and those in the South were blocked. This resulted in persistent lack of marketing facilities within each reserve. This in turn led to overstocking and deterioration in the soil fertility. To solve the problem, the government negotiated with Rhodesian meat - packing and canning firm LIEBIGS, with the aim of establishing a similar factory in Athi-River, Kajiado district. The factory would also help settlers in diversifying the economy by exporting frozen meat. In 1937, the factory was opened with an annual capacity of 30,000 - 45,000 livestock, in close proximity to pastoral reserves. There emerged a market for hides and skins as well. By 1933, Kajiado district exported 33 tonnes.

Despite government's initial pressure the Maasai were unwilling to dispose their livestock to Athi-River factory. Why? Between 1932-1935, they were re-building their herds having emerged from a severe drought. Secondly, the company was offering low prices and thirdly

with heavy demands placed on taxation or punitive expeditions, most Maasai learnt to rely heavily on livestock beyond subsistence level.

During the World War II, over 15,000 hides & skins were sold. In 1951 the figure had risen to 45,000 hides and skins and 94,537 by 1960 (Kituyi, 1990). The implication of this development was the increase in traders who found hides and skins less perishable, easier to transport and provided a more steady market than livestock.

As trade expanded, banking facilities were introduced. However, they failed since most Maasai saw no purpose in bank accounts. Banking in pastoral areas re-emerged after independence with the introduction of mobile bank, which went to livestock selling points. Results were unsatisfactory but in modern times, banks have opened at main township of Kajiado district. In 1923, the government started opening dairies. By 1929, there were 17 dairies in Kajiado district. However, the dairies faced resistance from Maasai elders. Trading centres too grew dramatically. Initially, in Kajiado district these were three - Ngong, Kajiado and Namanga, Where livestock auctions took place. These early centres represent a marginal advance over the peripheral market of the pre-colonial period. With the increase in market conversions, the centrality of the 'market complex' also grew as an extensive network of trading centres emerged.

The spread of the market principle opened economic options for women. Literate women were suited to running shops an activity that was popular women group members. The rise of market value of milk a women's sphere became a trade offer for women, improving their economic status.

1.1.2 (c) Post Independence

After independence, the modern state did not represent a significant change from the colonial administration. Instead it perpetuated the structure and form of the colonialists, but never destroyed the traditional structures as they interacted with the modern ones. Viability of pastoralism continued to dwindle as more land that was fertile was alienated for commercial agriculture. Most pastoralists found themselves being pushed into the dry marginal areas that were susceptible to drought and famine. Following this decline in pastoral economy, there was increased dependence on purchase of foodstuffs for subsistence.

A livestock traders class emerged among the pastoral Maasai. Those best suited for the livestock business had to have the following characteristics: had to have the knowledge of areas of livestock concentration, based on the elaborate exchange of information and network alliances; had to be physically fit (young and energetic) to travel long distances to obtain the better purchases and then drive the animals to the selling market; had to have a sizeable monetary capital for investment if the profit margin was to offer good returns for continued involvement; had to have knowledge or experience in trade, particularly good bargaining and evaluation skills and finally logistical knowledge on which areas to 'cross with livestock - particularly Manyattas belonging to friendly Maasai who could accommodate them, areas with wild animals and forests with Moran Manyattas who would steal their livestock. (Kituyi, 1990). Obtained livestock were sold at higher auction prices in trading centres or transported to larger towns.

In the contemporary modern market economy, one finds livestock use extending from the pre-capitalist use of livestock products, to animals being given a monetary value, which includes products such as milk, skins and hides. By giving milk a monetary value, this has meant

depreciation of many house households of the traditional expression of good will through the milk gourd that was passed to visitor and Moran. However, the sale of milk which is a woman's sphere, means women's involvement in this trade, which is more productive than their labour had been in the past.

The colonial setup of livestock auction centres and increased dependence of the Maasai on purchased foodstuff for subsistence, has led to opening of butcheries and shops in most part of Maasai land. Women have not only found an economic opportunity in running shops and food kiosks individually or as groups, but also acquired plots for business and rental purpose in the centres. With the butchery business small animals-goats and sheep are sold for slaughter. Acquired cash is used to purchase family food.

Through women group ventures, women are rearing livestock for sale to the Maasai livestock traders (middlemen), who later sells them at a profit. This income-generating venture is one way of improving women's economic status.

2.1.3.0 HERD MANAGEMENT AND PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT

Among the pastoral Maasai, ecology was an essential factor in herd management. This influenced the social and political organisation of the society so as to best cope with the natural (ecological) hardships. It is therefore impossible to discuss the Maasai social organisation in isolation of the ecology and herd management. The society's traditional settlement patterns can be categorised into three: The groups, which were autonomous political units, the localities and the kraal camps. Settlement patterns were closely tied to herd management and were dependent on three major physical factors. These included the

presence of surface water for livestock, the incidence and distribution of livestock diseases and the conditions of the local pasture. Of these factors watering points were the most influential on patterns of settlement while good pasture was the most reliable (Jacobs, 1963)

2.1.3.1 **Political Units (Iloshon)**

Politically the Maasai were a decentralised society. Each of the sixteen political groups Iloshon was politically autonomous had it's own clearly defined territory and individual supply of pasture and water. Among the political groups were the Purko, Loita, Matapato, Ilkeekonyokie, Kaputiei, Ildamati, Sigirari, Loitokitok, Kisongo and Dalalakutuk among others. Group lands lay adjacent to one another, but rarely overlapped. They were generally separated by some conspicuous topographic features, which formed the traditional boundaries between them. Members of one group could not graze their cattle across such boundaries without first seeking the permission of the other.

2.1.3 (ii) **Localities**

Localities were the second pattern of settlement. The general scarcity of permanent water supplies often 30 to 40 kilometres apart resulted into the tribal territory being divided into localities (**inkutot**). Each locality was a self-contained ecological unit with continuous areas of wet season pasture, to which camps dispersed during the rain on locally scattered temporary water. Settlements were essentially semi-permanent in character and their movement semi-nomadic. This was due to the seasonal variation in water, pasture, the area being infested by pest and unsanitary conditions.

According to Jacobs (1963) a typical locality covered 300 to 400 square kilometres and contained 600 to 700 persons, with between 12 to 14 kraal camps. The average cattle population for the area was between 8000 to 9000, with approximately 6 to 10 hectares per beast. But these figures varied depending on the specific environmental conditions of any one locality with heavy sheep and goat population. The average hectares could have been 2.5 hectares livestock unit, one unit equalling one head of cattle or 4 sheep or goats.

Despite the semi-nomadic movements of the Maasai, individual kraal camps tended to move within the same locality from year to year. Socially this ensured that settlement associations of each locality were relatively stable. These settlement associations were the smallest formal political and social segments of the Maasai. It was in them that important assistance among men and women were said to arise from the use of common pasture and water resources. Members conscious collective control over specific territory made them regard themselves as a corporate community in contrast to other localities.

2.1.3 (iii) **The Kraal Camp**

The third and last pattern of settlement was the kraal camp. This was the principal unit of cattle management, the basic unit of settlement and the principal centre of domestic life. Each kraal camp consisted of several independent polygamous families who teamed up due to a common interest in the economic exploitation of their immediate vicinity. Most of the camps consisted of 4 to 8 families and 30 to 50 people (Jacobs, 1963). Each camp was surrounded by a circular thorn-bush fence. The entrance was made through a number of separate gates, each owned by an independent family.

Kraal camps did not have formal leaders nor any overall kinship organisations with political

authority. Although some households in the camp may have been related, a camp did not exclusively consist of members of one clan. The Maasai felt that the camp should reflect a friendly arrangement, and no one should have had authority over the others. Independent families cooperated in activities of common interest. Each camp's active cooperative life was based on the economic and social cooperation of voluntary sort. They herded and defended their livestock collectively, but without specific grazing and watering rights in their areas as a group. Women cooperated in their day to day social and economic activities. Each family of a kraal camp regulated affairs as it pleased and acted independently. Differences of opinion over herd management often caused families to break away and join with other camps. This led to frequent change of most camps composition.

As a principal unit of cattle management, kraal camps congregated in the dry seasons around permanent sources of water. This was due to both watering needs of the calves, which were not able to travel longer distances as well as for the human population. Herding became more arduous during this season. Cattle had to leave their camps at dawn travel 10 to 15 kilometres to pasture and return long after sunset. The overlap between each camp's pasture increased and the total area available for grazing contracted. This led to severe grazing pressure and heavy cattle losses during periods of drought. While overall rainfall could support a relatively luxuriant spread of short and medium grass, natural catchment was poor. Moreover, it did not sustain a wide range of watering points throughout the dry season. Permanent water supplies consisted of natural springs in the highland areas and wells in lowland depressions and dried riverbeds. These springs and wells were neither numerous nor well distributed. This has necessitated the Government's installation of bore holes and dams to supplement the traditional watering points.

During the wet seasons, the pasturage was good and camps dispersed from their former dry season, congregation points. The camps were now widely dispersed on temporary rivers, swamps, or rain ponds. Cattle rarely pastured more than 5 kilometres from their camps. They frequently returned for mid-day milking before pasturing again in the afternoon. Individual camps were usually divided by many kilometres so as to conserve the pasture resources on which their dry season concentration could depend on.

The family (**Olmarei**) was the smallest unit of pastoral production. It comprised of a man, his wife/wives and their unmarried children. The autonomy of each family unit was signified by a separate entrance. The man was, seen as the head of Olmalei and was responsible for the construction and maintenance of the fence and entrance to the family unit. The first wife built her hut to the right, the second to the left and the third to the right. The autonomy of every wife was signified by the hut, which constructed a "**Matricentre**" for her and her children. Children were born and raised in huts and by virtue of being members of particular huts, they gained access to a larger portion of means of production (Kipuri, 1989)

2.1.4 LAND AND RIGHTS TO PASTURE

2.1.4 (a) Pre-Colonial Period

Traditionally among the Maasai, land and rights to pasture were shared communally by members of a locality. Each kraal camp was therefore free to move and graze cattle anywhere within the locality, but there were some factors, which inhibited such movement. These were the three forms of traditional private pasture. The first were small areas of several hectares, called **Olopololi**, which were located immediately opposite the family gates to a kraal camp.

They were demarcated by elders for the exclusive use of each gate's calf population. Failure to observe a family's calf pasture was a form of disrespect subject to social rebuke.

The second was a large area of several square kilometres called **Olokeri** which surrounded the 'warrior village' (**Manvatta**). It was reserved as a pasture for the exclusive use of the village cattle for the two to three years period when junior warriors lived together as an age - set. Trespass on a warrior's village pasture was punishable by a fine in cattle.

The third form of private pasture was also known as **Olokeri**. This was sometimes reserved when large numbers of people gathered together for a few months to hold a ceremony such as **Eunoto** (promotion of an age - set to a higher grade). Thus, traditionally the Maasai did not have individual parcels. But currently this is not the case following the on going subdivision of group ranches into individual land parcel.

2.1.4 (b) Colonial period

Following industrialization of Western Europe in the C19th, there emerged the need for source of raw materials and market for the manufactured goods. This led to the scramble and partition of Africa in 1884. Kenya and Uganda fell under the British sphere of interest while Tanganyika was placed under the Germans following the 1885 Anglo-German Agreement. Maasai land was split into Kenyan Maasai (under the British) and Tanzanian Maasai (under the Germans). This move incorporated the Maasai to the world economic system, Marking the beginning of primitive accumulation stage of capitalism through land alienation (Kipuri, 1989). Alienated land was allocated to white settlers and administrators, forest reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, Public works and expansion of agricultural activities.

In 1890 the British government set up its first administrative post in Maasai land at Ngong (Enchoro-Emuny). Following the 1904 and 1911 Maasai agreements, a Maasai reserve was created and later the Maasai were moved from the North to create room for the new settlers respectively. As a result the Maasai were left with 4,046,781 hectares which were too small to allow viable transhumance pastoralism with 737,735 hectares being arid or semi arid and 323,742 hectares infested with tsetse flies while 121,403 hectares were infested with East Coast fever. This made the land inhospitable for domestic herds and undermined the ability of the Maasai to feed themselves (Kipuri, 1989).

In the 1950s the colonial government introduced individualized land tenure system, so as to intensify production from African reserves, in order to sustain free market policies in agriculture after independence. The result was privatization of communally owned land and indirect sanction of land alienation. A land owning class of the Africans was created while most pastoralists were transformed to poor peasantry that depended heavily on the market economy for subsistence. The land owning class was to act as a buffer between the colonialist and the rest of the Africans. Oloibon Olonana was granted de facto ownership of some land in Ngong area while Legalishu received private land on the Laikipia plateau. The two were given the first-user rights and could exclude others from this land use. However, this individualization had its limitation. Since pasture was not quantified and land alienation through sale was not feasible, their rights were limited.

In 1960, the colonial government constituted the Kaptiei development committee in Kajiado district. 22,662 hectares of Kaptiei Olosho were subdivided into individual ranches for members. This marked the start of the official ranch development policy. However, the

transition period was marked with uncertainty among the Maasai. Between 1960-61, 300,000-400,000 livestock were lost (65-80% in Kajiado district), There was insecurity and suspicion as Kenya approached independence, and increased penetration of the market principle into more resource transactions (Kituyi, 1990). Many Maasai therefore, accepted the new land tenure system since it protected their land from influx by other Kenyans after independence. It further implied individual economic success. In 1962, the first 6 individual ranches were established.

2.1.4 (c) **Post Independence**

Between 1964-1965, the first 6 group ranches were established in Kajiado district, with backing from the World Bank funding for improved water supply and dipping facilities. In 1968, the Land Adjudication Act and the Land Group Representatives Act, Legitimized transformation of range Lands to private property. Disposal rights were granted to groups of individuals who could show traditional claims to the land. By 1981, 1.6 million hectares had been registered in Kajiado district as private land (Kituyi, 1990). Through the market principle, the subdivided Maasai land parcels

became a commodity with a value, which could be bought and protected from other land users. This created an opportunity for women group members to purchase part of the ranches in Ngong division and the allocation of 202 hectares of land to North Keekonyokie women groups by the government. An activity which improves their social and economic status.

2.1.4. (i) **Ranching Schemes**

Formation and development of group ranches in Kajiado district was the first (1960) in the

country. The schemes were initiated with high hopes and expectations from both the Government and the pastoralist. According to Munei (1991), the objectives of the establishment of these group ranches were as follows: to improve the income generating capacity of the pastoralist; increase the productivity of pastoral land; pre-empt the emergency of landlessness among pastoralists; and prevent environmental degradation.

Unfortunately, the group ranches failed to live up to the expectation of the interest groups involved. The programme failed to bring in any material benefits to the pastoralists. The World Bank, which was the financing organisation for the programme, made sure the funds were spent only on structural inputs and not on other things, that could benefit individual pastoralists directly. Upon the realisation that very little extra take-off was forth coming from the pastoralists as a result of the programme, the World Bank was the first to withdraw financial support. Yet, together with the Government, the two had made commendable efforts in making group ranches acceptable to the intended beneficiaries. They had also enacted a special legislation that incorporated certain aspects of pastoralist institutions. Since the pastoralists did not own individual title deeds, they voted for the sub-division of the ranches. With individual title deeds, they could be able to use them as security for loans.

According to Munei (1991), the average amount of credit funds (for ranch development) disbursed by the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) to ranchers was Kshs. 50, 000 and less, regardless of ranch size. Economically the loan was not viable to ranch improvement since the amount was too small. The Maasai argued that selling land offered more money than mortgaging it on AFC terms, considering particularly the risk of default. Moreover, part of the finances obtained from land sale would be used for the family subsistence, while the rest would be spent on the development of the ranches.

Sub-division of group ranches has had varied, both social and economic, implications. Socially, there were family conflicts arising directly from land sale. According to Munei (1991) there were cases of husbands beating up wives for not consenting to land sale. Worse still, the greater proportion of money obtained from the sales was spent on alcoholic drinks or even acquisition of an extra wife. This meant that the money obtained from land sale was not directly enjoyed by the members of the family. To meet the family financial needs Maasai women had to look for alternative ways of income generation. These included women group involvement in livestock rearing for sale, sale of fuel wood, running of kiosks and beadwork business by individual women.

Among the economic implications of the sub-division were improvement in ranch support facilities such as dams, dispersal of settlements and increased sedentarization. Some of the positive consequences of this sedentarization were increased opportunities for shared and cooperative income generating activities, labour as well as socialisation and participation in mutual support, by women. This was important to women's economic, emotional and physical health and their ability as individuals to assert their own interests and rights (Kelly, 1985). There was also increased cultivation due to the growing enthusiasm by the new Gikuyu landowners who formed a population of 50% of the sub-divided ranches (Munei, 1991). The implication was that there was a high likelihood of increased cultivation in this one time pastoral region. Finally, pasture and labour use was also affected by sub-division. Proper use of natural pasture through rotational grazing was adversely affected by the spread of human settlement. Labour use also changed a lot. More women labour and hired labour was being engaged to replace herding by both men and children who had to attend school (Munei, 1991).

2.1.5 PROPERTY RIGHTS AND INHERITANCE

Traditionally when an old man realised that he was about to die, he allocated his property among his sons. He also decided which of them could clear his debts incase he had any. However, if death was sudden, the eldest son inherited all his father's property and debts. The youngest son inherited the mother's property because he was expected to take care of her at old age. These were the only two sons whose inheritance was clear and indisputable. As for the middle sons their inheritance was not clear (Sankan, 1988).

At marriage, each wife received nine female cows and a bull. The number, and sex of animals allotted to each wife was presented by custom and not negotiated (Kipuri, 1989).

A married woman could also own property by being given some by her male relatives. However, she could not alienate such property without the consent of her husband. A Maasai husband could not in any way interfere with his wife's property. Should he happen to do so, this could give rise to ground for divorce, but in cases of marriage dissolution under ordinary circumstances the issue of property division between the couple rarely arose. In most cases the divorced wife only left with her personal effects and gifts given to her. No consideration was paid to the fact that she could have contributed to the acquisition of the family property. Contribution may have been either direct or indirect, by giving the husband emotional and psychological contentment to ensure that the family was well taken care of.

In some cases, a man might have only fathered daughters. In such a case, he could decide to prevent one of his daughters from getting married. Such a daughter was then allowed to have children at her father's home. If she got a son, he was immediately pronounced the heir of the property. While the son, grew up the mother only acted as a trustee of the property. This portrays the low social and economic status that was accorded to Maasai women traditionally, a factor that highly contributed to the uneven distribution of resources by gender. In other

cases the daughter could get married and give her father one of her sons. When the father died, dispute could occur since the son was not regarded as original member of that family.

The other method of inheritance was confined to certain families. This happened in the case of a warrior who died before he was married and could not therefore have children. The family could decide that they did not want his name forgotten. They thus called together members of the clan to decide to obtain a bride for the dead man. She looked after his cattle and was allowed to have children with a man of her choice. If a son was born out of this 'ghost marriage' he inherited the 'father's' property. It became his responsibility to keep the man's name alive and look after his own home once he is grown up. From such 'ghost marriages' it is evident that concerned women were reduced to the level of a **productive object**. They could not be fully entrusted with the dead man's property, except their sons to be. The prime role of a woman was seen as that of perpetuating the dead man's name. The concern for her economic status did not arise to the concerned parties (the deceased's relatives).

2.1.6 **DIVISION OF LABOUR**

2.1.6 (a) **Pre-Colonial Period**

Division of labour was determined by both gender and age. Labour allocation began at the household level and extended to grazing and protection of tribal land. Women's roles were centred around the homestead as the caretakers. They were responsible for making the thorn fence that surrounded every kraal camp and built the mud dung huts on either side of their husband's gates. The two most strenuous tasks performed routinely by women included fetching water and fuel wood. They sterilised milk containers and made household items associated with milking, food preparation and human decorations. When male labour in the

household was in short supply, girls and women were responsible for herding and watering fully weaned calves, including sheep and goats that might have been left at home.

2.1.6. (i) **Boyhood (Ilaiyo)**

Boys under the age of 10 years were expected to assist the household in the daily grazing of calves around the homestead. Boys above this age who had not yet gone through the initiation rites were restricted to the daylong isolation of cattle herding. Girls on the other hand assisted their mothers with domestic chores. Among the Maasai, the age-set was used to recruit all males according to their approximate age into fixed groups, which were assigned specific tasks in the society. Each group had an **Oloibon**, who was the ritual head of the group and symbolised unity. He opened and closed, promoted and named successive age-sets and gave ritual advice to the members in his capacity as the prophet.

Between 14 to 18 years, all males underwent a circumcision ceremony of ethnic initiation. This formed the basis of age-set recruitment. Boys initiated during the same eight consecutive years in duration, became members of a single age-set. Different age-sets were distinguished by an interval of 'closed - circumcision' which lasted between two to six years. The Maasai conceived of their age sets as passing through four named stages of the male life cycle. These included boyhood (**Ilaiyo**), warrior hood (**Ilmurrān**), elder hood (**Ilmoruak**) and ancient elder hood (**Illdasat**) - Jacobs, 1963). Women were not grouped into corporate age-set like men, but were identified in status with the male age set with whom they danced as unmarried maidens. The ranked age-set system established a status hierarchy to which ideal modes of behaviour and authority were related.

2.1.6 (ii) Warriorhood (Ilmurran)

There were two warrior age-sets, the junior and the senior warriors. These constituted a corps of able-bodied men who were expected to perform services for the whole community. Both warrior age-sets were free from household chores and cattle herding activities. The duties of the junior warriors included roaming the country, familiarising themselves with its details as well as assisting any elder in the labour of the dry season. During this season boreholes, dams, springs and wells were usually dry, so great was the physical labour involved in watering large herds, that the junior warriors had to frequently return to offer assistance. They were also expected to carry messages from place to place, escort women over long distances and ensure that herds boys were carefully watching over cattle. They also kept on reporting on the conditions of pasture and water. They kept their kraal camps safe from alien thieves and their livestock secure from predators. During the second or third year of junior warrior hood, age mates from one or more localities gathered in a Manyatta (warrior's village). From this village they played the traditional role of defence of the tribal territory and conducted raids of neighbouring ethnical groups for livestock.

Senior warriors ranged between 18 to 26 years. They performed a less homogeneous set of roles. Promotion to senior warrior status occurred after one had gone through Eunoto ceremony. They were then allowed to marry but the community at large could turn to them for public services. Like junior warriors, they assisted in the arduous task of dry season watering of livestock. They were prohibited to participate in all activities, which were traditionally the prerogatives of elders.

2.1.6 (iii) **Elderhood (Ildasat and Ilmornak)**

In principal the role of both junior and senior elders, who ranged in between age 28 to 56 years, was to head their individual households and maintain law and order within their locations. Elders of a camp met daily to discuss herd movements. They also determined whose sons would supervise the herd. Through such cooperation each family in the camp benefited in different ways. The inexperienced livestock owners gained from the knowledge of others, while families without sons benefit from the use of others sons as herds boys. The sick gain from assistance of their neighbours and the healthy from the leisure of not having to spend all their time looking after their own herd. Together with their local age-set spokesmen, elders met in the local elders councils to settle disputes and make decisions for their localities as a whole.

2.1.6 (b) **Colonial Period**

Traditionally the Maasai are patriarchal in structure and their division of labour was based on age-set system, residence and gender differentiation. Being transhumant pastoralists the method involved seasonal movement of livestock from the lowland to the highlands. Through this method preservation of ecosystem and the efficient use of labour was achieved.

However, with the encroachment of the colonial rule in the C19th, the Maasai lost their best grazing land. A combination of land alienation, colonial restrictions, controls and heavy taxation led to progressive decrease in viability of the pastoral economy. The colonial government intensified capitalist relations of production, thereby inducing collective poverty among the Maasai. Capitalist orientations were pursued through encouragement of the white settlers and the Africans to produce for the market rather than for subsistence. Following this

economic changes the traditional division of labour was adversely affected.

In 1919, the colonial administration issued a labour circular allowing forceful recruitment of labour by the newly appointed chiefs. Consequently, some Maasai were compelled to herd settlers' livestock. Also some juniors warriors (Ilmuran) were forced to build roads in Lieu of taxation (Kipuri, 1989.) This marked the emergence of labour as a commodity with a market value, signaling the spread of the market principle. This was a total contradiction of the traditional labour relations that were based on the age set system, residence and gender.

2.1.6 (c) **Post Colonial Period**

During the post colonial period, capitalist relations that were began by the colonial administration were intensified. The earlier induced collective poverty was transformed to individual poverty. This was achieved through pursuance of capitalist orientations involving commoditization of productive resources (Land and Livestock), and further encouragement of production for the market. Various factors emerged that upset the balance of residence and internal labour relations.

First, the rise of opportunities in large-scale livestock production on individual ranches and commercial agriculture increased the need for external hired labour that went beyond domestic supply. Moreover, Kituyi (1990) maintains that, individual land tenure system in form of ranches had led to a decline of residential units, from 5 (five) in 1960s to 2 households in the early 1980s.

Secondly, the rich households were sending their children to school as a way of preparing them for alternative career in the market economy, or for more efficiency in livestock management under new conditions. The result was rise of competition between school and herds in the allocation of child time and labour.

Thirdly, as competition for diminishing resources increased, so was the social differentiation between men and women, elders and juniors, first along pre-capitalist pastoral social formation and later a peripheral capitalist one. There emerged an impoverished Maasai class who had either lost or never attained viable economic resources of their own (livestock or land). This group of Maasai became willing to sell their labour as a form of raising money for subsistence or from investing in herds of livestock. This created certain contradiction that persists to the present period. Traditionally, persons of the same age groups were supposed to be comrades, sharing resources in the spirit of age fellowship. But this has become very difficult even for the rich to overcome, where the comradeship has to be replaced with the more impersonal wage relations. The situation is even more difficult where a junior man has a supervisory role over those of senior age (elders) - Kituyi, (1990). Traditionally each of an ascending generation represented a group to be respected. To overcome this problem, the wage relationship is disguised as a socialized flow, of the poorer helping with productive work and the rich helping poor friends and relatives restock either by livestock gift or money. The second method is to hire non-Maasai like the poor migrants or the Dorobos.

The fourth factor was the evolvement of the labour marketing with wage opportunities in slaughterhouse operations, guarding, hire as local drivers (On foot) of herds from one market to the other in the livestock trade. The fact that most of the Maasai had a late start in sending

their children to school means that, a majority of them hold low paying jobs as drivers, messengers, guards among others in urban centres. In most cases, the pay is not enough to maintain a family. This means that these jobs are either taken by the very poor without any other alternative or by those with pastoral capital and herding labour.

As men leave their homes for wage labour either in the farms/ranches or in urban centres, this translates to a shift of their traditional responsibilities to women. The situation becomes worse for poor families that cannot afford hired labour and have children going to school. This implies that their roles extend from the domestic sphere to the field where they have to do the herding.

With inadequate wage pays from their husbands, women have opted either to engage in bead work to supplement whatever cash they are given by their husbands join women groups for labour assistance following their increased workload or join merry-go-round group activities that assist members in improving the shelter structure or buy water tank for each other on rotational basis.

2.1.7 **LIVESTOCK MARKETING**

Ngong division is one of the areas upon which the urban market is increasingly dependent for the supply of beef, and mutton. The Maasai pastoral economy is secondarily market oriented. Livestock production is mainly guided by the immediate (milk) and the long-term (reproductive) subsistence requirements of the household (Evangelou, 1985). This is reflected in the predominantly female herd structures. Despite the traditional non-market orientation of production, the Maasai have a long history of trading in their relationship with the Agikuyu

and the Akamba. Livestock sales are becoming more widespread as the Maasai diet broadens to include grains and other purchased foodstuffs. There is also increased demand among the Maasai for manufactured consumer goods.

According to Evangelou (1985), the basic structure of livestock marketing mechanisms is the same throughout Maasai land. Initial transactions are carried out in homesteads between the owners and traders. Goats and sheep prices range between Kshs. 500 to 2,500 while those for cattle range from Kshs 6,000 to 15,000 or above. These variations can be explained by both the animal size and the season of the year. Traders later sell them at the local markets such as Kisames, Kibiko, Kiserian and Ongata Rongai in Ngong division. These markets are located in a town or trading centre and operate under the jurisdiction of the local government authorities. Officials validate interregional transactions by collection of access or sales tax, which varies from time to time. Livestock inspection by veterinary officers is done as part of the effort to control the transmission of diseases, particularly foot and mouth.

Traditionally women had only use rights on livestock, while ownership rights were held by men. The legal and economic implication of market participation in livestock sales is that disposition of livestock and cash expenditure was at the discretion of men. Due to the cash needs and expenditure of the sedentary household, Maasai women had embarked on livestock rearing for income generation as groups. From these cash proceeds, they were able to meet some of the financial needs in the households.

2.2.0 **THE AGIKUYU**

2.2.1 **Back ground of the Agikuyu**

According to the Gikuyu legend of origin, the legendary founders of the ethnical group Gikuyu and Mumbi, are said to have originated at Mukurwe wa Gathanga in the modern Murang'a district. The two are said to have had nine daughters, after whom the nine Gikuyu clans are named. These daughters were Wanjiku, Wanjiru, Waithera, Wairimu, Wambui, Wachera, Wangui, Nyambura and Wamuyu. From them, the nine clans were named as Agaciku, Anjiru, Achera, Aithera-andu, Aambura- (Ethagaya) and Aaichakamuyu. Their descendants over-populated Murang'a and dispersed to Nyeri, Kiambu and beyond. The Gikuyu society was politically decentralised. It was organised and functioned under the patrilineal system. To harmonise the ethnic activities, the society was based on three factors. The first one was the family group, which was the extended family (husband, wives, children and grandchildren). The second factor was the clan, which consisted of several family units, which had the same clan name and were descended from one family group in the remote past. The third factor was the age-grading system which was aimed at strengthening the whole ethnic group in all its activities. Age-grade members acted as one body in all society matters and had a very strong bond of brotherhood and sisterhood among themselves.

2.2.1 **SYSTEM OF LAND OWNERSHIP**

Being agriculturists, land ownership among the Agikuyu was very significant in the society organisation. The Agikuyu depended entirely on land for the supply of material needs of life. The 'soil' was considered as the 'mother' of the ethnic group. Like a mother, it fed the members and after death, it nursed their spirits. According to the Gikuyu customary law of land tenure, every family unit had a land right of one form or another. However, the whole

ethnic group defended its boundaries collectively (Kenyatta, 1975). According to the 'tribal' legend the founder father Gikuyu, was given land by Ngai, God, at Mukurwe Wa Gathanga in Murang'a where he built his first homestead. Soon the family land became overpopulated. Their descendants were forced to move southwards to acquire more land from the Gumba (Pygmy) and Ndorobo whom they assimilated in due course. In 1920, there was major movement of Kiambu Gikuyu into Ngong hills area. All land that was acquired from these people through sale was held under private ownership, or as a family joint property. Any man, who held private land through purchase or inheritance, had full right to sell or give it to any one as he liked without consulting anybody. Traditionally only the elders who acted as the ceremonial witnesses in all land transactions, were consulted.

2.2.1(i) Land Inheritance

Traditionally women - wives and daughters had no rights of land inheritance. After the death of a man, land passed to his sons, and the eldest son took his father's place. The land tenure system eventually changed from private ownership to that of family group land under the name of the former private owner (Mbari land). No one regarded such land as his or hers. The eldest son only assumed the title of trustee, and had no more rights than his other brothers. He could not sell the land without consent of his brothers who had the same full cultivation rights on the pieces of land that they cultivated, as well as those cultivated by their respective mothers. Traditionally the wife had use and cultivation rights, which were assigned to her by her husband.

Mismanagement of family land resulting quarrel between the trustee and his junior brothers could necessitate the change of the particular trustee. The village council was usually summoned to divide up the land equally among the male representatives of the family group.

This was done when all efforts to seek reconciliation had failed. The former trustee was left to himself and his own immediate family. The rest of his brothers, if they wanted, continued the management of their land under one head, appointed as the new muramati to carry on their affairs as before. According to the customary law of land tenure, when family land was divided up and one of the brothers wanted to sell out his share, the relatives had the first priority to buy. This was to avoid a stranger coming in their midst. Before sale was carried out, the matter was carefully scrutinised by the kiama (council of elders). The aim was to preserve kinship unity with the ancestral land. In perpetuation of kinship unity, it was considered right and proper for a man to reserve his rights in the ancestral land. Thereafter he was treated as a mere stranger. He moved away and bought land elsewhere. If misfortune befell him in his ventures, he could not return to his ancestral land.

2.2.1(ii) **Pastoral Land and Public Places**

In Gikuyu land, traditionally there were pasture lands where livestock was grazed in common. There were also salt-licks (**munyu**) and mineral springs (**ireri**) access to which was free to all. There were also public places reserved for meetings and dances (**iharo**). Others included public roads and paths (**njira cia agendi**) as well as sacred groves (**migumo**) where 'tribal' sacrifices were offered to **Ngai**.

Although in reality the above lands were owned by different individual families, in actual uses they were treated as common land. Whenever a salt lick or a mineral spring was found on any land, whether cultivated or uncultivated, the owner could not prevent the neighbouring people from sending their livestock to such a place. But in the case of a poor man, who had no other land, he was given another piece of land by the elders of the district. For pasture lands there

were permanent grass or bush lands reserved for that purpose. Usually these lands were situated some distance from the homesteads, and some of them were considered unsuitable for cultivation. Near homesteads, there were pasture lands for the calves. The use of calves pasture land was restricted to the family group possessing it. The family could give or withhold the permission to outsiders. Besides these pasture lands, there were wood lands reserved for building materials and fuel wood.

Contemporary Society and Land Ownership Patterns

According to Kabeberi (1987) the concept of communally owned land was replaced by the enactment of land registration statutes. This legal law recognises individual ownership of land as opposed to the traditional communal ownership. Land registered under the Registered Land Acts (RLA) vested the title holder with powers to deal with the land in any manner he or she wished, being the absolute owner. Although the RLA was not discriminatory, women were the eventual losers when it came to the application of registration of land previously registered under their husbands. To qualify, the law demanded that if one was the rightful owner he/she, had to prove that, prior to the application that the land belonged to him/her. Yet, under customary law a married woman did not own land. All that she had were the use rights over her husband's land. The RLA having conferred absolute ownership on the husband implied that the wife's interest was a matter that would be looked into. Thereafter all registered lands was to be subjected to it.

However, the Registered Lands Act provided an opening for those few women who were not bound by customary notions of land ownership and were financially able. These women though married or single could acquire land and register it in their own names. Due to the low

economic status that most women found themselves in, they began to join forces as groups to purchase land, this was registered in the name of the women group.

2.2.2 **GIKUYU ECONOMY AND DIVISION OF LABOUR**

The Agikuyu were agriculturists and land formed the foundation of their economy. Controlled and strengthened by the system of division of labour according to gender and age, in every family a man, his wife or wives and children traditionally constituted an economic unit (Kenyatta, 1975). Each member of the family unit had different tasks to perform in the economic productivity, to ensure the material prosperity of the group.

2.2.2 (i) **Division of Labour**

In division of labour, children began their activities in production when young. This was as part of their training in agriculture and herding. Young girls could be left at home minding the babies or assisted their mothers in domestic chores, water and fuel wood collection. Boys of tender age assisted in looking after the calves and young goats and sheep that were left at home. But those boys that were above the age of ten and had not gone through initiation assisted in both herding and farming. Children in general could be taken by their parents to the field where they were allowed to play in a corner of the cultivated field. Soon they would get interested in the work and became ambitious to participate in gardening. As soon as they were able to handle a digging stick, they were given small allotments to practice on.

Among the grown ups division of labour began from the homestead to the field. In building, the heavy task of cutting timber and putting up the framework was performed by men. Cutting of grass and carrying of water for plastering the walls with clay or cow dung was the

work of women. Men did the fencing around the homesteads or gardens and cattle pens. They were the night watchmen to protect the crops against wild animals.

2.2.2. (ii) House Work

The entire housework fell within the sphere of women's domain. This was in fulfilment of their traditional roles as caretakers both as mothers and as wives. They cooked, fetched water, collected fuel wood, did all the domestic cleaning and care for the children. Dressmaking, pottery and basket weaving was exclusively a woman's profession. According to the 'tribal' customs, no man could dare to indulge in any of these women's activities, except in cases of emergency. Otherwise he would be scandalised and, if single, it would be difficult for him to get a wife.

2.2.2 (iii) Field Work

In fields cultivation, men cleared the bush and forests. They also broke the virgin soil for farming, where women prepared the ground for sowing seeds. Planting was shared by both sexes. Men planted bananas, yams, sweet potato vines, sugarcane, tobacco and provided poles for propping up bananas. Women planted maize, various kinds of beans, millet and sweet potato vines.

2.2.2. (iv) Weeding

Weeding was primarily done collectively by women. They normally formed work team groups of four or more women who worked on a rotational reciprocal labour basis. This continued until they had cleared all weeds from all their fields. The other methods of cultivating the fields was by inviting a group of friends, ranging from ten, less or more. They were then

provided with a feast of beer or gruel and edibles after the day's work. This was not looked upon as a reward for the work, but as a sign of hospitality to one's guests. Such free assistance has become rare in the contemporary society. Instead, hired labour is widely used by those who can afford it.

2.2.2. (v) Harvesting

Harvesting was also an involving activity for women because they were the managers of the food supply in their respective families. They were therefore considered as the proper people to handle grain and store it according to the immediate and future needs of the family. Women did the actual harvesting and carried the harvest home. Men cut maize or millet stocks, burnt them and spread the ashes in the field. This was done as part of manuring and to kill pests. It was also the men's duty to make new granaries and repair the old ones.

When harvesting was complete, a woman's first thought was to store sufficient grain to last her family until the next harvest. She took great care not to exhaust the food supply of any one item such as beans, maize, bananas, and potatoes among others. An incidence of any shortage would be a reflection of her failure in food provision. According to Kenyatta:

A wife who manages efficiently the economic affairs as well as other duties in her family is highly respected, not only by her group but by the entire community (Kenyatta, 1975:38).

This shows that a woman's efficient fulfilment of her role was very significant in the society at large. This was what most of them strove to achieve through their involvement in women groups.

2.2.2. (vi) Age Grade Duties

To ensure universal ethnic membership and unity, every member underwent initiation as a sign of adulthood. After this rite, men were expected to take an active part in the Government. The young men between the age of 18 and 40 formed a warrior class, which was responsible for the defence of the society from the neighbouring Maasai and Kamba who could raid their livestock. The warrior class was divided into several regimental groups according to the age grading system. In times of war these regiments were united under the leadership of the council of war (**njama ya ita**).

Upon retiring from warriorhood, for a man to become an elder, he must have been married. The elders formed a council (**kiama**) which consisted of those members of the community who had attained the age. To qualify for initiation into a first grade of eldership (**kiama kia kamatimu**), one paid a male goat or sheep. Members of this grade were considered as learners of the council. They lit fire, fetched fuel wood, roasted meat for the senior elders and carried ceremonial articles to and from the council assemblies. To qualify for the second grade - council of peace (**Kiama kia mataathi**), one's son or daughter must have been old enough to have gone through initiation. Thereafter the elder was ceremoniously given a staff of office (**muthiigi**) and sacred leaves (**mataathi**) and was initiated into the core of the 'tribal' traditions and customs. From then onwards he was conferred the responsibility of a peace-maker in the community.

From the above division of labour, it is evident that traditionally there was a balance of roles that one had to perform on the basis of gender and age. This ensured that none of the party in the society was overburdened either physically or emotionally. But this situation no longer applies in the modern market economy. The modern woman, apart from playing her

traditional roles, has also to perform those duties previously performed by men and children as men join the wage labour market while children turn to schooling. This necessitated call for women's need to form groups from which they could derive material, monetary, labour and emotional security.

2.2.3 **CATTLE, GOATS AND SHEEP**

2.2.3. (i) **Cattle**

To the Agikuyu, cattle were a display of wealth, and a man's richness was measured in terms of the number of cattle that he had. To own a cow or two was the first sign of being a wealthy man. This was because every homestead had a certain number of sheep and goats. Cattle played a significant role in the economic life of the Agikuyu. Cow milk was primarily used for feeding babies. Very few families used milk as part of their diet, except those who owned many cows. Traditionally, milk was not sold but used by herdsman and visitors, particularly warriors who were the protectors of the village against raiders. Nowadays milk is sold to derive income for the family and is part of the daily diet. Hides were used for bedding, making sandals and straps for tying and carrying firewood and other loads. Cattle played a less significant role as a source of meat or butter supply. Cows were never slaughtered for food except at a time of famine, because of their economic value. As economic assets, cattle were only given as substitute for sheep or goats, each cow being valued at ten goats, and a bull or an ox at five goats (Kenyatta, 1975).

2.2.3. (ii) **Goats and Sheep**

Before the introduction of the monetary system, traditionally sheep and goats were regarded as the standard currency of the Agikuyu people. The price of almost everything was

determined in terms of sheep and goats. These livestock played an important role in the economic, religious and social life of the society. They were looked upon as a good investment, which gave an yearly income. A man with two or three goats or sheep could expect them to increase to six or more. A number that was considered as good profit. Unlike cattle, goats and sheep were used for various sacrifices and purification. They were the chief means of supplying the people with meat, while the skins were used as articles for clothing. They were also used as the measure for marriage insurance. Traditionally complete dowry payment was valued at forty goats. In Agikuyu's economic life, bee keeping, hunting, smithing and wood curving were men's occupation.

2.2.4 **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Among the Agikuyu, women did not own livestock, particularly if they were married. A married woman could theoretically own a cow, goat or sheep as a present from her father or any other male relative. But these livestock practically belonged to the husband, who had the power to dispose it upon informing her of his intentions. On the contrary, the wife did not have such powers to dispose of the same livestock. 'Tribal' legends and stories among Agikuyu were used to justify women's loss of the right to own property in form of livestock.

According to the Gikuyu legend, God gave one section of the animals (cattle, goats and sheep) to men and another other section (buffaloes and antelopes to women). During this period, the Agikuyu did not possess any iron tools. Instead, they used wooded knives and spears for slaughtering. Women took to slaughtering their animals for food and other purposes using these wooden tools. Consequently, they inflicted a lot of pain on these animals through the slow process of killing and skinning with blunt wooden knives. The animals could not stand it any longer. One night, when the women were a sleep, the animals gathered and

decided to run away, scattering in the forests and plains. From then, onwards the animals which women possessed became wild animals. On the other hand, men's animals, which at that time were not used for killing, remained domesticated. Women tried hard to get their animals back from the forests and jungles, but they did not succeed. They pleaded with God to help them but he would not listen to them.

The above explanation of women's denial of rights to own livestock under customary law portrayed women as irrational people who could not make any sound decisions. Yet this was not the truth. What may in reality apply was that property within the context of a traditional patriarchal society was land and livestock. In addition, both were owned by men but not women. The size of land and the number of livestock were used as the measure of a man's importance. Therefore, it was unheard of that a married woman could own property, for she would directly be challenging the husband's male ego. The laws of this society saw to it that a married woman did not hold property on her own. This ensured that she occupied a subordinate socio-economic position, both in the family and in the society at large. To emerge from this traditional socio-economic subordination that was perpetuated by the modern capitalistic world economy women resorted to joining forces as groups to acquire the traditionally forbidden properties. Such jointly owned property was said to be beyond the control of their husbands.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section existing literature on women groups will be reviewed under the following subheadings: -

- (i) The aims, objectives and types of women groups activities.
- (ii) The influence of socio-cultural and ecological factors on women groups activities.
- (iii) The impact of women groups activities on the members' social and economic status.

3.1.1 THE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND TYPES OF WOMEN GROUP ACTIVITIES

(i) Aims and Objectives

By 1989, Kenya had registered 25,000 women groups, although there are many more throughout the country that are not yet registered (World Bank, WPS 1989). According to Pala et al (1975) there are various factors that may lead to groups formation. These include the internal dynamics of an already existing group which may formally organise itself to improve members' position, by collectively bargaining for access to extension services which may be obtained through Government programmes. Such services would otherwise have been impossible to have access to, by members individually. In other cases members of a Women

Cooperative Society or Church group may decide to form a group to mobilise women for local development efforts.

Groups formation may also be as a result of stimulation by external mechanisms. For example, an individual woman who may have had earlier training and acquired skills in home craft through Special Rural Development Programmes (SRDP) may initiate group formation for others to benefit. Alternatively, wives of prominent local businessmen or politicians may initiate group formation with the aim of either achieving personal popularity or political support for their husbands. Wives of clergymen too may mobilise local churchwomen for development efforts. Financial or material support may be solicited from local or foreign Christian organisations to benefit women church members.

Finally, a locational community development assistant, home-economics assistant, nutritionist or a field worker from a voluntary agency may initiate group formation. This may be in line with the officers' endeavour to accomplish their objectives in the improvement of members' families welfare. While all the above outlined factors are true, the Pala et al (1975) study fails to show the interplay between the external mechanisms and the members' immediate objectives in groups participation, which highly depends on the shared perception of certain problem or problems that face the would be group members.

Other criteria for membership and participation in a particular group include ethnicity, religious affiliation, neighbourhood and occupational status. Women of high socio-economic status may participate in groups activities with the realisation that they are a marginalized gender in the society. They may therefore participate in activities like savings and credit rotational facilities, mutual group aid, establishment of health centres, nursery schools and

running posho mills among others. Involvement in these activities may not only be aimed at generating income for the members but also ease women's caretaking roles. The overall objectives of these groups is to improve members' and their families' social and economic welfare.

(i) **Group Activities**

According to Pala (1974) women groups fall into two broad categories, these are determined by the groups members' objectives which spell out the type of activities to be engaged in. They include the Social Welfare and the income generating activities. At times, it may not be possible to draw a distinctive line between the two categories because they overlap. This could possibly be explained by the ultimate overlap in the objectives of the groups' members, to both ease their roles and improve their socio-economic status.

(a) **Social Welfare Activities**

There are various types of activities that fall under this category. These include reciprocal labour, rotational savings and credit facilities (which are aimed at home improvement through provision of the needed household inputs), education and skills development, nutrition, family health, family planning and child care, among others. According to the World Bank (1989), women are bound to form reciprocal labour groups to cope with the increased workload. These efforts enable members to undertake farming tasks in a timely manner, and adopt agricultural innovations and soil conservation activities. The study further points out that members may also have access to training on better production and storage techniques from the agricultural extension workers. Such an appraisal indicates the significant role that women groups may play in communicating modern farming techniques to women farmers. These views form the basis of the current study's assessment of the extent to which members of

reciprocal labour groups' are aware of the added advantages, or these groups are only known to serve as a means of coping with the increased work load.

According to World Bank (June 1989) women's role in food, production in the family has been adversely affected by mechanisation of cash crop farming. This is because most of the fertile land is devoted to cash crops. In areas where commercial farming is not practised, population pressure limits the hectareage which farming is possible. Consequently, women have to move to marginal land, where production is less possible, more vigorous and may require the use of costly fertilisers. To cope with these problems women have resorted to the formation of groups and through combined effort acquire (buy) agricultural land. The land is used either for the groups' agricultural farming projects or for individuals' own agricultural use after allocation. In some cases, agricultural land may be permanently or temporarily acquired as a donation for the project from a prominent local person, or by one of the member's husband. At other times group members may rent it from somebody (Udvardy, 1988).

The above literature forms the basis of the study's consideration of women groups involvement both in agricultural production projects and purchase of agricultural land in Ngong Division. Assessment was based on how the members' roles in food production have both been eased and improved respectively, and how their socio-economic status has been improved as a result of purchase of agricultural land.

In their eagerness to improve their perceived marginal socio-economic position, rural women engage in the rotational savings and credit activities, popularly known as merry-go-rounds. Cut off from the formal banking and cooperative institutions by the large-scale nature of the

institutions transactions, rotating savings and credit activities have been a useful tool for the generation of capital. The capital, which is contributed either weekly, fortnightly or on a monthly basis, is invested in the member's either farm, household members or purchase of household items such as clothing, utensils, furniture, water tanks and others. The cash may also be used to improve house structure by replacing grass-thatched roof with iron sheets or cementing the floor. While some groups may use the contributions to stock the homes of members with livestock or poultry, others engage in the purchase of agricultural inputs (fertilisers, seeds, implements and animal feed) or payment of a child's school fees or boost business (NORAD 1984, Monson 1985). Group pressure is usually applied to ensure regular and prompt adherence to contribution formats. To control for inflationary pressures acting to the disadvantage of the members, certain materials are used as the standard value to compensate for inflation.

A study conducted by Monson (1985) on women's rotating savings and credit associations in Taita - Taveta District indicates a strong correlation between high levels of income and the rotating savings activity in the District. Rotating savings and credit women groups are said to have been located in the same geographical area - Wumingu Location. This is a region with much cash crop production of coffee and European vegetables. The current study attempts to assess whether geographical location has any bearing on the rotating savings and credit associations in the area of study.

According to NORAD (1984) membership to women groups provides members with security, labour, material and emotional support during situations of heavy financial expenditures in household life cycles. Further assistance is offered during childbirth, sickness, marriage, funerals and others.

(b) **Self-help Income Generating Enterprises**

Africa's modernising economies and the patriarchal political systems have not only led to the economic subordination of women but also to their marginalization. This situation has left them worse-off compared to women in the traditional African societies. In response to this situation, rural women groups have embarked on various incomes generating projects, which are aimed at acting as supplements to their local subsistence economy.

According to Pala (1974), in Kenya the commercial orientation of women groups activities are more dominant in urban areas. These include Nairobi, Nakuru and Nyeri. She maintains that in the less developed commercial areas, one finds weak women groups commercial activities. Such areas lack a strong pattern of cash crop production or income generating employment. In her study of women groups in Migori/Kuria, Pala (1975) found that women groups were engaged in poultry keeping and vegetable gardening. These activities have an income generating orientation, but are as well utilised by members to improve their role of food provision by providing some of the necessary nutrients in their diet.

Pala's views are contested by Monson (1985). According to Monson, in the less developed Chawia Location of Taita - Taveta District, an area that is more marginal agriculturally, women groups are mainly involved in income generating activities. These include marketing of sisal baskets and pig raising projects. The marketing of baskets has had the most enduring impact on the member's income. Monson attributes this to the assistance provided by foreign volunteers from Britain, the U.S. Peace Corps and Norway. Later the marketing of baskets was handed over to local men under the supervision of the Ministry of Cultural and Social Services. From the above three studies, it is evident that women groups access to market is crucial for their initiation and success in income generation activities.

Feldman (1981) critically reviews the role of women groups in Kenya. The study attributes

women's economic subordination to both lack of access to income earned from sale of cash crops and gender relationships, though they perform most of the agricultural work. In patriarchal systems, men are considered as household heads and decision-makers. They, therefore, have more control over income earned from the sale of crops in comparison to women. This situation calls for the involvement of women groups in income generating activities as an alternative source of income.

The study further questions the viability of non-agricultural income generating projects such as consumer shops, posho mills, handicraft production, building constructions and bakeries. Feldman's doubts of credibility of these projects is also expressed by ILO (1986). Both studies argue that income-generating projects of this nature funded by Donor Agencies are not immediately economically viable. Rather, they appear to be more of income consuming projects affecting only a small proportion of Kenyan women who have finances for initial contributions.

In view of the above literature the current study took into consideration Pala (1974, 1975) and Monson (1985) views in assessing the different types of income generation activities on the basis of their ecological location. Similarly, Feldman (1981) and ILO (1986) arguments were guiding factors in assessing the economic viability of non-agricultural income generating activities.

Posho mill projects have often been undertaken by women groups as one of the income generating activities. A suitable location site of a posho mill enables the surrounding women population to grind maize at a more convenient distance. Flour is considered a less time

consuming ingredient and more economical in terms of fuel consumption during preparation. Therefore, while posho mill operations by women groups are primarily aimed at generating income, they play a secondary role in easing women's role in food provision. A group mill operation could as well be a good location for women to gather other information provided by extension agents (World Bank, 1989). In the study the seemingly wide spread popularity of posho mills operation in Ngong division was considered on the basis of income generating and easing of role in a household food provision.

3.2.0 **THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL, MARKET AND ECOLOGICAL FACTORS ON WOMEN'S CHOICE AND PARTICIPATION IN WOMEN GROUPS ACTIVITIES**

Different societies gender division of labour is culturally defined. This therefore explains the differences in various societies roles performance based on gender. Women groups welfare activities are role oriented. In an agricultural society, reciprocal labour work groups are formed to enable women members complete their farm work on time. The group may also engage in the sale of their labour to the surrounding farmers in order to generate income.

Browne (1975), in his evaluation of women group activities in Tetu, maintains that a shift from one mode of production to another may necessitate groups' involvement in a different type of activity. He asserts that, the formation of Mabati Women groups in Nyeri was necessitated by land consolidation and the spread of cash cropping, as opposed to the former subsistence agriculture. The ecology being one of fertile volcanic soils and adequate rainfall, it was traditionally easy for women to obtain thatch grass for their roofs. Nevertheless, following the introduction of the cash economy, thatch grass became increasingly scarce.

Traditionally it was women's role to provide thatch. To fulfil this role women groups in Tetu

have had to engage in buying iron sheets for their members. Initially members contributed Kshs.2 - 5 per month. Each member benefited in turn by receiving a 1,000-litre water storage tank. The mabati roofs serve both as status symbol and a labour saving device in water provision. It is evident that group involvement in purchasing of iron roofing to conform with the role of thatch provision has improved their status while purchase of water storage tanks eases their role in water provision.

The above literature serve as a basis for the evaluation of the study of Maasai women groups involvement in buying of mabati in the semi-arid zone, and at the same time conforming to the traditional division of labour where women are charged with the role of constructing houses.

3.4.0 **WOMEN GROUPS' IMPROVEMENT OF MEMBERS' SOCIO ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STATUS**

Studies on women in development (NORAD 1984, ILO 1986; World Bank 1989, Were 1990) indicate that women in general do experience several constraints that affect their status in different spheres of life. Among them are the heavy workload, low level of education, lack of capital, ignorance of available opportunities and their rights, lack of managerial skills, lack of collateral for loans which can be used for self improvement, devaluation of women's labour in the market oriented economy, lack of appropriate technology (for water and fuel wood) and lack of markets for women groups products.

While women groups have attempted to address some of the above constraints, some of them still prevail affecting their status and participation in the development process. Studies by Udvardy (1988), NORAD (1984) and Browne (1975) on women groups have indicated that there has been general improvement in the members' socio-economic and psychological status. Through access to

agricultural and animal husbandry extension services, material, professional and financial assistance, group members are able to improve their economic status. However, much of what is learnt from extension workers is either not retained or effectively utilised due to poor performance of groups agricultural projects (NORAD, 1984). The probable explanations include high rate of illiteracy among group members, low rate of information retention, too many topics being taught for a very short time during leaders' courses and failure to put into immediate practice what has been learnt due to lack of facilities and equipment (Pala 1975). Despite these shortcomings, women groups are still one of the channels for communicating newly acquired agricultural and livestock innovations.

In acting as a group, women do benefit from credit facilities, financial assistance from district funds, politicians, Donor Agencies and others. This assistance goes along the way to improve the member's economic status by having a source of income.

Through participation in women groups' activities members gain psychologically. They benefit from fellow members' companionship, encouragement and sense of security. One may also benefit from material, financial, emotional or labour support during times of hardship. This emotional security is important in facilitating a healthy environment.

Udvardy (1988) asserts that traditionally the Miji Kenda women do not have legal title to land. Title deeds are usually in the name of one or more patrilineal or patrilineage males. Women's access to land is therefore through their male relatives, who dominate agriculture. As a result of this cultural practice, some women groups' efforts are directed towards land ownership. Women groups' ownership of land is therefore a gender conflict between cultural traditional norms, which enhances

women's subordinate economic status in the society and the economic needs of the times. The current study considers women groups purchase of agricultural land in Ngong division and plots allocation from both a cultural and economic point of view.

3.5.0 **DEFINITIONS**

The following terms have been defined so as to avoid misinterpretation of their applicability in the study.

Role

Refers to the set of actions associated with an individual in a particular structural position. In this study women's roles include their productive and reproductive responsibilities. These include farming, provision of family food, provision of basic domestic items - baskets, pots, beads and others, food preparation, water and fuel provision, domestic cleanliness and child bearing/caring.

Status

Women's status has been used in the study to refer to the value judgement that ranks the position of women relative to that of men and fellow women. Thus differentiating their positions in terms of prestige, power, authority and esteem that they hold in political participation, economic activities, decision-making, job placement, social positions and education.

Ethnography

In the study, this term has been used to refer social and cultural facts based on the social institutions, customs and the day-to-day behaviour of both the Maasai and the Agikuyu. The two societies are the focus of the study.

Ethnology

This refers to facts relating to the history of movement (migration) and the mixing of the Maasai and the Agikuyu. The mixing was not restricted to the two societies only, but also with the others

such as the Kamba, Chagga, Dorobo, Somali, Boran and Diggo among others during their trade activities.

Patriarchy

It's simple meaning is the rule of the fathers. In gender issues it refers to male dominance, not only that of fathers, but that of husbands and male bosses. As a concept, patriarchy constitutes the totality of oppressive and exploitative relations by men, which affects women.

Class

'Class' as a concept is used to refer to social stratification in society to describe groups whose members are united on the basis of similar economic and social status as well as common interests.

Women Groups

Refers to the voluntary corporate groups in the area under study. Their formation is determined by either the need to achieve a social or welfare goal, begin a business enterprise or acquire resources that an individual woman cannot achieve single handily. Membership to a particular group is determined by common values, norms or goals.

Development

The term has been used both at the national and women groups' level. At the national level, it refers to both qualitative and quantitative improvement of citizens lives (Were, 1985) based on the utilisation of national resources and services. At the groups level development to the women groups activities as group's conscious efforts aimed at the individual's and community enrichment of both the material and emotional life.

Dependants

Are an individual woman member's dependent children, grand children of unmarried or divorced daughters and aged parent(s) under her care.

Reciprocal Labour Work Groups

These are women groups whose activities involve provisions of farm labour or fuel wood collection for members on alternative days or weeks.

3.5.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the study, two theoretical frameworks have been used as the frame of reference. These are "Capitalist patriarchy" and the situational approach theory:

3.5.1 "CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY" THEORY

The capitalist patriarchy" theory is the extreme analysis of women position, with the conceptual frame of reference being based on Marx's materialistic theory. (Shettima, 1998). According to Bennett (1995) who is a proponent of this theory, the core relations defining women's lives are capital and patriarchy since the two are intertwined. She argues that women are exploited first on the basis of their class position and secondly on the basis of gender. The gender pattern of work and access to resources portray obligations and reciprocities between men and women, which determine their roles and status in society. Bennett contends that gender and class intersect in the exploitation process because women's role as managers of social reproduction is more difficult under conditions of poverty. Here the use of the role concept reinforces the existing patriarchal ideology of gender division of labour. Shettima (1998), further argues that, although the intersection of gender and class in explanation of exploitative gendered work pattern is valid, other factors such as ethnicity, age, education, class, political affiliation, creed and regional location act in complex network to define the lives of, men and women. Shettima views women as being exploited in terms of longer working hours than men, but ironically they have less or no access to resources. She asserts that the above factors can not be explained in isolation from the "all powerful, all encompassing variable of class or by dismissing patriarchy as an expression of capitalism" None of those factors can

analytically be considered in isolation. Rather, both their specificity and interactive outcomes should be considered. A consideration of "capitalists patriarchy" theory from a gender perspective is used in the study to offer conceptual insights on the situation of men and women in Ngong division of Kajiado district.

Shettima (1998) broadly defines patriarchy as a gender ideology which is socially constructed by men to exploit women and dominate young men in transition to adulthood. Among the Maasai and Gikuyu, who are the subject of this study both were patriarchal societies whose division of labour was based on, gender, age-set system and the locality during the pre-colonial period. According to Kipuri (1989) both patriarchy and age set-system were inherently used to subjugate women since the two defined the relations of production and distribution in all levels of interaction. Women are reproducers in both biological sense (as child bearers) and in socio-cultural sense (in terms of labour power). Consequently women contribute to their own subordination by perpetuating these systems.

Kipuri, 1989 attributes women's exploitation and dominance by men in Ngong - Kajiado district as derived from the following fact:

- men own livestock while women don't ,
- men control women's sexuality, fertility and labour while women control no one,
- Men dominate in the public sphere while women are restricted to domestic spheres.

As a result men and women are classified as "owners and owned; super ordinate and subordinate; independent and dependent" respectively (Kipuri: P. 61)

Among the Maasai and Gikuyu, inequality between men and women begin at initiation. For the boys this rite marks the acquisition of full rights to their own person and emerges them into patriarchal

units with entitlement to ownership and disposal over livestock and to property rights in women and their children. Unlike the change of status for boys, for the girl initiation completed her formal transformation into a woman. But this did not make her independent of her father's or husband's patriarchal unit. Following a girl's maturity, she acquires fertility and becomes transactable between male groups.

Women are excluded from membership of age-sets as they are considered to be lacking the desirable qualities of masculinity. Consequently, they are excluded from participation in the highest levels of culture. This inherently translates to women's low social status in the society.

The fact that men control means of production- land, livestock, and labour among both the Gikuyu and the Maasai, generates sexual/gender inequality in social relations of production and reproduction. Women's products of labour (agricultural produce, livestock and livestock products), as well as their procreative resources (children) are all controlled by men. This is so because they are the families household heads, and therefore the decision makers: they also occupy the elders status in the age-grade system and exploitation through lose of control of the products of their labour and their reproduction can be explained by the patriarchal organization.

Among both the Maasai and the Gikuyu unmarried male youths (warriors) were also subordinates in the age set organization. However, their subordination was temporary unlike that of women. While junior males become glorified as 'warriors' women neither become 'warriors' nor 'patriarchs'! They were just spectators in a male system that mediated the exploitation of their labour (Kipuri, 1989). Kipuri maintains that in due course junior warriors gained access to the mean of production and reproduction livestock and women) and enabled them to gradually acquire the status of

husbands, fathers and patriarchs.

Women on the other hand did not progress through age-grade system in a formalized manner as men. They identified themselves as mothers, wives and daughters. Women belonged to the age-grade through marriage and related to their sets as to other accordingly.

According to Jacob's (1971) and Kenyatta (1975) women's 'power ' were mainly centered in their houses where they were managers. According to Jacobs, the Maasai house was not merely a physical structures, but a centre of crucial productive and reproductive activities. Emphasizing on this point Kenyatta maintains that, among the Gikuyu a woman derived high respect in the community if she could manage the household food stock properly and ensure that household members were fed even during periods of drought. This assertion portrays the high significance that was given to women's ability to play their roles as mothers and wives as well as households food providers in the pre-colonial (pre-capitalist) societies.

The pre-capitalist traditional economies among the Maasai and the Gikuyu of Ngong, Witnessed a dramatic change as a result of colonial expansion in the country in the 19th century. The introduction of the capitalist economy undermined the positive aspect of patriarchal organization, which ensured complementarity and reciprocity in the division of labour on the basis of gender and age. The result was deterioration of women's status and increased workload as both the colonial administration and the post independence government endeavored to perpetuate the principles of capitalism. Following commoditization and individualization of land both Maasai and Gikuyu women lost their land use rights, While commoditisation of livestock and introduction of commercial agriculture left women in a worse economic situation. At the same time

commoditilisation of labour did not only increase women's workload but relegated them, all the more to the private domain, leading to devaluation of their labour.

Feminists with materialistic orientation have used Marx's capitalistic line of argument to explain women's exploitation and subordination in the contemporary societies. According to the Marxist doctrine, a society under capitalism is synonymous with class society, and class antagonisms provide the seed for the inevitable downfall of the particular society. This view is contested by feminists who argue that exploitation and subordination of women is not synonymous to capitalism. This is so because oppressive forms of patriarchy flourished in the pre-capitalist societies (Shettima, 1998). This view concurs with kerning (1972), who maintains that "Marx did not create the socio-economic class concept. It was already to be found among physiocrats of the 18th century though their class breakdown was oriented towards the agricultural production methods.

Marx maintained that, for a revolutionary change to be achieved in a capitalist society there had to be the existence of a class society; class antagonism; class-consciousness and finally a class struggle through which change would be achieved. Marx distinguished three classes: First the capital and landowners, Secondly the labour owners and thirdly the workers who are the majority. From a gender perspective, the Marxist socio-economic definition of classes may not well fit to the contemporary situation of men and women. However, from a patriarchal classification point of view, men can be considered to occupy the first and the second Class as capital and landowners as well as labour owners. On the other hand women and the young warriors can be generally classified as the third class of the workers.

Marx's definition of classes had to be defended against a number of misunderstandings. Marx argued that mere differences in income do not create Classes. Nor is the simple difference between

rich and poor sufficient to explain two class conflicts in the dialectics of class antagonisms the "quantity, of poverty" rarely turns into a new 'quality' of revolutionary attitude. If it did, Marx argues the poorest proletariat would have to be regarded as the most revolutionary.

From a gender and class perspective, Marx's argument that the difference between the rich and poor is not sufficient to cause class antagonism, can be interpreted to explain that men and women can co-exist harmoniously despite the fact that one of the groups is oppressed and exploited. What then would turn on two classes against each other, if they have earlier co-existed?

Marx explains class antagonism on class-consciousness. He maintained that the oppressed class strives to change social reality and to dissolve itself as a separate class. This long-range goal can only be achieved if the oppressed class emerges in history as a functional entity. This in turn is not possible unless the oppressed and exploited individuals are conscious of their class position. According to Marx, class conscious tends to be identified with individual being. Unless class Consciousness exists, there can only be individuals having the same status, but not a real class. Marx believed that class-consciousness became part of the socio-economic complex when a class recognizes its own interests and units to wage struggle.

In the current study, the emergence of women group from the 1970 in the area of study is considered as a sign of class antagonism between men and women in a capitalist society. This historical social phenomenon can be attributed to emergence of feminism whose approach was based on "women in development" approach in the 1970s. However, in the 1980s the approach shifted to "gender and development". This approach was characterized with widespread radical feminism, which swept the country in 1985. Feminist advocates played the roles of what Marx

termed as "critical thinkers", who would influence the proletariat to revolutionary change. Having been aroused to class-consciousness what social realities women in Ngong going to change through women group activities? Those social realities included their limited or lack of access to resources, heavy workload, and emotional insecurity and development stagnation among others.

At the individual consciousness, level women in Ngong became aware of their low economic status as a result of limited or lack of access to agricultural land and livestock. This limitation further impacted negatively on their role as household food providers. Further awareness was in heavy workload, particularly in fuel wood provision, water and completion of farm work in time. Emotional insecurity also set in as the number of de facto and de jure heads of households increased, as men moved to farms and urban centres for wage labour. Women also realised that they were marginalized when it came to implementation of development projects in the area. Only men who were considered as household heads and decision-makers were targeted. To address these problems, a class consciousness emerged among women who formed women groups whose objective(s) was to participate in one or more activities pertaining to specific problems that were affecting them.

However, not all women in the area of study participated in women groups activities. Heavy workload that left would be group members without extra time to participate in-group activities was cited as one of the setbacks. Financial Constraints was also said to be a second factor, since some women could not afford to contribute towards group activities.

Women groups formation in Ngong division and their participation in various group's activities can be paralleled to what Marx distinguished as the two stages of class emergence. In this study 'women

groups formation' can be paralleled to Marx's first stage of "class in itself", while 'participation in different women groups' activities' parallels the second stage of "class for itself". The evident fact here is that the social feminists line of argument is valid that to understand the interface between patriarchy and class it has to be considered at two levels.

First is an examination of gender between gender. At this level the social feminists argue that in relation to men, most women do more work and work for longer hours, but have limited access to resources. Secondly is an examination of gender within gender. The argument here is that an examination of women within women indicates that some women work less and for lesser hours compared to others yet they have access to resources. The truth is that women cannot be generally treated as a homogeneous group. Instead a perception of their own situation at the individual level and their choice to participate in groups activities as women irrespective of their difference in socio-economic status unifies them as a 'class in itself' and 'for itself'.

While Marx views the class struggle's ultimate goal as the overthrow of the existing system, this is not the case with women groups activities. Contemporary women groups in Ngong are not to see the downfall of either patriarchy or capitalism. Their are endeavours of adjustments to co-exist more comfortably both socially and economically in patriarchal - capitalist society. As Shettima (1998) maintains women's access to resources and income can at least help them counter balance male patriarchy. The situation approach theory below, gives further insights on how women in Ngong are addressing their situation through women groups activities

3.5.2 SITUATIONAL APPROACH THEORY

This theory was propounded by Thomas and Znanieck (1974). It advocates for situation analysis during situations of emergency, anti - social behaviour, political, economic and social problems where introduction of new desirable attitudes and values are necessary in dealing with group or individual crisis. The basic assumptions of this theory are:

- There has to be a crisis,
- It has to be defined and
- There has to be re-definition of the crisis.

In Ngong division which was the area of study, the crises facing women include heavy workload, lack or limited access to resources (land and livestock) resulting to food insecurity, emotional insecurity and development stagnation.

CRISIS DEFINATION AND RE-DEFINATION

Heavy Workload

With the shift from the traditional economy based on barter system of exchange, to the world monetary capitalist economy in 1919 the colonial administration labour circular marked the emergence of male labour as a commodity, with a market value. As time went by, the market principle spread affecting the traditional labour relation based on the age-set system, gender and residence in Kajiado district. After independence, the government intensified capitalist relations of production. A wider market for male wage labour grew. Men were employed as herders in ranches and in settlers' farms. In livestock trade they were employed in slaughter houses, transportation of livestock from one livestock centre to another and in urban centres as security guards, drivers office messengers, while the well educated have taken better paying jobs. Male migration to farms and urban centres for wage labour meant an increase in women's workload, as **de facto** heads of

households. This further meant a devaluation of female labour since it was not given any market value as opposed to that of men. This translated a decline in their socio-economic status.

Further increase in women's workload emerged with the enrolment of children in schools, as a way of preparing them for the market-oriented economy. The situation was even worse for women who could not hire labour for assistance in domestic, herding or farm work. Their inability to cope with the heavy workload became a major factor for women groups members failure to participate effectively in-groups activities.

In re-definition of their heavy workload crisis, Ngong women had three approaches: they participated in reciprocal labour assistance work groups activity, free group work assistance to members and participation in merry-go-round contributions aimed at easing members role performance. Reciprocal labour assistance group activities were widespread in the whole of Ngong Division. However, the ecology of the location where women found themselves greatly influenced their type of activity. In both North and South Keekonyokie Locations, which are semi-arid and covered with scrubs and bushes. Both Maasai and Gikuyu women were involved in labour assistance work groups in fuel wood collection. The scrubs and bushes were therefore the main source of fuel wood. Activities in fuel wood provision were also combined with prayers meetings, once every week. Such meetings were said to be helpful to members who were experiencing emotional insecurity and were in need of spiritual nourishment.

In Ngong and Ongata Rongai location, the fuel wood crisis was re-defined through initiation of group businesses in sale of charcoal and saw dust to members and the general public. These activities played a double role in providing them with a source of income from sales of charcoal and sawdust as well as easing their access to fuel energy.

In Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations, which are well watered and covered with fertile soil, farming activities are widespread. The locations were predominately inhabited by the agricultural Gikuyu women. Most of them experienced heavy workload during the planting, weeding and harvesting seasons. Reciprocal labour assistance work groups in these locations were therefore directed towards farm work. During the intensive season, work group activities were also intensified. Members did farm work half day (8.00 am - 1.00 pm), while the afternoons were spared for the domestic chores. Through these activities women group members were able to accomplish their farm work roles in time.

Further re-definition of women's heavy workload was evident in households water provision. Women group members, in the four locations participated in merry-go-round activities that either had the objective to purchase water tanks or improve the member's house structure through purchase of iron sheets on rotational basis. To ensure members' compliance with the group activity objectives, the recipient members were not given cash. Instead the item was purchased by other members and handed over to her. The water supply crisis was felt most in both North and South Keekonyokie where women spent 14 hours a day, during the dry season to collect 20 litres of water. In Ngong location, some women groups reported to be actively involved in community water projects. They maintained that their participation as group members would not only increase their visibility in the public, but also the success of the water projects would greatly reduce their workload in water provision.

Free group work assistance was also provided to members during times of crisis such as illness or death, or during social occasions such as weddings, childbirth among others. Assistance was in form

of farm work, fire wood provision or any other domestic labour. Beneficiaries did not only gain from the labour provided, but also from the emotional support.

LACK OR LIMITED ACCESS TO RESOURCES (LAND AND LIVESTOCK)

In the traditional African societies, among both the Maasai and the Agikuyu, land ownership was communal by members of a locality or clan respectively. Women had therefore land use rights to the portions that they cultivated or grazed their small livestock. However, with the establishment of the colonial rule in the late 19th century, this scenario changed. Maasai land and Kajiado district in particular was incorporated to the world economic system. This marked the beginning of primitive accumulation stage of capitalism through land alienation for white settlers and colonial administrators, forest reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, public works and expansion for agricultural activities. Consequently the Maasai lost their best grazing land, and were pushed to the marginal less hospitable tsetse fly infested land. This forced the Maasai to overgraze the arid land, thereby undermining the viability of pastoralism and the ability of the Maasai to feed themselves (Kipuri, 1989).

In the 1950s, individualized land tenure system was introduced as a means of intensifying production from African reserves for the sustenance of the market economy. This marked an end of, the communally owned land, and marked the beginning of privately owned land. The result was therefore the creation of a land owning class of pastoralists and agriculturists and the transformation of a majority of the pastoralists/agriculturists to non-land owning poor peasantry.

In 1960, the Kaptiei Development Committee in Kajiado district was constituted, with Kaptiei **OLOSHO** being subdivided into individual ranches. This marked the start of the official ranch development policy. Between 1964-1965, 6 group ranches were constituted in Kajiado district, with

backing from World Bank for improved water supply and dipping facilities (Kituyi, 1990). The objectives of the group ranches were; to improve the income generating capacity of the pastoralists; increase productivity of pastoral land; pre-empt the emergency of landlessness among pastoralists and prevent environmental degradation (Munei, 1991). According to Kituyi (1990), by 1981, 1.6 million hectares had been registered in Kajiado district as private land. Through the market principle, the subdivision land parcels became a commodity with a value, which could be bought and protected from other land users.

Kituyi (1990) Maintains that in 1920 and 1950s there was a high influx of Gikuyu peasantry into the well-watered, fertile lands of Maasai, particularly Ngong hills. The widespread privatization of land in Ngong into ranching schemes in 1980s was also marked with high infiltration of the Gikuyu community. According to Munei (1991), by 1990, 50% of the population that owned the subdivided ranches in Ngong were Gikuyu.

What then, were the implications of this land phenomenon among the women in Ngong?

First, the commoditization of land as a productive resource and its privatization in the new market economy, meant women's limited access to it, since it was owned by the male household head, under whose name the title deed appeared. Male landowners could alienate it at will, a fact that affected women's land use rights.

Secondly, the emergence of the landless poor peasantry males implied that women related to this category of men as wives or daughters had no access to land at all. Among the Gikuyu households living in Ngong, women maintained that, those who were in this category of landless peasantry, had access to land for both shelter and cultivation on temporal basis. Their status of such land use either

on annual hire at a fee, or for free as a MUHOI (AHOI,Plural) 'beggar' and continued stay and land use depended on the good will of the land owner.

Re-definition of women's access to land crisis was addressed at two levels. First, by women themselves through formation of women groups whose activities would include land acquisition by members. Secondly, the government addressed this crisis by allocating land to registered women groups who had forwarded their requests. Allocation was subject to land availability.

In re-defining the land crisis in the first level, in 1980s (1984-1989) Kajiado district witnessed widespread registration of women groups. During the same period, the district also witnessed extensive sub-division of group ranches and their purchase by women group members of Gikuyu origin. This phenomenon can be attributed to increased radical feminist ideologies that propagated for women's betterment of their status. The fact that the 1985 women's international conference was held in Nairobi had a very strong positive impact among women in Ngong division. They appear to have adapted the conference's call for gender and development approach in national development. As evident from the number of women groups (206) registered in the district between 1970-1984, the number had more than doubled between 1985-1989 to 437, therefore a registration of 231 groups within a period of 5 year, compared to 206 groups for a period of 15 years. What was more positive was the change of approach in women groups activities. While in the 1970s the activities were more 'role' oriented, in the 1980s the activities embraced the economic status orientation as well. Therefore, given a crisis situation among women of landlessness or near landlessness; the availability of ranches for sale and the then prevailing 'right climate' created by radical feminists meeting at Nairobi for the women international, conference; The 'current' from the conference proceedings swept Ngong division women to massive registration and pooling of finances together for purchase of groups land. Group land was used for agricultural farming by members, pending

future sub-division into individual parcels for members.

In re-defining women's, land crisis, the government too embraced the feminist gender and development approach to development. Registered women group became targets of development.

In Ngong division, the government allocated 202 hectares of land to five **EWAUSO KEEDOONG** women groups, in North Keekonyokie location. The farm was targeted for promotion of both domestic and commercial agriculture to meet food needs of urban areas as well. With financial assistance from Food for the Hungry International and with technical assistance from the government, this project turned out to be at variance with the priorities of the pastoral Maasai women. While it was well received by the minority Gikuyu women group members to whom it was culturally appropriate, the low participation by Maasai women in group farming activities led to the project failure. However, the allocation of the farm to members was a big move forward in resource acquisition.

Government's further intention in women's land crisis was evident in its allocation of commercial plots in trading centres and towns to women group members. On the allocated plots, members had either constructed semi-permanent or permanent buildings. Some groups were running group business in these buildings, while others had rented them. Divided of rental fee were shared annually and spent on family expenses like payment of school fee, purchase of family assets or any other worthy pressing need.

Women's acquisition of land has become an important strategy in uplifting their socio-economic status. Members expressed psychological satisfaction derived from owning a piece of land (for those who had access to none) and a feeling of security for these who already had access through male relatives. They said that they felt secure that if their husbands/fathers happened to sell the family piece of land, they had something to fall back to.

The decline in pastoral subsistence economy and its replacement with the capitalist market economy resulted in commoditization of livestock and livestock products. This led to the inability of most pastoral families to feed themselves, translating to increased dependence on purchased foodstuffs for subsistence. This scenario was both disadvantageous and advantageous to women as household food providers. Commoditization of livestock meant that men as household heads, livestock owners and the family decision makers, were the only persons who would determine when the small livestock would be sold for the purchase of foodstuffs. Upon sale of the livestock, it was their decision whether the proceeds would be partially or totally spent in purchase of foodstuffs. The implication of this change was that, men had indirectly taken control of women in the fulfillment of their role as households food providers. On finding themselves in this stressful situation, women re-defined the crisis by using two methods: First by indirectly claiming access to livestock through women groups activities and secondly by starting operations of small shops stocked with foodstuffs as group income generating ventures.

Re-definition in access to livestock was more evident in North and south Keekonyoikie. Women group members purchased small calves and raised them together in one of the members homestead. Groups livestock rearing was viable since this was culturally and ecologically appropriate mode of production and members male relatives/husbands had no power to alienate group livestock. Once the livestock were fully-grown and could fetch good market prices, they were sold to livestock traders. Part of the sale proceeds was saved for purchase of other stocks while the rest of the cash was shared amongst members to meet households food expenses among others.

Further re-definition was also evident in the rise of market value for milk. Being a livestock product that falls in women sphere, it opened a new economic option for women who could derive a source of income at an individual level. Accrued income was spent in contributions in women groups

merry-go-rounds activities and purchase of household food and other items.

In re-definition of their access to purchased foodstuffs, women took the challenge by initiating operations of small shops/kiosks stocked with foodstuffs as individuals or as a group activity. Group operation of this type of activity had double advantage. Group members formed the bulk of customers, with shop operations being during market days. The business became a source of income for group members. Thereby uplifting their economic status. Secondly, the presence of the shops/kiosks within reach was an easy way of access to the needed foodstuffs. Therefore easing women's role as households food providers.

EMOTIONAL INSECURITY

A section of women group members maintained they had joined groups as a result of experiencing emotional insecurity. Such insecurity was said to be caused by lack of basic needs due to poverty. Among these needs were shelter, food, clothing, lack of school fee among others. Others said that they needed emotional security through the knowledge that they belonged to a group that would come to their assistance in the times of illness, death, childbirth or during any social occasion.

In re-definition of emotional insecurity relating to shelter and food, women participated in women group activities that were involved in purchase of agricultural land. Acquired land would immediately provide a source of food, while in future it would provide a home. Those experiencing emotional problems due to lack of children's school fee opted to participate in merry-go-rounds and income generating activities. In so doing, they would pool the meager resources that they had and were able to pay their children's school fee. For those involved in income generating activities shared, dividends were spent in fee payments.

Re-definition by those who needed emotional security during times of illness, death, childbirth and social occasions, was through participation in work assistance groups or any t other group activities whose members had the welfare of participants as a secondary objective. Needy members received assistance in forms of free labour, finances, foodstuffs, water, fuel wood and companionship. This assistance provided a sense of acceptance, belonging, companionship and encouragement. In essence this assistance had significant positive impact on the beneficiaries psychological well being.

DEVELOPMENT STAGNATION

As Kipuri (1989) maintains, during the contemporary period, Pastoralists have continuously become susceptible to drought, as a result of alienation of the best grazing land leading to a decline of the pastoral economy. Consequently, both the pastoralists and the agriculturists in Kajiado district and Ngong division in particular, have become targets of development programmes that aim at improving their living conditions. The programmes are promoted by government officials and international 'experts'. The programmes are aimed at increasing beef production and promotion of commercial agriculture to meet urban needs as well as for export.

However, during implementation of these programmes women realized that they were being left out. Women group members expressed dissatisfaction in the fact that they were excluded from seminars held on loans, better seedlings and farm inputs among others. They maintained that area chiefs who were responsible of recruiting participants were only inviting men in their capacity as household heads, thereby sidelining women who were the practical farmers.

In re-definition of this crisis, women formed groups whose activities were based on livestock rearing and agricultural farming. To gain visibility in the presence local administrators, politicians

and local prominent males, women participated in community activities, which included dances, public rallies and water projects. During these forums, concerned groups were noticed. As was evident during fieldwork, officials from the ministries of cooperatives development and ministry of agriculture and livestock development were doing field visits and training of women group members involved in agricultural farming and livestock rearing. Field training of group members was done on group farms when members were carrying out their group activities. Knowledge and skills gained during group training was transferred to individual farms. Similarly women groups with livestock rearing activities were visited by veterinary officers, in the member's ranch where they were raising the stock, Knowledge gained in animal husbandry was extended to their own homesteads.

Women group members maintained that they had been targeted for seminars on women groups management, clothing and textiles, knitting, cookery, family planning and child care. They said invitations had been easy since what was being taught fell on women's domain. Therefore, men were automatically excluded from invitation.

As evident from the foregoing discussion, it is evident that women group members would participate in one activity, which would eventually solve at least two crisis, which would be status and role oriented. For instance, participation in labour assistance work groups were role oriented. However, participation addressed the heavy workload crisis as well as emotional (Psychological status) insecurity. Land acquisition and livestock rearing activities were aimed at improving women group members socio-economic status and ease their role as households foods providers. Through participation, they were not only able to resolve their limited access to development stagnation crisis. Through group activities in agricultural farming and livestock rearing they were targeted for both agricultural and livestock information and skills. This translated to better farming and animal

husbandry methods, resulting in higher yields and therefore food security.

Participation in merry-go-round activities fell under both role and status. Through groups contributions members could pool resources together and educate their children, elevating them to a better status. Mothers were therefore able to solve their emotional crisis with the knowledge that their children could gain individual advancement. From the same contributions, other members were able to improve their house structure or furnish them. While this was in accordance with their roles, it also improving social status in the eyes of the public. For some participation in the activity resolved their emotional crisis through the knowledge that they belong to a social group that would come to their aid in times of need.

3.6.0 **HYPOTHESES**

- H1, - Women groups' activities enhance efficiency of members roles performance and reduce their workload.
- H2 - Women groups activities improve members economic status
- H3, - Ecological, market and socio-cultural factors facilitate or constrain women group activities.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 THE RESEARCH SITE

The study was carried out in Ngong division of Kajiado District. Kajiado District is one of the in Rift Valley Province, and is situated at the South-East tip of the Province. Its present boundaries were marked between 1889 and 1890, during the British Consolidation of their spheres of influence.

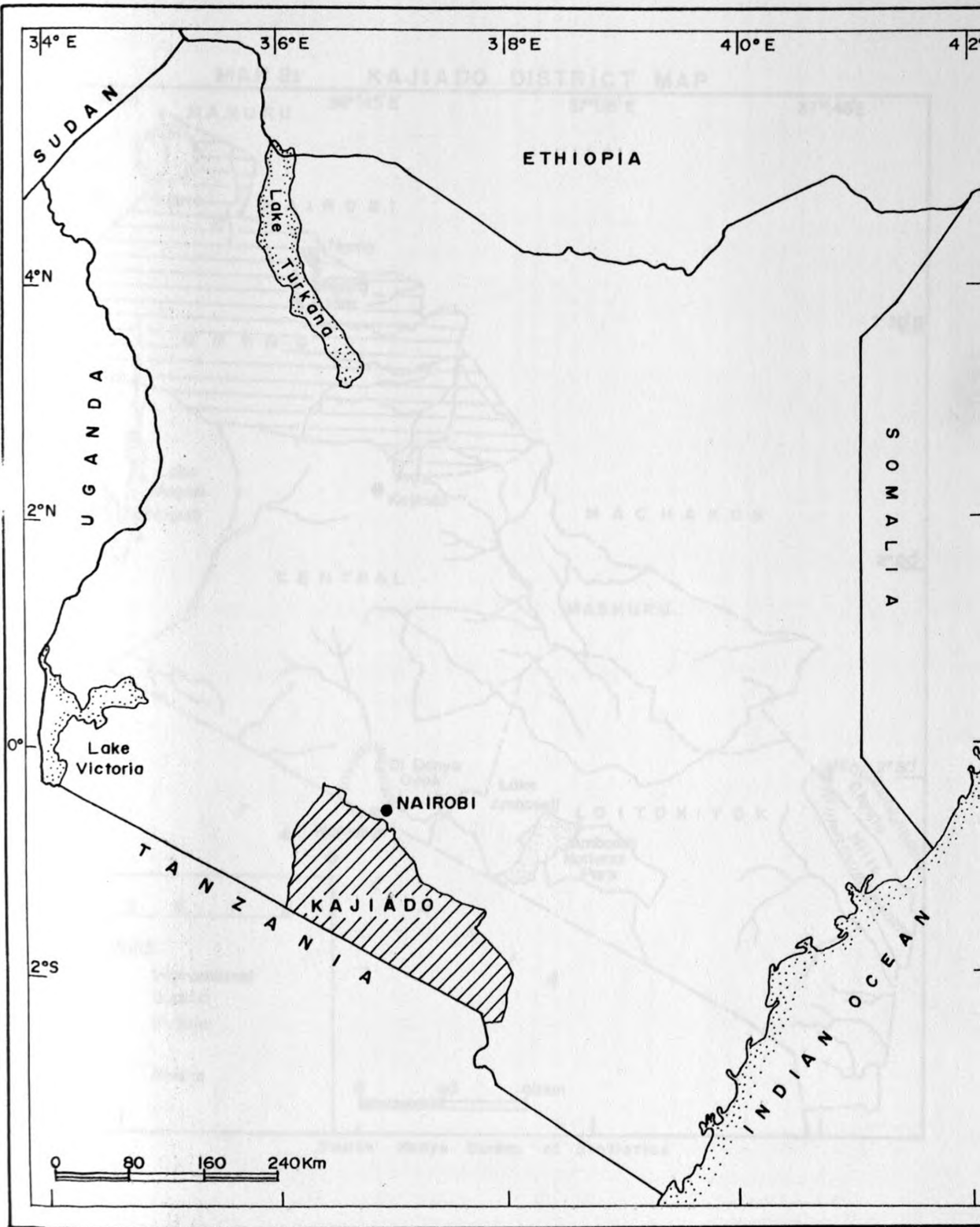
The district is located between 36°.25' and 37°. East Longitude and 1°.25 and 3°.11'44" South Latitude. It borders Machakos and Taita Taveta districts to the east, Republic of Tanzania to the south, Narok district to the west and Nairobi province, Kiambu and Nakuru districts to the north.

The district as a whole covers 11% of the total area of Rift Valley Province and 3.4% of Kenya.

Kajiado district consists of 5 divisions, namely Kajiado Central, Loitokitok, Magadi, Mashuru and Ngong. These divisions are further sub-divided into 21 Locations. Ngong division in particular consists of four Locations. These are Ongata Rongai, Ngong, South Keekonyokie and North Keekonyokie locations. (Refer attached maps)

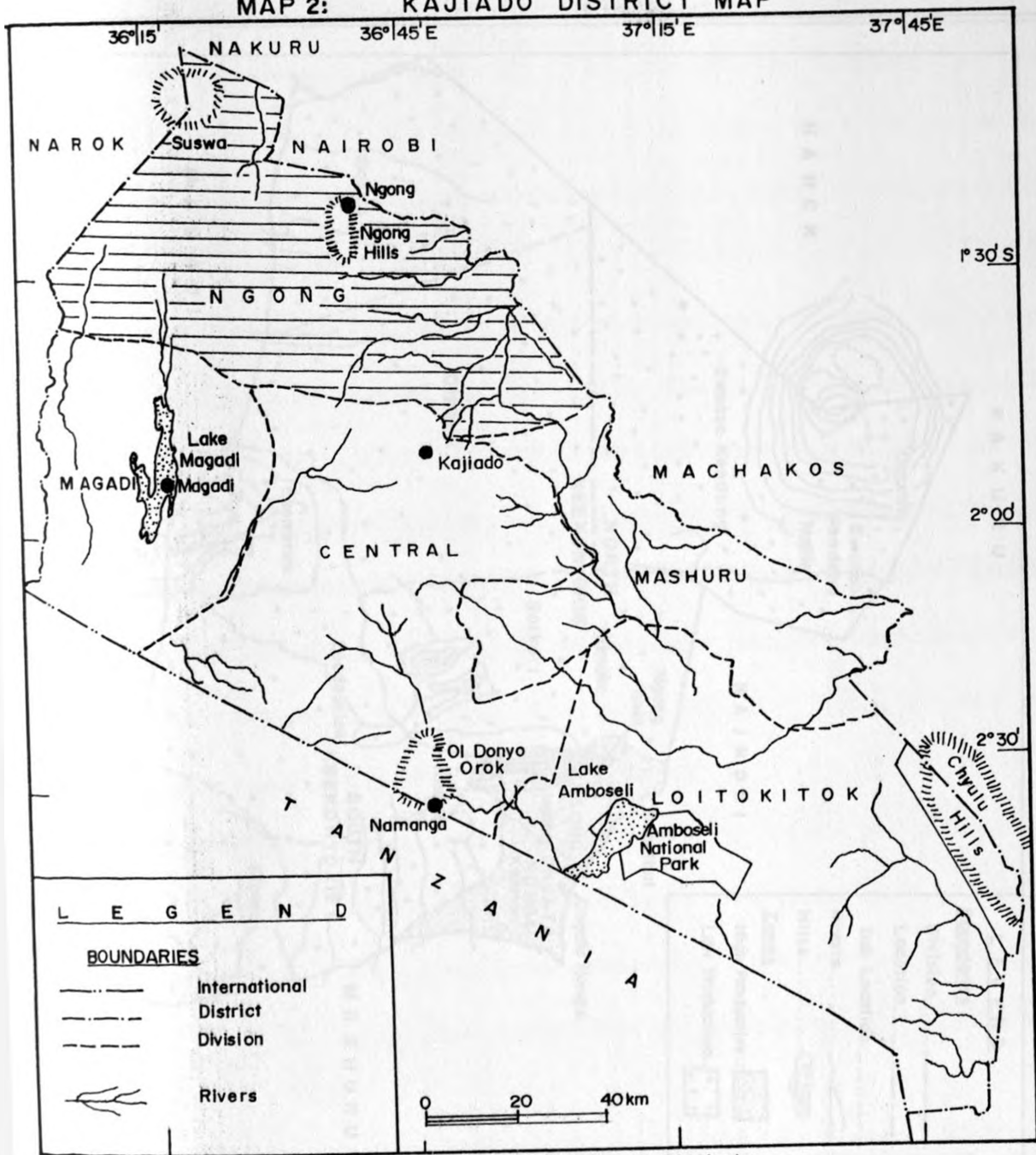
The physical geography and the climatic conditions of Ngong division had some influence on the type of women groups activities. Ngong division is a medium potential agricultural and livestock rearing area [Kajiado District Development Plan 1979-1983]. Arable farming is practised in the higher parts of Ngong Location and Ongata Rongai Location. In these two locations one finds a duplication of women groups activities based on agricultural farming, land purchase, rotating credit cooperatives, income generation, plots acquisition and building constructions. These two locations further have a rural - urban orientation since they lie at the outskirts of the city of Nairobi. Their population is multi-ethnic, the Maasai and the Agikuyu being the majority.

MAP 1: LOCATION MAP OF KAJIADO DISTRICT IN KENYA

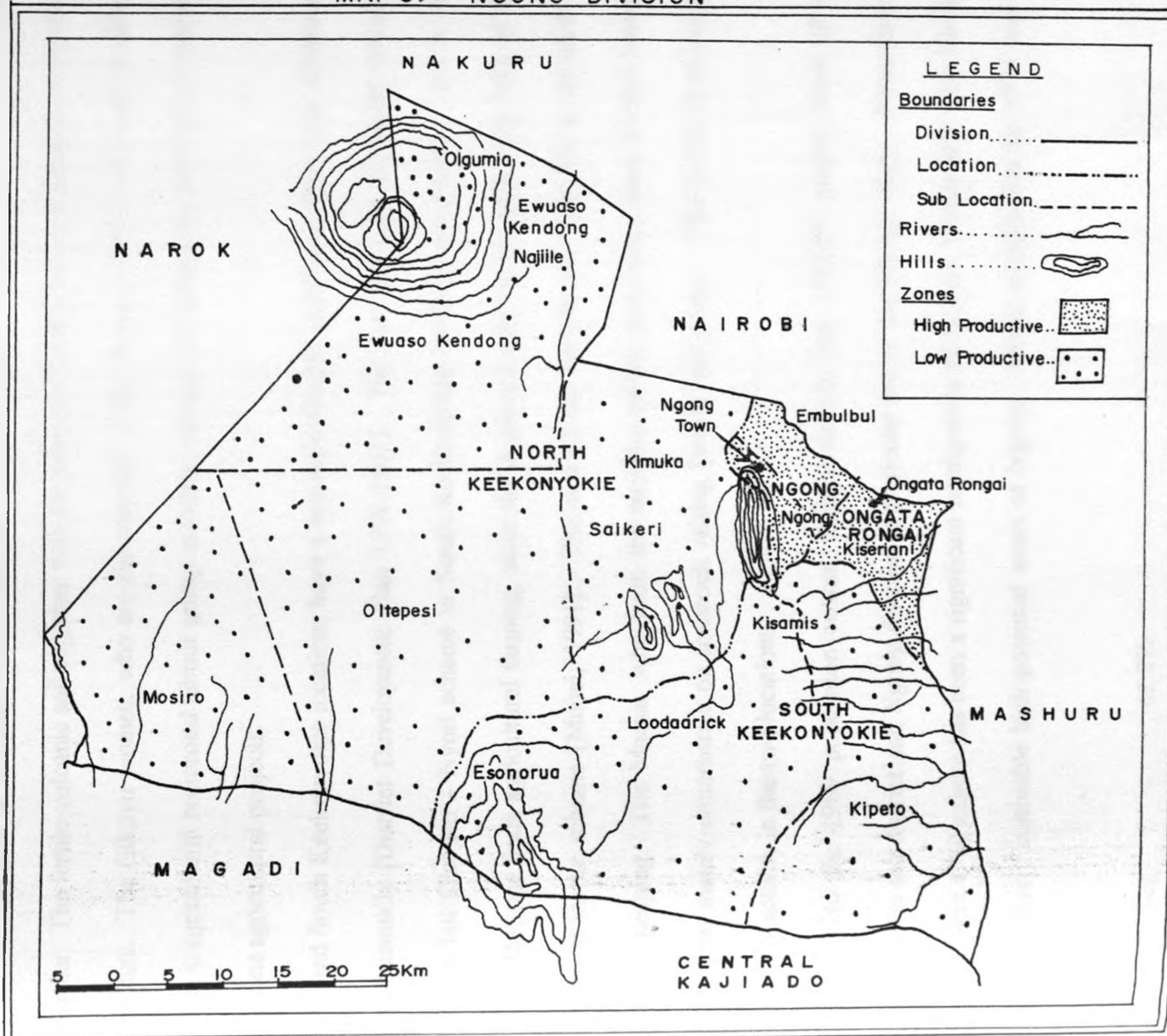


Source Kenya Bureau of Statistics

MAP 2: KAJIADO DISTRICT MAP



MAP 3: NGONG DIVISION



Source Kenya Bureau of Statistics

Ngong Hills region, where both Ngong and Ongata Rongai Locations are found, has two rainfall peaks. The first one is between March and May and the second one between November and December. The fertile volcanic soil together with the adequate rainfall makes it possible to practise agriculture. The Gikuyu women, who are the majority of the farmers, find it necessary to either engage in agricultural reciprocal labour group activities, particularly during the peak labour season, or initiate agricultural projects.

North and South Keekonyokie locations have a semi-arid climate, and receive less than 400mm of rainfall annually [District Development Plan 1979-1983]. The two locations fall under ranching schemes, but Olchoro - Nyori scheme in South Keekonyokie has been sub-divided. It's in this scheme that one finds agricultural farming, since the A gikuyu who bought land form 50% of the population in the scheme [Munei, 1991]. The rest of the land in the locations is devoted to livestock keeping. The Maasai, who form the majority of the population, have formed women groups that mainly concentrate on livestock raising [steers and goats]. This is the chief income generating activity in the two locations.

According to the 1989 population census, Kajiado district had 149,005 people. Most of the inhabitants in the district and Ngong division in particular are of the Maasai origin. Nevertheless, since the late 1960's there has been a significant immigration of farmers, particularly from Kiambu to the relatively cultivable high potential areas of Ngong. Ethnic composition by 1979 was as follows:-

Maasai	-	62.8%
Agikuyu	-	22.6%
Akamba	-	5.9%
Luo	-	2.1%
Abaluhya	-	1.5%

Others - 5.1%

[Source: District Socio - Cultural Profile, 1986].

On average, the district is sparsely populated and by 1979, the average density was only 7 persons per km.² Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations had a relatively moderate population density of 212 persons per km.². Urban centres have higher population densities, Ngong town having the highest, 1564 persons per km.². The high population density of both Ngong and Ongata Rongai Locations can be explained by their location on the periphery of the city of Nairobi and their agricultural potentiality.

The district has only 22,000 hectares of high potential, land, which is 7% - 10% of the total district land [District Socio-Cultural Profile 1986, District Development Plan 1979-1983]. This cultivable land is found in Ngong division, Loitokitok division and Sultan Hamud Strip. In Ngong division, farming is carried out by Agikuyu, Akamba and the Luo who have bought land and settled. The crops grown include maize, beans, potatoes and horticultural crops, both for subsistence and sale. In Ngong division, cultivation is carried out on the slopes of Ngong Hills and under irrigation along Kiserian, Matasia and Mbagathi rivers. Along these rivers horticultural crops such as tomatoes, cabbages, onions, spinach, cauliflower and melon are grown throughout the year.

4.2.1 **SAMPLING FRAME**

Sampling frame refers to the actual procedures involved in sample selection from the sampling units, which form the sample universe or population. In the study, the sample universe constitutes all registered women groups and their members in Ngong division. This serves as the sampling frame for the study. Using the list of all registered women groups with the social services

department in the division, each women group members were randomly picked during group meetings.

Pre-testing

Prior to the actual research, a pre-testing survey was conducted in January 1991. Its aim was to test the questionnaire and provide basic information on women groups in the division. This eliminated typical problems in the sampling frame. During the pre-testing survey it was found out that: -

- One woman would register in more than one-registered women groups. That some recently registered women groups were not appearing in the social development assistant's list. They were said to be appearing in the District's Social Service Department Office.

- There were registered members of women groups who were inactive in-groups activities.
- Potential respondents were suspicious and uncooperative. This necessitated the need to approach the Social Development assistant to play the role of a research guide and interpreter during the field research.
- Most groups in Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations engaged in more than one activity.

4.2.2 EVALUATION OF SAMPLING FRAME.

Two different typical problems in sampling were anticipated. These included incomplete frames and clusters of elements. With this in mind using the pre-testing survey, an evaluation of the sampling frame was done for identification of incomplete frames and Clusters of elements.

Incomplete frames are said to occur if the sampling units included in the population are missing from the list. Control for this problem was done using the prior knowledge of the pre-testing survey, that recently formed groups between the late 1989 and early 1990 were not appearing in the

Social Development assistant's [S.D.A] list. From the 121 groups appearing in the list, the estimate was raised to 125 groups to ensure a more representative sample.

The second anticipated problem was that of Clusters of elements. This problem occurs if the sampling units are listed on cluster. This was the initial intention to have a single Cluster of all registered groups in the division. From this cluster, a sample would be drawn randomly using the type of activity that a particular group engaged in as a criterion. However, the discovery of the pre-testing survey that some groups engaged in more than one activity necessitated the application of multi-stage sampling technique.

To determine the sample size, the probability sample design was applied. This is because such a technique permits one to specify for each sampling unit [both women groups and their members, the probability that they would be included in the sample in one draw from the population. Two designs in this method were used. These were the stratified [multi-stage] random sampling and simple random sampling. The stratified random sampling was used to select 60 groups from the estimated 125 groups that formed the population. To get the 60 groups, the following sampling stages were followed:

Stage i: A list of all women groups (including their activities) in Ngong division was drawn,

Stage ii: List of all women groups in each of the four locations,

Stage iii: List of women every sub-location in the four locations. This was done to ensure that different groups of the population were adequately represented in the sample. This measure would increase the level of accuracy in estimating parameters.

From the above stage, the simple random sampling design was to complete the selection of the 60

sample groups. This sampling procedure was used because it would give each of the N [125 groups] sampling units of the population an equal and known non-zero probability of being selected. Using the lottery method procedure, a representative sample from each location was selected. Using four containers, each representing a location, pieces of papers bearing the locational, sub-locational number and the number of different groups in the location were indicated and put in the containers.

Example Location - 1
 Sub-location - 3
 Group number - 28

From these containers the required numbers of the sample units were obtained as follows:-

North Keekonyokie	10 groups
South Keekonyokie	10 groups
Ngong location	20 groups
Ongata Rongai	20 groups

Each sample unit numbers for each location was determined by the total number per location. Ngong (51) and Ongata Rongai (34) had the highest numbers of registered groups, while South Keekonyokie (20) and North Keekonyokie (20) had the least. Unfortunately, from the sampled 60 groups, 5 of them were missing, and only 130 members from 55 groups were available to fill the questionnaires. Thus, the targeted number of 150 respondents was not achieved. Out of a sample size of 130, 70 respondents were groups leaders and 60 ordinary members since most of them were not willing to discuss group matters.

4.4.0 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION.

4.4.1 LIBRARY RESEARCH

This was the first stage of the study where existing Literature on women groups was reviewed. This literature together with the district annual reports from Kajiado social services department facilitated the formulation of a conceptual frame of the different aspects of the study. These included theoretical frame work and research hypotheses.

The essential research method used to obtain field data was the survey method. The method involved the use of standard interview schedules with the respondents, non participant observation, unstructured interviews with key informants and focused group discussions with members of amalgamated women groups.

4.4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

A standard questionnaire consisting of 65 items, which were both closed and open ended was administered to both leaders and ordinary members. The aim was to obtain non biased data on women groups membership, organisations and objectives of engaging in different activities. The questionnaire was sub-divided into two sections. The first 27 items were based on personal information on age, marital status, family socio-economic status and the gender division of labour.

The second part of the questionnaire had 38 items based on women groups general information. This included year of group registration, group activities, respondents' objectives of joining women group activities, relationship between group activities and members' roles and status, the impact of groups activities on these roles and status, organisation and management of women groups and problems that members experience in their group activities and suggested solutions. The interviews

were carried out by the researcher and the assistants. The research guide/interpreter was of key significance in questionnaire administration to Maasai women members. Being a Maasai, she acted as the link between the interviewers and the respondents. Self administered questionnaires were found to be inconvenient since most respondents were either semi-literate (42%) or not literate (48%). Direct interviews made it possible to clarify any misinterpretation of the questionnaire. These interviews further ensured flexibility and probing was done whenever it was found necessary. Completion of the questionnaire was also ensured, though it was not possible to quantify some of the qualitative data obtained through probing.

4.4.3 UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

4.4.3 (i) Key Informants.

Key informants were interviewed for extraction of information on regularity of assistance given to women groups, criteria used for choice of a particular group(s) to benefit from assistance, Ministries or organisations from which women groups do benefit in family planning information, agricultural extension services, cooperative information and loans procedures and, finally skills and home management. Verbal consent was sought from them, for the inclusion of their names whenever their information was to be quoted in the document. Among those interviewed as key informants included the Maendeleo ya Wanawake representatives in the division, divisional social worker and the community development assistant, Divisional cooperative assistant officer, Divisional agricultural assistant officer and the Netherlands Development organisation representative - women advisor Kajiado district for ASAL programme.

4.4.3.2 **Focus Group Discussions.**

This method was applied in order to obtain data from leaders of the amalgamated women groups, which had began to embark on major income generating projects.

These groups included Muungano Women group with 41 member women groups in Ngong location, Ewuaso Kedong Women groups irrigation project (5 member women groups in North Keekonyokie), Olamal women group (9 member women groups,) in Ongata Rongai location and Nyakinywa Women group (5 - member women groups), in the same location, and also Kisames Women group (6 - member women groups in South Keekonyokie). From the discussions the following information was elicited: -

- How members came up with the idea of amalgamating smaller groups into a larger one.
- Criteria for selection of type of project.
- Financing of the project.
- Procedure for selection of leaders of the larger group.
- Execution of the project work.
- Type of assistance received and from where
- Problems experienced during the execution of the project and how these have been overcome.

4.4.3.3 **Non-Participant/Direct Observation.**

This method was used to supplement the standard questionnaire. It was extensively applied since most of the interviews were face to face and were done during group meetings and on days for group activities. Among the observations done were conduct of women groups activities and meetings, composition of the groups by age, rate and frequency of participation of members in group activities. This was particularly very evident in agricultural farming groups where more than

two visits were made. Observations were also made on the type of assistance that these farming groups received from agricultural extension officers and the divisional cooperative assistant officer.

4:5:0 VARIABLES SPECIFICATION AND THEIR MEASUREMENT.

Under this section, specification of variables used in the study is made so as to avoid any misinterpretation. Such specification further portrays how these variables have been operationally conceived and how they have been measured. This will determine their validity in the study.

4:5:1 DEPENDENT VARIABLES.

In the study, the major dependent variable is the impact of women groups activities.

Impact of Women Groups Activities.

This refers to the extent to which women groups' objectives of improving members' economic self reliance through income generating has been achieved. It further refers to the increase of their social visibility and psychological security as well as improved effectiveness in their role performance through groups mutual assistance activities.

Indicators of women groups impact include the following:

Economics gains.

This implies the monetary gains that members have accrued from their groups' income generating projects. It further implies groups' investments in resources such as agricultural land, plots and livestock.

Social Benefits to Members.

These are perceived gains by group members, as compared to the period prior to their enrolment in the groups. These include contributions made towards the family such as clothing, house-hold items [utensils, furniture, water tanks and refrigerators], improvement of the house structure and

buying of food or its production.

Other social benefits include the enhancement of women's social status through increased visibility in the society. Such visibility can be measured by their invitation to seminars, public meetings and fund raising or receipt of any material, services or financial assistance in aid of women groups projects.

4.5.2 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES.

In the study the main independent variables are occupation, education, income, access to land, number of dependants, age, marital status, socio-cultural and ecological factors.

Socio-economic Status.

Social status refers to the ranking position that an individual holds in a Society. In this study socio-economic status was measured using the:-

Occupation, number of dependants, sources of household income, access to land, age and marital status. These have been used to construct an index so as to obtain a single measure for categorising their levels.

The assumption here is that women of average socio-economic status, such as the peasantry, will participate more in women groups activities. This is because they have nearly adequate resources for their basic needs, and can thus spare some funds for investment in-group projects. Some of them may even afford to hire labour, thereby getting extra time to spend on groups activities. But the poor women who may need these groups most may find their participation being hindered by lack of funds and time.

For the analysis of this variable, the indicators will be used in the contingency tables, instead of a

single measure of Socio-economic status in general.

Dependants.

This refers to the number of one's own children, grand children and the aged that she has to care for by providing food, clothing, shelter and any other form of maintenance.

The assumption is that the more the number of dependants, the higher the expenditure of the family resources.

Age.

Age refers to the actual number of years the individual respondent has attained. This has been further categorised into young, middle aged and old age. The assumption here is that age category can either facilitate or constrain participation in women groups activities. Middle aged women are assumed to participate more in women groups activities as a result of their internalization of societal norms and values (Kyendo, 1972).

Marital Status.

This refers to whether a woman is single, married, widowed, separated or divorced. The assumption here is that married women participate more in women groups activities. This is because they have access to resources and finance through their spouses.

Ecological Factors.

Ecology in any one locality refers to the totality of all environmental factors which characterise the site. In the study, this refers to the different ecological zones of the study site. The whole of North Keekonyokie and a larger part of South Keekonyokie are semi-arid. The mode of production is pastoralism by the Maasai, who are the majority of the inhabitants. Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations are found in a high potential area of adequate rainfall and fertile soils. The chief mode of production is subsistence farming by the Agikuyu. They both lie at the periphery of Nairobi and have a semi rural-urban characteristic. These factors may have some contribution to the type of

activities that women groups engage in. The measure for this variable is the type of activities that women groups are involved in each zone.

4.6.0. **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD.**

Various problems were encountered in the field, and they tended to hamper the data collection within the short time that the researcher was expected to spend in the field.

The first major problem was access to current women groups records and information for the division, for sampling purposes. The concerned officials tended to behave in a suspicious manner towards the researcher, for reasons best known to themselves.

The Divisional Social Development Assistant was reluctant to divulge any information without prior consent of the District Social Development Officer. This meant several trips being made to the District office at Kajiado, without much success. Appointments that were made with the District Social Development Officer were never honoured. He was said to be on official duties at the Social Services Department Headquarters in Nairobi. As a result it became totally impossible to get access to the district register of women groups members. Similarly, further upto date information on these groups could not be accessible. The result was a delay in sampling.

The second problem was lack of cooperation by the respondents. This was due to suspicion by some of them that the study had a political motive. Others became indifferent after learning that there were no expected tangible benefits upon filling the questionnaire. They complained that the questionnaire was too long and stated that they were busy with groups activities, including pending domestic duties.

To solve this problem, the Divisional Social Development Assistant, who was a research guide, had to explain to them the objective of the study.

Most potential ordinary group members refused to be interviewed, claiming that they were likely to be reprimanded by the group leaders for giving group information. Those who were interviewed did so after obtaining consent to do so from their group leaders.

Women groups with religious affiliation such as Woman's guild and Mothers-Union were mainly involved in the running of Nursery schools, Lower primary and a Youths vocational training centre.

They maintained that ordinary women groups based on neighbourhoods were political entities. Thus, their acceptance to be interviewed would mean a conflict between their Christian faith and politics. This meant that some information in community development issues had to be left out.

Thirdly, transport was another setback, particularly in North and South Keekonyokie; North Keekonyokie has no tarmacked road. The only means of transport available is irregular private vehicles, of individuals going to that area. Apart from fares, being exorbitant the long hours of waiting for means of transport was emotionally taxing. At times, this meant getting back home as late as 10.00pm.

Due to the semi-aridity of North and South Keekonyokie locations, it was difficult to get most of the potential respondents. The period of research coincided with the dry season [January to March], when most of the Maasai migrate in search of pastures. The few who had been left behind, left their homesteads very early in the morning accompanied by male relatives in search of water. They would not be back until between mid-day and 3.00 pm. Thus, only a few could be interviewed during the day. Unavailability of the respondents compelled the researcher to leave out some of the groups that had been sampled.

Due to the then rife inter-ethnic hostility between the Maasai and the Agikuyu, during that period, on land issue, no group members were interviewed from Mosiro Sub-location of North

Keekonyokie. The land issue was directly centred in this sub-location and so it would have been risky to venture into the area for research. The researcher had no solution to this problem.

It was therefore found necessary to add two more groups in the Ngong location sample since it had the most number of registered groups.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics.

Field data was coded for computation of descriptive statistics in form of frequencies of occurrence of key variables. The averages and percentages were computed. This statistical analysis method was particularly more applicable in variables like age, marital status and socio-economic status.

Inferential statistics.

The second method of analysis used was the contingency tables, the chi-square test and the step-wise regression analysis. These types of inferential statistics were applied in the study to infer the truth or falsity of hypotheses. For example, socio-cultural factors facilitate or constrain women groups activities.

Chi-square Test.

The chi-square was used for test of association. It was to show whether or not a statistical association exists between two variables, and whether the null hypothesis [HO] should be rejected or accepted in each hypothesis.

Step-wise Regression.

The step-wise regression analysis was used to measure the correlation between the dependent

variables and each of the independent variables, while eliminating any tendency of the remaining independent variables to obscure the relationship. This method of analysis was particularly used for Hypothesis [3].

In [H3], the method was used to show the causal relationship between socio-cultural factors, market situation and ecological factors, to the choice of women groups activities. In carrying out the above statistical analysis the SPSS, computer data package was used.

	Yes	No	Total
Yes	10	5	15
No	5	10	15
Total	15	15	30

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, presentation and discussion of the research findings were done in form of descriptive statistics. Both frequencies and percentage tables were used to show the general characteristics of women groups in the area of study.

5.1.0 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN GROUPS IN NGONG DIVISION

A total of 130 women group members were sampled and interviewed from four administrative locations of Ngong division. The distribution of the respondents per administrative location is presented in Table I.

Table 5.1 **Distribution of respondents by Location**

Location	Number of respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
Ngong	43	33.1
Ongata Rongai	37	28.5
South Keekonyokie	28	21.5
North Keekonyokie	22	16.9
Total	130	100.0

61.6% of the respondents were sampled from the high productivity zone-Ngong and Ongata Rongai Locations. 38.4% were sampled from the low productivity zone of North and South Keekonyokie. The variation in sample size from the two zones was explained by variations in population density. The

higher the population density, the higher the samples size. These variations in sample size were intended to ensure a representative sample from each zone and location respectively.

Table 5.2 **Distribution of Respondents by Sub-Locations**

Location	Sub-location	No. of Respondents (F)	Percentage (%)
Ngong	Ngong	17	13.1
	Ebul-Bul	14	10.8
	Upper Matasia	12	9.2
Ongata Rongai	Rongai Town	23	17.7
	Olkeri	14	10.8
North Keekonyokie	Ewuaso Kedong	10	7.7
	Oltepes	5	3.8
	Saikeri	7	5.4
South Keekonyokie	Kipeto	16	12.3
	Loodaariak	12	9.2
Total		130	100.0

Table 5.2 shows distribution of the respondents as they were sampled from different sub-locations of each location.

5.2.0 **WOMEN'S TIME ALLOCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL AND DOMESTIC ROLES**

Various studies on gender issues (World Bank; 1989, Were, 1990; Krystal, 1979) have pointed out that women in general are faced with heavy workloads. This is because in most cases they have to combine both their professional or occupational duties and the domestic roles. This has been a major constraint in their participation in the development process. With limited time and numerous roles to be performed, women have no alternative but either concentrate on their traditional roles or be left out from participation in women group activities as well as community development. Some may choose to overwork themselves so as to have extra time for community affairs. There are few who are financially able to engage hired labour for assistance. Others may resort to reciprocal labour or the irregular child labour as a situational approach to their heavy workload.

Table 5.3 **Distribution of Members by their Time allocation to Professional/ Occupational Work Duties per day**

Time spent on occupational work	Frequency	Percentage
Over 8 hours	47	36.5
From 5 to 8 hours	41	31.5
From 3 to 5 hours	19	11.5
Less than 3 hours	23	17.7
None	4	3.7
Total	130	100.0

From Table 5.3 it is evident that more than a third (36%) of the respondents spend over eight hours per day in their occupational (farming, herding, business, teaching) work. Together with those who spent between 5 to 8 hours this added to 68%. On average then this percentage spent 7 hours on the professional/occupational duties. But this was not all for the day's work since they had domestic duties to attend to as most of them indicated.

Table 5.4 **Distribution of Members by time allocation to domestic duties per day**

Time spent on domestic duties	Frequency	Percentage
Over 8 hours	4	3.2
From 5 to 8 hours	18	13.8
From 3 to < 5 hours	88	67.7
Less than 3 hours	16	12.3
None	4	3.1
total	130	100.0

Table 5.4, indicates that 85% of the women spend 3 hours to over 8 hours and above on domestic duties. On average, they spend five hours and a half. The 12% who are reported to spend less than 3 hours said they had to hire labour since they could not cope with the domestic duties together with the occupational duties, which took over 8 hours. On average (7+ 5 1/2 hours) women members spent 12 1/2 hours daily on both their occupational and domestic duties. This affected their role performance. To ease some of the roles, some women opted to resort to reciprocal labour group activities particularly in cultivation and fuelwood collection.

The 3% of the women who neither performed the occupational nor the domestic duties had health problems. To fulfil their expected roles either they had to hire labour or the duties were taken over by their school going children and relatives.

Table 5.5 **Distribution of members according to those who assist them accomplish their domestic duties**

Helper in domestic duties	Frequencies	Percentage
Children	65	50.0
No one	40	30.8
Hired labour	24	18.4
Husband	1	0.8
Total	130	100.0

Table 5.5 shows that half (50%) of the women group members in Ngong division relied on children for assistance in the accomplishment of their domestic roles. Members pointed out that child assistance was both irregular and unreliable since most of them were of school going age. Those who were day scholars had school assignments to do. Full time assistance was said to be possible

only during school holidays when students were not required to attend extra tuition classes. Thirty one percent of the members did not have helpers at all. This implies that about 81% (50% + 31%) of the women group members in the area of study were overworked in their efforts to fulfil their roles. Only 19% may be said, "not to be overworked" since they had hired labour.

The following were the domestic duties (in descending order of occurrence) that women performed: food preparation, domestic cleanliness (clothes, utensil, house), water provision and fuel wood provision. Others included family shopping, construction and maintenance, of homestead fencing and poultry care. Among these responsibilities water and fuel wood provision were said to be the most time consuming. 63% of the members stated that they did not have piped water in their homesteads while only 37% had. This meant that most of the households in the division do not have access to clean piped water. Out of the total sample 97% said to be the drawers of water for the family daily needs. Occasional assistance was obtained from children when possible. Only 3 % indicated hired labour to be the sole drawer of water. The water supply situation was worse in North Keekonyokie and part of South Keekonyokie. During the dry season (which coincided with the time of the study) women left home at 1.00 am, only to return between 12.00 noon and 3.00 pm., in their efforts to provide water supply for the family. Therefore, women in these locations had to spend between 11 to 14 hours per day in their role of water provision. This situation was similar to that of Mbeere where women spent about 9 - 14 hours per day in search of water (Wallis and pala 1975).

Eighty two percent of the sample said to be using fuel wood in their homes for cooking purposes. Women were the main suppliers since culturally this was their role. Respondents said that they experienced difficulties in it's provision where women were required to pay a fee of 5 shillings per collected bundle to the forester (personal interview Waceke Ottoma, 11th - 2 - 1991)¹. Lack of the

5 shillings meant that one had to do without wood. Women expressed the need of fuel-saving "jikos" so as to economise on fuel wood. Only 18% of the sample stated to be either using electricity, gas, charcoal, paraffin or saw dust. To cope with fuel wood needs. Women groups in North Keekonyokie were involved in reciprocal labour in fuel wood provision. The fuel energy crisis in Ngong division was similar to that which was echoed by Ardayio (1985) in her study in Nigeria.

5 2.2 **Types of activities undertaken by the women groups**

The different types of women group activities are a reflection of the members perception of their own needs in regard to their roles fulfilment and their socio-economic status. These activities are a situational approach (Thomas and Znanieck, 1974) to those constraints that women experienced on daily basis. An individual's decision to participate in a particular type of group activity was determined by her financial ability, availability of time and the solution that the activity would offer. Members usually engaged in those activities which they could comfortably adjust themselves to, both financially and in terms of time without much disruption of their day to day schedules. The goal of these activities was foreseen as either easing women's workload or improvement of socio-economic status.

Table 5.6 show the member of groups (from the sampled 55 groups) that were involved in different group activities. However, it was not possible to provide totals in the table because each group was involved in at least two activities or more. For example, one group could be involved in merry-go-round, income generation and reciprocal activities.

Table 5.6 **Distribution of groups by types of activities**

Type of activity	No. of groups	Percentage
Merry-go-round	34	61.8
Income generation	33	60.0
Resource acquisition	26	47.0
Community development (funds, labour, dances, initiation of community projects e.g. water projects	15	27.2
Reciprocal labour	12	21.8

NB.- Total number of sampled groups = 55

Each group was found to be engaged in an average of 2 types of activities.

Table 5.6 shows the different activities that women groups were involved in, either to enhance their performance or improve their socio-economic status. Merry-go-round, which can fit in both categories, is the most popular, with 62% of the groups engaging in it. Through this type of activity members can acquire household items like utensils, furniture, clothing, water tanks, food

stuffs, farm inputs and improve their shelter structures. All these needs are in line with women's roles as caretakers. Through the same activity several members indicated that contributions were used to educate children which is a long term investment. For those members who were involved in petty trade and business, contributions were used to boost the stock, while for the farmers they spent the money in either buying farm implements or inputs such as seeds and fertilisers. Of all those groups that engage in merry-go-rounds, 89% of the members reported to have set formats for the expenditure of the contribution, which every member must adhere to. To ensure this the receiving member was not given cash, but the item such as utensils, furniture, fertilisers and others, that all members acquired on a rotational basis. This measure further checked on the effects of inflation acting to the disadvantage of the last members to receive the contributions. The second reason for the popularity of merry-go-rounds was that they were less time consuming. Therefore, even those who would be experiencing time pressure could afford an hour or two every month to take their contributions.

Sixty percent of the groups were involved in income generating activities. Among the different business ventures that women groups in Ngong division engaged in were livestock rearing, farming projects, building construction for both rental purposes and group business, poultry keeping, sale of food stuffs, tailoring and sale of saw dust or charcoal. The choice of the income generating project was highly influenced by the members cultural background in relation to roles, economic ability, time factor, knowledge of skills, where appropriate, and the suitability of ecology, where necessary.

Resource acquisition ranked third, with 47%. These were those groups involved in purchase and allocation of agricultural land and plots. Though this percentage was relatively lower in comparison to the other two preceding activities, its implications were encouraging. It portrayed an awareness

among women of the deterioration of their economic status and the need to improve it.

Only 27% of the groups engaged in community development activities, which particularly included dances and projects in water development. But virtually all members of the women groups interviewed in the division said to be offering either financial contributions (85%) through the divisional social development assistant or entertainment. Those who did not participate in dances said time pressure to be a limiting factor. The same problem was also experienced by the participants, but as they explained they had to sacrifice their time in order to gain affiliation with prominent local males, administrators and politicians. Through such affiliation they could be able to acquire plots or gain some financial assistance for group projects. The ultimate goal was seen as increased social visibility and improved economic status.

Portrayal of women's social visibility was through invitation to public rallies (97%), invitation to seminars (68%), benefit from agricultural extension services (9%) and assistance with material or finances for group projects by local administrators, prominent business men and politicians. The high percentage of women's invitation to public rallies may be deceptive, since women did not gain directly from attendance. The reasons for the invitations probably included expectations by local authorities for women groups to contribute financially or otherwise to community projects.

Therefore their presence when decisions were being made was found to be vital. Secondly, women form the majority of the electorate and their presence in large numbers was an indication of the support of the powers that be.

Invitation to seminars that directly related to women groups management, clothing and knitting, textiles, cookery, family planning and child care accounted for 68%. This was probably because men are not eligible. Ironically where women were expected to gain some tangible benefits like loans, better seedlings and farm inputs, this formed the lowest percentage (9%). This implied that

to a large extent men had not shed away the traditional belief of women not being entitled to property. Women members complained of not being invited to seminars being held on agricultural education. They maintained that the area chief had only invited men and no woman had been invited (personal interview, **Wanjiku Nduati**, 19-2-1992)². This was an indication that invitation was based on heads of household (men) and not on the practical farmers (women), who largely still remained socially invisible.

From Table 5.6 reciprocal labour accounted for 22%. The period of research could have had some influence on the low percentage. The field research was carried out during the dry season when there was no much farm work to be done, unlike during the peak seasons when reciprocal labour activities usually took half day since members had other duties to perform. The shift from a traditional economy which ensured fair division of labour on both gender and age had left women with a heavy workload to bear since children had to attend schools while men had to be away on wage employment. Therefore, reciprocal labour groups were a situation approach to some of the multiple roles that women had to perform. However, for some, the tight time schedule for the day's work was a setback to participation in these activities.

Table 5.7 **Distribution of members by ways in which group activities had helped reduce their work load**

Reduced workload	Frequency	Percentage
Provision of household items	70	54
Gained assistance in domestic roles in times of need	48	36.8
Provision of fuel energy	29	22.3
Food provision through group shamba	20	15.3
Completion of farm work in time	16	12.3
Improved farming methods	14	10.7
Improved house structure	5	4.0
Water provision	4	3.0

NB - Most groups were involved in more than one activity.

From Table 5.7 provision of household items (utensils, clothing and furniture) ranked highest (54%). This could be attributed to the household primary needs, which include food, clothing and shelter. To meet these needs, food could not be served without utensils, neither could shelter be considered satisfactory without some basic furniture such as beds and seats. Nor was it possible naturally to do without clothing. Provision of these items by women was of paramount importance in their fulfilment of caretaking role for the household.

Assistance in domestic roles in times of needs ranked second with 37%. Such assistance was said to be offered in times of illness, social functions and death. Assistance was mainly in form of labour, finance, material needs such as foodstuffs, water and fuel wood, as well as emotional support. This assistance had significant psychological implications to both the recipients and the contributor. It provided a sense of belonging, acceptance, encouragement and companionship, which were essential for the individual's psychological well being.

Fuel provision accounted for 22%. Most members said to be willing to participate in fuel wood provision to ease their role but were limited by lack of forests and bushes. They pointed out that some knowledge in the technological skills in production of energy saving jikos would be one way of solving the fuel energy crisis.

Food provision, which was 15%, and improved farming methods 11% totalled to 26% in the area of study. Though low, this gave some positive implications of the women in the area growing concern for households food security and improved farming methods geared towards higher agricultural output. These efforts were a direct challenge to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to disseminate the necessary agricultural information to the concerned women

groups.

Water provision and improved house structures ranked lowest with 3% and 4% respectively. This was an indication that these problems exist in the area of the study but probably most women were not aware that they could alleviate these problems through group activities. This activity had a cultural implication, since traditionally it was the role of women to construct traditional huts. Traditional Maasai huts were said to be a great menace during the rainy seasons, since they were subject to destruction during heavy down pours (personal interview, Hanna Nairepu, 19 - 3 - 1991)³. To avoid the inconveniences that could occur following such destruction, the few Maasai women had adopted a situational approach to the problem by constructing semi-permanent houses, which could withstand different weather conditions.

The few members (3%) who engaged in water projects could probably be explained by the large sums of money, labour and technology that were needed for the completion of the project. Moreover, completion of the said project could take long while members would have aimed at an immediate solution to their problem. They could therefore not have had the patience for long term projects.

Table 5.8 **Distribution of members by ways in which group activities had improved their socio-economic status**

How socio-economic status has been improved	Frequency	Percentage
Acquisition of resources (Agricultural land and plots)	65	50
Gained income through groups business	54	41.5
Education of a child through group effort	12	9.2
Acquired new skills	7	5.3

In Table 5.8 acquisition of resources in form of agricultural land and plots ranked highest 50% in improvement of socio-economic status. This was an effort by women to overcome poverty. With these resources, women could utilise them on food production, shelter and as a source of income.

Members access to income from group income generating projects accounted for 42%. This showed that women group members could use group strategies by engaging in income generating activities to supplement their low income. Such income could be used for the betterment of the families' economic situation.

Nine percent of the members reported to have educated children through group efforts. Though low, the implications were quite positive. This showed how women group could be utilised to achieve individual development. Education was a long-term investment that was essential in manpower development at the national level while at the individual level it was significant for personal empowerment.

Development of new skills in tailoring, crocheting, tie and dye, among others, accounted for 5%. Though low, these skills were essential for self-economic advancement.

5.3.0 **THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL MARKET AND**

ECOLOGICAL FACTOR ON WOMEN GROUPS ACTIVITIES.

The following findings are related to hypothesis 3. They have been used to show how socio- cultural and ecological factors may either facilitate or constrain women group activities.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE 55 SAMPLED WOMEN GROUPS IN THE FOUR

LOCATIONS BY THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN THE TWO ZONES

In income generating activities, there was a marked difference on type of activities on zonal level, particularly those, which were based on the mode of production, cropping, activities and livestock rearing. This could be attributed to the ecology, which had a lot of influence on both modes of production. In the high productivity zone, one found the cropping activities (5 groups out of 39) which were lacking in the other zone. The two locations were also highly populated by the Gikuyu who were traditionally agriculturists and were the participants in the cropping projects. The low percentage (13%) of these projects in the two locations could be attributed to lack of large tracts of land which could be rented by groups. Rental fees were also too high which might have made the project less economically viable, considering both the labour and the rest of the inputs that are

required.

Livestock rearing was practised in both South and North Keekonyokie locations. These locations were found in the low productivity zone, with pastoralism being the main mode of production among the predominant Maasai population. This type of activity was lacking in the other zone. 75% of the women groups in the zone engaged in livestock rearing since it was appropriate both ecologically and culturally. Women groups' livestock were distributed to members' homestead for management together with the family herds until the groups wanted to dispose of them for finances. This saved the group members the inconvenience of lack of a group ranch.

In small business and trade, both ecology and culture did not seem to have much influence on their distribution in the locations. Women groups found in South and North Keekonyokie was primarily involved in running of shops and kiosks (25%) that were operated during market days. This can probably be explained by the market situation. They, therefore, provided the bulk of customers including their friends in these shop-kiosks. In Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations, which were highly rural-urban, women groups engaged in the more role specific business and trade in food stuffs, tailoring and sale of saw dust 15%. Women too were the main customers.

Business in rental houses in the three locations - Ngong, Ongata Rongai and South Keekonyokie appeared to be thriving. This phenomenon could be attributed to the market situation of demand and supply of both residential and business houses. These houses were located in the town centres of Ngong and Rongai. In South Keekonyokie they were found on the Nairobi - Magadi road. Lack of this business venture in North Keekonyokie could probably be explained by lack of market, the area being in the interior. In south keekonyokie 25% of the groups were in this business.

Resource acquisition in the form of plots was fairly distributed in the four locations. The 12 groups (22%) that reported to have acquired plots had done so either through group financial contributions or had been allocated by the county council. Most of those groups that had none, stated that they had applied for allocation or were making contributions towards the purchase of one. Involvement in this type of activity could be explained culturally. Traditionally Maasai and Gikuyu, women are discriminated against when it comes to property ownership. Therefore, acquisition of plots was a way of uplifting their economic status.

Acquisition of agricultural land (24%) was predominant in Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations which were agricultural locations. Participants in this type of activity were Gikuyu women including the two groups in South Keekonyokie. Ngong and Ongata Rongai were also the densely populated locations in Ngong division. Concentration of land purchase in these two locations by only one particular ethnic group had a cultural bearing. Traditionally being cultivators, faced with land scarcity, high population and the cultural constraint in access to this vital resource, the only solution was to embark on land purchase through groups efforts. Lack of Maasai women groups participation in land purchase may also be explained culturally. Traditionally, among the Maasai private ownership of land is unheard of even by men. Moreover, in some areas of Maasai land sub-division of ranching schemes had not yet been carried out. Therefore, the traditional communal ownership of land could have been a setback to Maasai women groups participation in land purchase.

Women group participation in traditional dances (24%) form of community development activity was common in all the locations. There was variation in the number of participating groups which could be explained by the population densities in the different areas. Ngong had

13% of participating groups, Ongata Rongai 5.5%, South Keekonyokie 3.6% and North Keekonyokie. Participation of both ethnic groups could be explained culturally. Traditionally, women in the two main ethnic groups were considered as socially "invisible". Being patriarchal societies this was one of the strategies of maintaining male dominance. To try to eliminate this social 'invisibility' women group members were engaging in dances as one of the methods of community development. Only two groups (3.6%) were involved in water development projects in the high production zone. The most probable explanation was that it may have been easier to tap water from this zone unlike in the arid zone. Here ecology was the key factor in involvement in this type of activity.

Reciprocal labour activities appeared to have been influenced by both ecology and the cultural background. Cultivation reciprocal labour activities only occurred in Ngong (5.5%) and Ongata Rongai (7%) where agricultural cultivation was practised among the Agikuyu. This was not the case in the semi-arid and arid South and North Keekonyokie which were inhabited by the pastoral Maasai.

Reciprocal labour in fuel wood provision was found to take place mainly in North Keekonyokie (3.6%) and partly in South Keekonyokie (5.5%). Nevertheless, ecology seems to have been the facilitating factor. Being semi-arid, the natural vegetation had not been cleared for settlement and cultivation. Thus, natural bushes provided the fuel wood that was needed by women involved in this type of activity.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1.0 (H1) PARTICIPATION IN WOMEN GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR REDUCTION OF MEMBERS' WORKLOAD.

In smallholdings agricultural production, women were the primary labour providers. They hoed, weeded, harvested, stored, processed and marketed most of the food. Among the pastoralists, they were expected to care for goats and sheep. But when male, child or hired labour was not available, women took care of the big animals - cattle and donkeys as well.

Women's caretaking roles included food provision and preparation, domestic cleanliness, family shopping, maternal care, water and fuel wood provision. To enhance efficiency in performance of some of these roles. Women participated in group activities such as merry-go-rounds, reciprocal labour, income generating and resource acquisitions.

The chi-square values presented under this hypothesis are an attempt to establish statistically the truth or falsify of what has been hypothesised.

6.1.1 Improvement of members role performance through participation in merry-go-round activities

Merry-go-round activities were viewed as one of the mechanisms through which women could enhance efficiency in their caretaking roles through purchase of food, house furniture, utensils, bedding and education of their school going children.

Table 6.1 **Participation in merry-go-rounds to improve roles performance.**

ACTIVITY MERRY-GO-ROUND	PARTICIPATION			
	YES		NO	TOTAL
	n	%	n	%
Yes	67	51.5	11	8.5
	34	26.2	18	13.8
No				
TOTAL	101	77.7	29	23.3

P> 0.1

X^2 = 6.437 with df significant at 99% confidence level

Phi = 0.24193

P> = 0.05

Fifty one and a half percent of the participants maintained that the above type of activity was particularly used as a situational approach (Thomas and Znanieck (1974) in their endeavour to

enhance positive fulfilment of their caretaking roles in the household. Faced with a situation of limited access to adequate funds and numerous responsibilities, members resorted to collective efforts in financial contributions. They were then able to finance each other on a rotational basis so as to purchase household utensils, furniture, clothing, foodstuffs, farm inputs, water tanks and improve the house structure. This finding concurs with Brown (1975), NORAD (1984) and World Bank (1989). While Brown (1975) maintains that groups contributions are used for water tanks and improvement of house structure, NORAD (1984) mentions purchase of utensils, clothing and foodstuff. Further World Bank (1989) cited the purchase of farm inputs such as fertilisers, seeds and tools.

The calculated χ^2 value 6.43a which was significant at 99% confidence level indicated a significant positive statistical association between members participation in merry-go-round activities and their intention to enhance efficiency in roles performance. However, the phi value of 0.24193 indicated a weak relationship between the two.

The 8.5% who were participants in this type of activity, but did not participate with the aim of easing their caretaking roles, were those who used the contributions to better their household status through educating children or boosting business stock.

The 40% of women group members who did not participate in merry-g-rounds were involved in other activities such as income generation, reciprocal labour and resource acquisition.

6.1.2 **Participation in reciprocal labour activities to reduce Workload**

Reciprocal labour activities, particularly in farm work and fuel wood provision were some of the mechanisms of coping with women's heavy workload. By working as a team, farm work was completed in time and fuel supply ensured for the household.

Table 6.2 Participation in reciprocal labour to reduce workload.

RECIPROCAL LABOUR	PARTICIPATION					
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	33	25.4	2	1.5	35	26.9
	68	52.3	27	20.8	95	73.1
No						
Total	101	77.7	29	23.3	130	100.0

X^1 = 6.35522 with df significant at 98.8% confidence level

Phi = 0.24193

P> = 0.05

The calculated value 6.355 indicates a significant statistical association between members participation in reciprocal labour activities with the aim of reducing workload. The X^2 value

was significant at 98.8% confidence level which is above the study's set confidence of 95%.

However, the Phi value .24193 indicates a weak relationship, between participation in reciprocal labour and reduction of workload, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

The high statistical association between the two variables may be explained by the fact that reciprocal labour activities are one of the mechanisms that women use to cope with the heavy farm work (World Bank, 1989) and the world's fuel crisis (Ardayio Schandof, 1985).

However, from the 25.4% of the positive responses, it can be deduced that this type of activities are not being utilised to the maximum by members in the area of study to ease their roles. The two major activities that members are involved in include farm work and fuel wood reciprocal labour. 73% of the non-participating members cited role conflict due to limited free time and ecological factors as major limiting factors in participation.

Child care, domestic chores and livestock care were cited by women members who did not receive much assistance either from hired labourers, husband and the school going children as some of the most pressing roles. In the high production zone lack of nearby forests was a setback to fuel wood reciprocal labour, while in the low production zone the arid and semi arid ecology was a limiting factor to participation in farm work activities.

Table 6.3 shows the association between participation in resource acquisition activities and the objective to reduce members' workload.

6.1.3 **Participation in resources acquisition to improve roles performance**

Though resource acquisition is meant to improve status, in some cases it was used to improve members role performance.

Table 6.3 **Participation in resource acquisition activities to improve members's roles performance**

ACTIVITY RESOURCE ACQUISITION	PARTICIPATION			
	YES		NO	TOTAL
	n	%	n	%
Yes	57	43.8	19	14.6
	44	33.8	10	7.7
No				
TOTAL	101	77.7	29	22.3
			130	100.0

X^2 = .43693 with df not significant at 50% confidence level
 Phi = 0.07672
 P< = 0.05

From the calculated X^2 value .43693, which is significant at 50% confidence level, it indicates an

insignificant positive statistical association of members participation in resource acquisition activities to improve members roles performance. Moreover, the Phi value .07672 indicates a very weak relationship between the two variables. From the above statistics where the χ^2 value is only significant at 50% confidence level which is far much below the study's level of significance at 95%, can be deduced that members participation in resource acquisition activities does not significantly help to improve their roles performance. The probable explanation for this finding is that improvement of roles performance by members participation in resource acquisition activities was secondary to the improvement of their economic status.

From the above Table 6.3 58.5% of the members were participants in resource acquisition activities. These included purchase of agricultural land, purchase of commercial plots or allocation of such plots by the county council. The 43.8% (44%) of the positive responses were those who participated in the above activities so as to both improve their economic status and role performance. Amongst the 43.8% were those who had acquired agricultural land and operated farming projects. Part of the produce (vegetables, maize and beans) was sold for income while the rest was shared among members to feed their households. The Ewuaso Women Groups irrigation project was one of the examples found in the division. Members to this project were all from North Keekonyokie location. They consisted of five different women groups each with a total membership of 50 women. Between 1984/1985 the five groups were allocated a ranch of 202.35 hectares on which they could carry out livestock rearing and farming activities, the location being an arid zone. The irrigation project was initiated and funded by both Food for the Hungry organisation and the Netherlands development organisation through the district's arid and semi-arid lands programme (ASAL), on 8.09 hectares. According to the Netherlands development organisation, Women Advisor, ASAL Representative - Kajiado

district the project's implementation objective was and still is to ensure food security for household members. However, surplus produce was sold locally to generate income⁷ (personal interview with Anne Frantzen, 2nd April, 1991).

About 44% of women groups ranging from 5 to 28 in the four locations had been allocated with plots by the county council. On these plots flour mills were run by groups members both for income generation and as a means of easing their role performance in food preparation. Preparation of "ugali was considered to be more convenient particularly when women had limited time and less fuel energy at their disposal one is saved from preparing the time and fuel energy consuming Gikuyu traditional dish of maize and beans, githeri. In this case, women group operation of flour mills was seen as a solution to the limited time and fuel energy crisis that most women do experience (personal interview with Mary Waichanguru, 5th March, 1991)

The 15% who had acquired resources but had not eased their roles include those who had purchased agricultural land but had no title deeds. Therefore, they could not develop it. Others are those who had acquired plots and had developed them for rental purposes only, or had plots that were still undeveloped.

61.4 **Participation in income generation activities to ease roles**

Table 6.4 **Participation in income generating activities to improve role performance**

INCOME GENERATING	PARTICIPATION					
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
Yes	60	46.9	16	12.3	77	59.2
	41	30.8	13	10.0	53	40.8
No						
TOTAL	101	77.7	29	22.3	130	100.0

$X^2=.08422$ with dfl not significant at 33% confidence level

Phi = 0.4422

P< = 0.05

From table 6.4 the calculated X^2 value .08422 on participation in income generating activities to improve members' roles indicates a very insignificant statistical association at the confidence level of 33% which was far below the study's set level of 95%. The relationship between the two variables was also very weak as indicated by the Phi value of 04422. Therefore, members' participation in income generating activities does not significantly improve their roles performance.

This insignificant association may be explained by the primary intention of members participation in income generating activities which is to improve their economic status.

From the table 6.4, 59.2% of the members participated in income generating activities. These activities include building constructions for rental purposes or to run group businesses, livestock rearing, sale of food stuffs, saw dust and charcoal was more common in Ongata Rongai location.

This activity was viewed as one of the mechanisms of coping with the fuel energy crisis in the area⁹ (Personal interview with Tecla Wanjiku, 8th March, 1991). Trade in food stuffs, operation of shop kiosks and posho mills were conveniently located within the reach of customers, while trade in foodstuffs was not only carried out during market days but also daily in a members homestead.

Being within the neighbourhood, purchase of the necessary foodstuffs and other items from the kiosk was time saving and credit facilities were provided for, for the groups members¹⁰. (Personal interview with Peris Njumbi, 14th March, 1991). In North Keekonyokie location, conveniently located women groups shop kiosks have greatly eased women's role of family shopping. This is because the Ewuaso market centre and Ngong town where such shopping could have been done were quite far, 40kms. away. (Personal interview with Naisoi Kidi, 25th February, 1991).

The 12.3% of the participants who did not aim at easing roles performance through income generating activities, were those whose activities were centred on livestock rearing and rent of

group building constructions.

It was deduced that merry-go-rounds and reciprocal labour activities are significantly appropriate activities which can be utilised to ease members' role performance. Though statistically participation in resource acquisition and income generation are insignificant, they should not be totally overlooked.

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IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN GROUP MEMBERS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS THROUGH WOMEN GROUPS ACTIVITIES

Commenting on women's status Sivard (1985) maintains that "changes achieved in women's status since 1950's have been extremely uneven and, on the whole, modest. Whether in economy, education, health or Government, there is no major field of activity and no country in which women have attained equality with men (Ibid p.5).

Women's low status in comparison to men has been enhanced by various factors. Among these, throughout the world women form the majority of the unemployed and under-employed, the poor and the illiterate and they remain a negligible minority at the centres of political power. Although there has been an influx of women into the paid labour force, there has not been any significant change in the tide of poverty since most of them are in the low income bracket. Moreover, women's unpaid household labour is never reflected in the Gross National Product (GNP) (Sivard, 1985). Despite the key role that women perform in third world economies, particularly in agriculture, they have largely been by-passed in development strategies. The above situation has necessitated what Sivard calls "a silent revolution" in form of women groups, organisations and associations. These social associations are an under current of confidence and cooperation that holds some hope among them in the world.

H2 **PARTICIPATION IN WOMEN GROUP ACTIVITIES IMPROVES MEMBERS**
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Through participation in women group activities such as income generation, resource acquisition and merry-go-rounds, women are making attempts through collective efforts to improve their economic and social status. Under this hypothesis an attempt has been made to assess the extent to which these activities have improved the socio-economic status of group members in the area of study.

Table 6.5 presents participation in income generating activities with the intention to enhance economic status.

	Before		After		Total	
Yes	45	100	100	45	75	45
No	12	25	12	25	25	25
Total	57	125	112	70	100	70

Participation in income generating activities to improve economic status

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION					
INCOME GENERATION	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
YES	67	51.5	10	7.7	77	59.2
NO	37	28.5	16	12.3	53	40.8
TOTAL	104	80.0	26	20.0	130	100.0

X^2 = 4.78032 with 1 df not significant at 71.2% confidence level.

Phi = 021132

P < 0.05

The statistic in Table 6.5 of a X^2 value 4.780 indicates a positive insignificant statistical relationship between women participation in income generating activities and improvement of economic status. This positive relationship is further shown as weak by the Phi value of 21131. The implications of this insignificant statistical association between the two variables are

that, other factors such as individual's educational level and job placement, spouse's scale of income among

other factors that were not considered in the study probably do enhance women's economic status.

However, from the 51.5% of the members who participate in this type of activities with the intention of improving their economic status, its contributions need to be given some consideration.

The existence of both patriarchal and capitalistic economic systems have led to the devaluation of women's labour and uneven development on the basis of gender (Rodney, 1972). Therefore, for those women who cannot improve their economic status individually, concerted efforts as a group are essential.

Among the viable income generating activities in Ngong division were building constructions, livestock rearing and posho mill operations. Complete permanent building construction for rental purposes fetched members reasonable monthly incomes. The Olooseos women groups in South Keekonyokie had constructed a building with four large rooms. This building had been rented (by the time of the field work), and on it the Olooseos Secondary School was in operation. Each of the rooms was being charged Kshs.1,500, therefore a monthly income of Kshs.6,000 was being generated at the end of the month¹². (Personal interview with Hanna Nairepu, 19th March, 1991).

In Ngong location the Muungano Women Groups have constructed a building complex of seven shops and a social hall. Each of the shops is rented at a monthly rate of Kshs.3,000. From these shops the groups have a monthly income of Kshs.21,000¹³ (Personal interview with Joyce Mutei, 19th February, 1991).

The above findings do not conform with NORAD (1984) a study that maintains that building

constructions as a form of income generating projects are not immediately economically viable. Similar sentiments are echoed by Nyagah (1985) in his study of Kinoo-Kikuyu. The two studies further maintain that these projects are more of income consuming since most of them are left incomplete for a long time. The above two projects in Ngong division were constructed for a period of one to two years. Therefore no major inconveniences were experienced, since members were both materially and financially prepared for the construction work.

Other group members who have constructed semi-permanent buildings have done so to avoid construction work being left incomplete for a long time¹⁴ (Personal interview with Martha Ngigi, March, 1991). Such semi-permanent buildings are rented as shops, residential rooms and nursery schools. However, rent rates were relatively low compared to permanent building. A semi-permanent nursery was rented at the rate of Kshs.800 to 1,000 per month¹⁵. (Personal interview with Mishi Mohammed, 7th March, 1991).

From livestock rearing and posho mill operation projects income was seasonally derived but the interests were reasonable. In livestock rearing, calves, goats and sheep were purchased towards the end of the dry season (March) when prices were low. A weak calf or cow was purchased at the rate of Kshs.1,000 and 2,000 respectively. After feeding them properly during the rainy season, these animals were disposed of at the rate of Kshs.6,000 to 8,000 for beef. A goat that had been bought at Kshs.200 was later sold at Kshs.500 to 800 depending on its size¹⁶. (Personal interview with Narantai Loloshon, 25th February, 1991).

Posho mills operation business usually experiences usually experienced a boom during harvesting period. Milling charges varied from season to season¹⁷. (Personal interview with Margaret Nokunono, 20th February, 1991).

Despite the insignificant statistical associations that were evident between income generation activities and improvement of members status, the qualitative data gave the impression that these

activities should not totally be ignored. Rather members should be encouraged and assisted either materially or financially to embark on such projects.

The 7.7% of the members who participate in this type of activities but not to improve their economic status were those whose intent was to gain group identity, for companionship, security and encouragement¹⁸. Personal interview with Zipporah Gathoni, 15th February, 1991). This assertion confirms with Vernon (1969) Mutiso (1971), Mbithi, and Rasmusson (1977) Vernon (1969) maintains that individual belong to social groups for security. Mutiso (1971) points out a desire for positive satisfaction and pleasure while Mbithi and Rasmusson (1977) outline a need for companionship, acceptance and encouragement.

6.2.2 Participation in resource acquisition activities to improve socio-economic status

Women group members in the area of study were involved in acquisition of agricultural land and commercial plots. This was viewed as a way of reducing women's dependence on men, which was reinforced by cultural beliefs that women were not entitled to private ownership of land. Group ownership of either plots or agricultural land was therefore one way of enhancing members socio-economic status in the society.

6.2.3 Participation in merry-go-round activities to improve socio-economic status

Though merry-go-round activities were mainly geared towards easing of roles, some few groups did use the contributions to improve socio-economic status. Through education of children, boost personal business or improve house structure.

Table 6.7 presents participation in merry-go-round activities with the objective of enhancing socio-economic status.

Table 6.6 **Participation in Merry-go-round activities to improve socio-economic status**

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION					
	Yes		No		Total	
Merry-go-round	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	61	46.9	17	13.1	78	60.0
No	43	33.1	9	6.9	52	40.0
TOTAL	104	80.0	26	20.0	130	100.0

X^2
=
.162226 with 1 df not significant at 31.4%

Φ
=
.05496

P
<
0.05

The above X^2 value .162226 between participation in merry-go-round activities and the objective to improve socio-economic status presents an insignificant statistical association. The relationship is

further indicated as weak by Phi value 0.05496.

Despite the insignificant association from 47% of the positive responses participation should not be wholly disregarded. The 47% include those who were using the contributions for education of children¹⁹. (Personal interview with Rehema Oloitiptip, 28th February, 1991) boost personal business²⁰. (Personal interview with Lilian Wanjiru, 20th March, 1991), purchase of farm implements and inputs, water tanks and improvements of house structures which were considered as socio-economic symbols. Education was a life time investment, not only on the individual level but also on the National level for personnel development. On the other hand a well boosted business went a long way to alleviate poverty on the concerned individual women and improve the livelihood of their household members. Use of group's cash contributions was a situational approach by members to overcome a 'crisis' (Thomas and Znanieck, 1974) of limited finances in particular incidence of need.

The above finding conform with NORAD (1984) and Brown (1975). NORAD report (1984) maintains that groups cash contributions were at times used for the education of a child or to boost business. Brown (1975) further asserts that in Tetu, merry-go-round contributions were used for purchase of water tanks or iron roofing sheets.

The 13% of the participants in merry-go-rounds who had no intentions of improving their economic status were those whose objective was purely to ease roles through purchase of household items, food, clothing and furniture.

Under this hypothesis, it was evident that participation in groups activities which included income generation, resource acquisition and merry-go-round statistically did not significantly contribute to improvement of their socio-economic status. However, the qualitative data indicated that these

activities bore a lot of importance to those who participated in them to improve their socio-economic status. It can be concluded that the insignificant statistical association between the above activities and improvement of socio-economic status, implies that there exists other factors, which were not considered in the study which enhance women,s socio-economic status.

6.3.0 H3

THE INFLUENCE OF ECOLOGICAL, MARKET AND SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON WOMEN'S CHOICE AND PARTICIPATION IN GROUPS ACTIVITIES

Studies in women groups activities by Wallis (1975), Brown, (1974), Pala (1974), Ndumbu (1985) and World bank (1989) have indicated that ecology, market and culture do influence members choice and participation in women groups activities. Since roles and status in African traditional societies are culturally defined, it is most likely that women groups members in activities that enhance their role performance and status positively.

Under this hypothesis, the data analyses attempt to examine the extent to which the above factors influence members, choice and participation in income generating, resource acquisition and reciprocal labour activities. For cross-tabulation purposes ecological zones have been used to represent the independent variables (ecology, culture and market). In the two zone, there is marked difference in climatic factors and the mode of production. Similarly, the predominant residents of the two zones are of different cultural background. The pattern of settlement are quite different in both zones. This factor has either facilitated or hindered participation in different groups activities.

6.3.1 Influence of ecology, culture and market on participation in income generating activities

In the study, it has been hypothesised that ecology, culture and the market situation do influence the choice and participation of women in different types of groups activities. An income generating activity that may either be culturally appropriate, ecologically suitable or have a favourable market is most likely to be chosen and participated in by groups.

Table 6.7 Participation in income generating activities in the two ecological zones.

ZONE (Ecology, Culture & market)	INCOME GENERATING					
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High potential	30	26.2	49	37.7	83	63.8
	34	33.1	4	3.1	47	36.2
Low potential						
TOTAL	77	59.2	53	40.8	130	100.0

X^2 = 29.66 with 2 df significant 100% confidence level

Phi = 0.49399

P> = 0.05

The above calculated X^2 value statistics demonstrated a highly significant statistical association between the influence of ecology, culture and the market situation on women groups members' choice and participation in income generating activities. The X^2 value was significant at 100% confidence level, showing a non-chance occurrence. A positive relationship was further indicated by the Phi value 0.49399. It was observed from the table that the majority of participants (33%) and the minority of participants (3.1%) in the low production zone who did not participate in income generating activities were those who restrict their activities to reciprocal labour. The minority of participants (26%) and the majority of non-participants (38%) were from the high production zone. The 38% of non-participants in income generation are either involved in resource acquisition, merry-go-rounds or reciprocal labour.

An explanation for this zonal participation variation in income generation activities can be drawn from the types of activities, facilitating factors and the obstacles in their involvement. In the low production zone where the majority of participants in this kind of activity were found, the major activity was livestock rearing for sale as source of beef and mutton. The facilitating factors for involvement in this activity included the low and convenient contributions (Kshs.20 - 50) that were made initially by members on a monthly basis; cultural and ecological appropriateness of the activity, which make it easy to manage groups livestock by distributing them to members homesteads. The favourable market situation too in Nairobi and its surrounding environment offered high profit returns. Some few women groups combined livestock rearing with running of shop kiosks or flour mills. These facilities were conveniently located in the market centres. Part of

the produce from the Ewuaso women groups irrigation project was marketed for financial returns while the rest was used for consumption.

In the high production zone where the least participants in income generation were found, the main activities included farming, building constructions of rental houses and small scale business and trade. Members involvement in farming projects was facilitated by ecological suitability, cultural appropriateness of participants who were the agricultural Gikuyu and, the favourable market situation, this being a densely populated zone. But widespread participation in commercial farming was limited by land shortage (for lease) and high lease fee, financial strain on members and time strain. During the peak seasons members were required to provide farm labour for two days per week. This was not possible for most women who had both domestic and farm roles to perform.

Population increase in the high production zone had led to groups involvement in building constructions for rental purposes, either as commercial or residential buildings. Members participation was limited by financial strain. To qualify as a registered shareholder a member had to contribute Kshs.1,000 and above.²¹ (Personal interview with Joyce Mutel, 27th February, 1991).

Yet most rural women are poor, unemployed and underpaid (Sivard, 1985).

Groups involvement in small-scale business and trade in foodstuff, charcoal, sawdust and clothing was facilitated by the locally available market. Initial contributions of Kshs.20-50 per member on a monthly basis were within the range of members ability. But widespread participation was limited by time. Given the hectic days a head of most women, they found it difficult to participate effectively by providing their labour twice every week.

Table 6.9 presents members participation in resource acquisition activities in the two ecological zones.

6.3.2 Influence of ecology and culture on participation in resource acquisition activities

Culture and ecology were considered to influence women's choice and participation in acquisition of different forms of resources. Women (Gikuyu) from a cultural background that deprived them private ownership of land as a gender were more likely to participate in its acquisition as a group, particularly if their area of settlement had a crisis of land scarcity. But women (Maasai) from a cultural background where private ownership of land did not exist and were not experiencing a land scarcity crisis, were least likely to participate in groups acquisition of agricultural land.

If both groups of women (Gikuyu and Maasai) happened to be experiencing a common crisis as a gender such as low status, then they were bound to participate in a similar activity. Women from different cultural background did occupy a low economic status. To improve this situation most of them were involved in acquisition of commercial plots.

TABLE 6.8 Participation in resource acquisition activities in the two ecological zones

ECOLOGICAL ZONES (Ecology and Culture)	RESOURCE ACQUISITION					
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High production	46	35.3	37	28.5	83	63.8
Low production	30	23.1	17	13.1	47	36.2
TOTAL	76	58.4	54	41.6	130	100.0

X^2 = 15.07243 with 1 df significant at 99.8% confidence level

Phi = 032233

$P>$ = 0.05

The above findings indicate a very significant statistical association between the influence of ecology and culture on resource acquisition activities. However the strength of the relationship is moderate as shown by the Phi value of 0.32. Implying there are other important factors that were not considered in the study. Despite this, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null one

rejected.

It is observable that out of 58.4% of the participants in resource acquisition - (purchase of agricultural land and plots) the majority - 35.5%, are from the high production zone. But the tables further indicates that the majority (28.5%) of non-participants are from this same zone. On the contrary, the minority of the participants (23.1%) and the non-participants (13.1%) are from the low production zone. This phenomenon of the majority of both participants and non-participants being from one zone while both minorities are from the other, can be attributed to the sampling procedure.

However, it was evident from the raw data that groups in low production zone were mainly involved in plots acquisition, except for two that participated in purchase of agricultural land. In the high production zone, 12 groups engaged in purchase of agricultural land while the rest were involved in plots acquisition.

The evident difference in extensive acquisition of agricultural land in the high production zone unlike the low one had both population density and cultural explanation. Group members that were engaged in this activity in both zones were of Gikuyu origin. Majority of them live in the high potential zone. But the Maasai members who were predominantly found in the low potential zone did not engage in this activity. The two ethnic groups had marked differences in their modes of production and land tenure systems. The Gikuyu were traditionally cultivators and women had no ownership rights to land as wives and daughters (Kenyatta, 1975). They only had usufructory rights. Given the land scarcity in this high production zone due to high population density, this factor had led to the evolvement of an enterprising spirit among Gikuyu women to satisfy their need for land as a source of livelihood.

Among the pastoral Maasai in the low potential zone, land scarcity and overpopulation had not been a problem at the time yet. Moreover private ownership of land had not been in existence among them for a long time (Jacobs, 1963 and Sankan, 1988). Maasai women therefore, may not have had any urgent need of acquiring pastoral land. Plots and the 202.35 hectares ranch owned by Ewuaso Women Group Irrigation Project were viewed as necessary for income generation and food security²². (Personal interview with Annemie Frantzen, 2nd April, 1991).

Table 6.10 presents participation in reciprocal labour activities in the two ecological zones.

6.3.3 **Influence of ecology and culture on participation in reciprocal labour activities**

Ecology highly influences people's culture and therefore mode of production. In a community where women played a key role in agricultural production, it was most likely that reciprocal labour groups would be formed to cope with farm work. But in a pastoral society like the Maasai, groups based on such activities were bound to be limited or to be lacking. While in both societies - Gikuyu and Maasai women have to play the role of fuel wood provision, Gikuyu women may have found it difficult to participate in fuel wood reciprocal labour activities. This was due to lack of forests and bushes in the surrounding area. But Maasai women could have these groups since the natural bushes had not been cleared.

Table 6.9 **Participation in reciprocal labour activities in two ecological zones.**

ZONE (Ecology and Culture)	RECIPROCAL LABOUR					
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High potential	16	12.3	67	51.5	83	63.8
	19	14.6	28	21.6	47	36.2
Low potential						
TOTAL	35	26.9	95	73.1	130	100.0

X^2 = 13.65880 with 1 df significant at 99.7%

Phi = 0.30835

P> =0.05

The above calculated X^2 value 13.65 at 99.7% confidence level presented a highly significant influence of ecology and culture on choice and participation of reciprocal labour activities. A moderate relationship is indicated by the Phi value of 0.308. This moderate relationship indicated a likelihood of existence of other hidden factors that influenced participation, that were not

considered in the study. However, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6.10 portrayed limited participation (27%) in reciprocal labour activities in the area of study. The high production zone presented the minimal participants (12.3%), but the majority of non-participants (51.5%). On the contrary low production zone had a higher percentage of participants (14.6%) and the least of non-participants (21.6%). This can probably be explained by both ecology and cultural factors. In the two zones there was a marked difference in the types of reciprocal labour activities that members engaged in.

In the high production zone, most of the groups members were of Gikuyu origin, the area had been extensively cleared for cultivation and was densely populated. This made it less possible for members to participate in fuel wood reciprocal labour, as there were no natural bushes and forests nearby. The presence of fertile cultivable soils and the cultural background of the cultivator Gikuyu members were contributing factors to participation in farm work reciprocal labour. Lack of participation by 51% of the members from this zone could be attributed to role conflicts. In the Gikuyu division of labour, women's roles extended from the home to the field (Kenyatta, 1975). These roles had been extended to animal husbandry following the withdrawal of both male labour for paid labour in the market economy, and child labour to school attendance. Consequently there had been frequent absenteeism by members leading to their eventual withdrawal from this activity². (Personal interview with Elizabeth Njeri, 21st March, 1991).

In the low production zone, members concentrated on fuel wood reciprocal labour activities. This was facilitated by the presence of natural vegetation that had not been cleared for neither settlement nor cultivation. This activity was also combined with prayer meetings by church members in

alternate homesteads²⁴. (Personal interview with Naini Kamukie, 6th March, 1991). The probable reason for the 21.6% of members not participating in this activity was that, they did not find any need of meetings as groups members of their respective homesteads unlike their 14.6% counterparts. Participation in farm work reciprocal labour was impossible since most of this zone was either arid or semi-arid. Also the predominant mode of production was pastoral farming. Therefore cultivation activities were not in line with members cultural background.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that culture, ecology, market situation and other factors such as population density do influence participation on women groups activities. While cultural appropriateness of members' ecological suitability and favourable market influenced Maasai women's participation on livestock rearing, culture and ecology influenced Gikuyu women's participation in farming activities. The increased population had led to higher demands for rental houses which had influenced participation in building construction. Purchase of group agricultural land had been influenced by their culture which deprived them the right to own land as wives and daughters.

TABLE 6:10 STEPWISE REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS IN PARTICIPATION IN
INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN THE TWO ECOLOGICAL ZONES

Predictors	Multiple	% of joint Explained Variation R^2	% of individual Explained Variation
*Cultural *Convenience(to roles and status)	.52913	28%	28%
*Ecological Suitability	.65944	43.5%	15.5%
*Market Situation	.69666	48.5%	5.0%
Total	_____	48.5	48.5

NB: Predictors indicated with asterisk (*) have been converted to dummy variables

Table 6:10 presents factors that were considered in the study as of major influence in choice of participation in income generating activities among women group members. Choice of an activity that was culturally convenient to both role and status emerged as the best predictor .It explained 28% of the variation while operating individually.

While operating jointly with ecological suitability, cultural convenience explained for 43.5% of the variance. While operating individually, ecology explained for 15.5% of the variance. While the above two predictors were considered jointly with the market situation, they explained for 48.5% of the total variation. But the market situation individually explained for 5% of the variation.

From the 48.5% the general implication was that the three factors (predictors) that were considered in hypothesis three- H3 as of major influence in choice of participation in income generating activities held some truth. But the implication was that there were other important factors that were not considered in the study that contribute for the remaining percentage 51.5%.

It was evident that, Women group members in Ngong division were more likely to participate in an income generating activity that they were already familiar with, so long as it could be conveniently utilised to both better their economic status and reduce their workload where applicable. Ecological suitability particularly in livestock rearing and farming was a major facilitating factor, while a conducive market situation reinforced the success of any income generating enterprise.

CHAPTER 7.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

In this chapter, the major findings of the study were summarised and conclusions drawn. Key findings that had a bearing on the study's objectives were highlighted to create a link between the issues raised in the first four chapters.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS.

7.1.1 How Group Activities Reduced Members' Workload.

The two women group activities - merry-go-round and reciprocal labour were of great significance in reducing members' workload and enhancement of roles performance. These roles included provisions of household items such as utensils, furniture, water tanks improved the house structure, purchase of farm inputs, food and clothing. Through reciprocal labour, members were able to provide fuel wood to their households, complete farm work in time and assist each other freely in domestic and farm work during times of need.

Group involvement in acquisition of agricultural land and farming projects was found to be a significant endeavour not only for women to improve farming methods but also to improve their role in household food security. This implied women's concern of the world-wide food crisis, and were using group efforts in farming projects not only to provide for their households needs but also gain income from the surplus food. Women's access to the most vital resource - land that they had continually been denied legally in the customary law, was the first step in their attempts to achieve food security.

In North Keekonyokie women's role in the provision of household water supply was one of the most arduous and time consuming duties. Women spent eleven to fourteen hours (from 1.00 am to 3 00 pm) per day during the dry season to make one trip to and from the borehole. This implied

lack of access to clean piped water in the area, which hindered participation in group activities during the dry season.

Generally, the majority of the women were found to be having a heavy workload. 37% said that they spent over 8 hours in their occupational work and 68% spent 3 to 5 hours in their domestic roles. Similar findings have been put forward by Krystal (1979) and World Bank (1989). This fact explained why some women found it difficult to effectively participate in women group activities due to role conflicts.

7.2.0 Impact of Women Groups activities on members socio-economic status

Women groups engaged in various activities so as to improve their economic status. Among them were income generating, resource acquisition and merry-go-rounds. Income generating activities were being utilized by 52% of the women groups to improve economic status. These activities included building constructions, livestock rearing, farming projects, small businesses and trade in foodstuffs, shop - kiosks, clothing and fuel wood. Building constructions and farming projects featured prominently in the high production zone, while livestock rearing was the main feature in the low production ecological zone. Income accrued from the business ventures was banked in group accounts. When convenient, it was withdrawn to be shared among members while the rest may was re-invested.

Almost all women groups in the division had formed amalgamated women groups ranging from 5 to 41 member groups either at the sub-locational level or locational level. Except in North Keekonyokie the amalgamated women groups in the other three locations - Ngong, Ongata Rongai and South Keekonyokie operated flour mills. In Ngong and South Keekonyokie, the amalgamated

groups had completed building constructions from which members collected rents. In North Keekonyokie, member groups were involved in the Ewuaso women groups irrigation project. Unfortunately, in Ongata Rongai location there was no other amalgamated group income generating project except the flour mill.

The implications of the above widespread income generating activities in the division were that women were aware of their low economic status that they occupied. Therefore, through collective efforts they were making attempts to gain some measure of economic independence from men.

In resource acquisition 48% of the members were participants. This type of activity included group purchase of agricultural land, mainly by Gikuyu women, and allocation (by county council) of commercial plots. Through access to agricultural land, most members hoped to improve their socio-economic status by growing adequate food for their household' consumption, while the surplus was sold for income to meet other household needs.

From the constructed plots, members had regular monthly income from the rents. This helped improve their economic status. Through involvement in merry-go-round activities some group member pooled their meagre incomes to boost their small business stock, while others (9%) invested the contributions in child education.

The implications of the above findings were that faced, with poverty, access to inadequate or lack of access to resources and limited finances, women group members adopted a situational approach strategy (Thomas and Znanieck, 1974) to counter-check these situations of crisis. The findings further implied women's realisation of their marginalised state as a gender, following deterioration of their socio-economic status over the recent decades (Rodney, 1972). The above collective

efforts were therefore manifestations of a 'silent revolution' (Sivard, 1985), which indicated women's desire to attain some measure of economic independence from men.

Women groups involvement in community development activities (financial and labour contributions to public projects, initiation and implementation of water projects, and entertainment during public gatherings) were some of the mechanisms being used in Ngong Division by women to gain social visibility as a gender. 97% stated this social visibility to have been portrayed through invitation to public rallies and 68% invitation to seminars.

The implications of this finding are that women had realised that by uplifting their social status, they would gradually achieve some political and economic power that they highly lacked.

7.3.0 **THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL, MARKET AND ECOLOGICAL FACTORS ON CHOICE OF WOMEN GROUP ACTIVITIES**

The influence of socio-cultural and ecological factors was found to be significantly related to income generating, resource acquisition and reciprocal labour activities.

In income generating activities, different types of business ventures featured prominently in the two different agro-ecological zones, which were also culturally different. In the high productivity zone (Ngong and Ongata Rongai locations), income generation in farming projects, rental houses, small businesses and trade in foodstuffs, shop - kiosks, clothing and fuel wood featured prominently. The occurrence of several farming projects in this zone could be attributed to both favourable ecology and the cultural background of the dominant participants, Gikuyu women who were traditionally agriculturists. But the prominent occurrence of rental houses in this zone had a bearing on the market situation. Located at the periphery of the city of Nairobi, the demand for rental houses by the persistent increasing population was higher than the supply. Therefore, a booming business of

the time. The increasing population in the zone has also created a wider market for foodstuffs, clothing and fuel.

Livestock production was a prominent feature of the low productivity zone (North and South Keekonyokie). This occurrence could be explained by three factors; favourable ecology, cultural appropriateness and the demand for meat supply in the ready market in Nairobi and its environs.

Livestock rearing was carried out by the pastoral Maasai women who had found group herd management quite easy. The herds were easily accommodated in members' herds without any difficulties.

In resource acquisition the high production zone had an upper hand over the low production zone. Though plot acquisition was spread in the two zones, the high production zone had the highest number. Purchase of agricultural land was a feature of the high production zone. Participants were women of Gikuyu origin. Members of the two groups that were involved in this activity in the low production zone were also of Gikuyu origin. From this finding culture had the greatest influence on purchase of agricultural land. Traditionally, the Gikuyu land tenure system recognised private ownership of land, but discriminated women as legal proprietors through inheritance (Kenyatta, 1975). Therefore, due to this relative deprivation of one of the most vital resources, an enterprising spirit has emerged among Gikuyu women to satisfy its need. Among the Maasai traditionally, the land tenure system recognised communal ownership of land (Jacobs, 1963, Sankan 1988). Despite recent changes in the land tenure system which had resulted to establishment of ranching schemes (Munei, 1991), there had not been adverse effects of land deprivation among the Maasai population. This probably explained the delay in the development of an enterprising spirit among Maasai women in land acquisition.

Different types of reciprocal labour activities also featured prominently in the two different zones. Both ecology and cultural background had a lot of influence on participation. Reciprocal Labour in cultivation dominated in the high production zone where the soil was fertile and members were traditionally cultivators. In the low production zone, where this activity was minimal, the soil was infertile and the majority of the members were pastoralists.

Reciprocal Labour in fuel wood provision occurred only in the low production zone. Participation could be explained by both cultural and ecological factors. This zone covered both arid and semi-arid areas. The natural vegetation, therefore, had not been cleared for cultivation, nor for widespread settlement. This vegetation provided group members with fuel wood that was needed to fulfil their role in fuel wood provision.

The implications of the above findings were that women groups' choice of whichever activities to be involved in, was highly determined by the ecology, culture and the market situation in case of income generating activities.

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CONCLUSION

A comparison of both Maasai and Gikuyu women's roles and status reveals that Maasai women were better placed in terms of roles allocation in their society. Their roles were mainly centred around the homestead, while those of their Agikuyu counterparts extended from the homestead to the farm. This implied that Gikuyu women had longer working hours than the Maasai women except during the dry seasons when water was scarce.

Socio-economically Maasai women also occupied a better status than the Gikuyu women. Unlike among the Agikuyu, a married Maasai woman had the right to own property in form of livestock that she had been given by her male relatives. Moreover, the communal ownership of land among the Maasai had not yet threatened women's economic status in the society greatly. They still had access to this vital resource, though this might not be the case some years to come. On the other hand Gikuyu women had only use rights as daughters and wives; they neither could legally own land nor inherit it. This might be the probable explanation in the current study, as to why only Gikuyu women appeared to have developed an enterprising spirit in acquisition (through purchase) of agricultural land, plots and more varied business ventures in comparison to Maasai women. Maasai women were involved in plots acquisition and livestock rearing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the preceding findings of the study the following recommendations can be drawn.

- 1) Women in Ngong Division bore a heavy workload and worked for a minimum of eleven hours per day. They should therefore be educated, trained in skills and encouraged through the social services department to engage in group activities that would greatly help reduce their workload. These could include making of energy saving 'jikos' at the members' homesteads, buying or constructing for each other water tanks and making reciprocal labour a more widespread activity. Cooperation from the ministries of energy, science and technology and, culture and social services should be sought for, in order to impart the necessary skills.
- 2) For the success of women projects in farming, poultry keeping and livestock rearing, dissemination of professional knowledge is vital. This calls for cooperation from the Ministry of Agriculture and livestock Development. Staff members' assistance from this Ministry to related women projects would highly contribute to their success, both in achieving food security for the households and in generating some income. The malignant problem of livestock death due to Nagana in North and South Keekonyokie would greatly be reduced. For the livestock rearing women groups to benefit from veterinary services easily, the concerned group should be allocated with a number of hectares in the ranching schemes for separate management of groups' herds.
- 3) Women involvement in income generating projects had become one of the most viable method of improving their economic status. To enhance this achievement, all groups should be given equal chances to benefit from either fund raising, loans, plots or both material and financial assistance from well- wishers. There was a general complaint that there was

favouritism when it came to allocation of grants, loans and plots. Some local administrators were also said to be uncooperative with members whose groups did not fall in their favour. It would, therefore, be advisable that in the all groups be treated equally by those in positions of power and authority, whenever their assistance is needed.

- 4) Since most women are unable to participate in resource acquisition activities due to poverty, the Government should identify the very needy households and allocate them with agricultural land or residential plots for livelihood and shelter purposes.
- 5) Bead work among Maasai women groups was widely cited as an alternative source of income. But women faced a major problem in marketing. It would be advisable for the government to establish a curio shop within the Division or in Nairobi where these bead work can be sold from.
- 6) Local administrators and politicians were identified as some of the most important promoters of women group activities. But political interference was also cited to have contributed to suspension of some particular group income generating projects. It would be important if the concerned administrators and politicians discouraged women group members from spreading malicious gossip against their fellow group members.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Survey Number _____
2. Location _____
3. Sub-Location _____
4. Position Held in the Group - Official (Specify)
- Ordinary member.
5. Age _____
6. Marital Status
- (a) Single.....5
- (b) Married.....4
- (c) Separated.....3
- (d) Divorced.....2
- (e) Widowed.....1
7. Education
- (a) No Education.....4
- (b) Primary.....3
- (c) Secondary.....2
- (d) Post Secondary-Diploma/Graduate1
8. Occupation _____

9. How many dependants do you have? (actual number).....
- (a) Less than 5 4
 - (b) Between 5-10 3
 - (c) More than 11 2
 - (d) None 1
10. What are your sources of household income?
- (a) Sale of Subsistence crops 6
 - (b) Sale of Cash Crops 5
 - (c) Sale of livestock/Products..... 4
 - (d) Self wage employment..... 3
 - (e) Casual employment..... 2
 - (f) Remittance by a relative..... 1
11. What does your husband do for a living?
- (a) Businessman..... 6
 - (b) A professional (teacher, doctor, etc.)..... 5
 - (c) A politician..... 4
 - (d) Local government administrator 3
 - (e) Casual Labourer (specify)..... 2
 - (f) Others 1
12. How much time do you spend on your occupational work?

(Actual hours)_____

- (a) Less than 3 hours.....4
- (b) Between 3-5 hours.....3
- (c) Between 5-8 hours.....2
- (d) Over 8 hours.....1

13. Do you have any other duties apart from the occupational one above?

- (a) Yes2
- (b) No1

14. If yes, which one?

- i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

15. How much time per day do you spend these other duties?

(Actual hours).....

- (a) Less than 3 hours..... 4
- (b) Between 3 to 5 hours..... 3
- (c) Between 5 to 8 hours..... 2
- (d) More than 8 hours 1

16. Who helps you accomplish your routine duties?
- (a) Hired labour 4
 - (b) Children 3
 - (c) Husband 2
 - (d) No one 1
17. What type of fuel does the family use for cooking?
- (a) Sawdust 6
 - (b) Firewood 5
 - (c) Paraffin 4
 - (d) Charcoal 3
 - (e) Gas 2
 - (f) Electricity 1
18. If firewood who is responsible for the supply?
- (a) Wife 4
 - (b) Hired labour 3
 - (c) Children 2
 - (d) Labour exchange group 1
19. If other, who buys?
- (a) Wife 3
 - (b) Husband 2
 - (c) Relatives - (sons/daughters) 1
20. Do you have piped water in the homestead?
- (a) Yes 2

(b)	No.....	1
21.	Who ensures the supply for the family daily needs?	
(a)	Wife	3
(b)	Children	2
(c)	Hired labour	1

Owner ship and usage of agricultural land

22.	Do you have access to shelter land and agricultural land?	
(a)	Yes as private proprietor	5
(b)	Yes, through husband	4
(c)	Slum dweller on country council land	2
(d)	Squatter on Private land	1
23.	How big is the piece of land? (Actual hecterage.....	
(a)	Less than a hectare	4
(b)	Between one to 5 hectares.....	3
(c)	More than 5 hectares	2
(d)	More than 10 hectares	1
24.	How did you come to own the land?	
(a)	Through inheritance.....	4
(b)	Purchased individually	3
(c)	Purchased through women group efforts.....	2
(d)	Succession to user right.....	1
25.	How do you utilise this land?	
(a)	Growing of subsistence crops	4

- (b) Growing of both subsistence and cash crops 3
- (c) Growing of cash crops..... 2
- (d) Livestock keeping only 1
26. Who makes decision regarding the following?
- (a) Use of finances which either or both of you have earned
- (b) What and when to plant.....
- (c) General use of livestock.....
- (d) How to use farm produce
- (e) Whether to join a social group or not.....

Questions based on women groups participation

28. What is the name/s of the women group/s to which you belong?

- (i)
- (ii).....
- (iii).....

29. When was it formed? _____ Year _____

When did you join?

30. Who introduced you to the group?

- (a) -a friend/neighbour 4
- (b) -a relative 3
- (c) -Wife of a prominent local person..... 2
- (d) -Others..... 1

31. Why did you join that particular group?

- (a) For material gain (domestic items/resources) 4

- (b) For companionship 3
- (c) To learn new skills..... 2
- (d) To benefit from group labour or social assistance
during hardships 1
32. What types of activities does the group engage in?
- (a) Merry go rounds..... 5
- (b) Reciprocal Labour 4
- (c) Income generation (specify which)..... 3
- (d) Acquisition of resources 2
- (e) Community development activities..... 1
33. Why did the group members decided to engage in that/those
particular type/s of activity/activities?
- (a) To ease their roles 4
- (b) That particular activity is more favourable 3
- (c) The physical environment of the area would favour that particular activity more than
others 2
- (d) To raise the socio-economic status of the members..... 1
34. In merry-go-rounds, how much does each member contribute on a weekly/monthly/yearly
basis? Kshs.....
- Are there set formats for the expenditure of the contributions?
- (a) Yes, (specify which) 2
- (b) No, (why?)..... 1
35. In reciprocal labour, how often do you have labour exchange activities?
- (a) Throughout the year 3

- (b) During the peak seasons 2
- (c) Whenever need arises 1

Do you sell your labour?

- (a) Yes,.....2 To who?.....
- (b) No,.....1 Why?

36. In income generation, what made you think of engaging in that particular type of business?

- (a) Presence of ready market..... 3
- (b) It was more appropriate both culturally and ecologically 2
- (c) More convenient for both roles/status.....

37. How much was each member required to contribute at the initial stage?

KShs

38. Who runs the business?

- (a) Members, on a rotational basis..... 3
- (b) Hired labour 2
- (c) Both members and hired labour 1

39. How is the income accrued from the business used?

- (a) All of it is re-invested 3
- (b) It is shared among members..... 2
- (c) Some of it is re-invested and the rest shared by members 1

40. In what ways do you think that the particular group activity/activities helped ease/improve your roles and status?

ROLES

STATUS

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| (i) | |
| (ii)..... | (i) |
| (iii)..... | (ii) |
| (iv)..... | (iii)..... |
| | (iv)..... |

41. Women groups should concentrate more on easing the roles and socio-economic status of women, but not in improving their political status.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|
| (a) | Very important | 4 |
| (b) | Agree | 3 |
| (c) | Disagree | 2 |
| (d) | Strongly disagree..... | 1 |

42. How important does your family/husband, consider your membership to a women group?

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|
| (a) | Very important | 4 |
| (b) | Fairly important | 3 |
| (c) | Don't know..... | 1 |

43. How supportive (Financially or emotionally) is your family about your group participation?

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|
| (a) | Very supportive..... | 4 |
| (b) | Fairly supportive..... | 3 |
| (c) | Not supportive | 2 |

(d) Very discouraging 1

44. When there is need for the public to collaborate in projects, to what degree do you collaborate?

(a) A great deal..... 4

(b) Sometimes..... 3

(c) A little..... 2

(d) Not at all 1

45. What type of support do you offer?

(a) Material..... 4

(b) Labour 3

(c) Financial..... 2

(d) Entertainment..... 1

Organisation Structure

46. What criteria do you use to recruit members into your group?

(a) Age 7

(b) Religion..... 6

(c) Educational level 5

(d) Occupation/place of work..... 4

(e) Permanent residence 3

(f) Sex..... 2

(g) Individual's interest and ability to

- Participate 1
47. Do you have any male members in your group?
- (a) Yes,..... 2 Why?.....
- (b) No,..... 1 Why not?.....
48. Who decides on whom to recruit or expel from the group?
- (a) All group members 4
- (b) Management committee..... 3
- (c) Executive committee 2
- (d) Officials (Chairlady, Secretary, Treasurer) 1
49. Do you have a standardised official format for example-
- General group meetings
- Management Committee
- Executive Committee
- Officials (Chairlady, Secretary, Treasurer)
- (a) Yes..... 2
- (b) No..... 1
50. In your opinion, what are the most important requirements of a women's group leader?
- Chairlady
-
-
- Treasurer
-
-

Secretary

.....

51. How often does the group meet?
- (a) On a weekly basis 4
- (b) On a monthly basis..... 3
- (c) Whenever need arises..... 2
- (d) On yearly basis..... 1

52. Who makes decisions on matters of?
- (a) Amounts of financial contributions by members? 4
- (b) Disciplinary actions on erring members: 3
- (c) Deposit or withdrawal of banked money: 2
- (d) Contribution of non-group activities: 1

Client/Patronship.

53. Do you have a group patron/patroness?
- (a) Yes, 2
- (b) No, 1

54. What position does she/he hold?
- (a) A politician 4
- (b) A local Government Administration 3
- (c) Wife of a prominent local person..... 2
- (d) A prominent local person 1

55. What type of assistance has the group benefited in from the patron/patrons?
- (a) Advice on that type of projects/activities to engage in 4

- (b) Arrangement for planning and execution of group projects..... 3
- (c) Financial assistance 2
- (d) Material assistance..... 1
56. Political Status Enhancement.
- Do you have any personal interest in politics?
- (a) Very much 4
- (b) Some 3
- (c) Very little..... 2
- (d) None at all 1
57. Why have you not been interested in politics?
- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
58. Do you personally hold any political post?
- (a) Yes,..... (Why?).....
- (b) No,.....
59. Who has influenced you most in becoming interested in politics?
- (a) My pastor/priest..... 5
- (b) My school teacher..... 4
- (c) A relative (specify)..... 3
- (d) The mass media 2
- (e) No one..... 1
60. Have women group's participation increased members' political participation?
- (a) Yes, 2

(b) No, 1

Social Status Improvement.

61. To what extent do you think women groups' participation in community development projects has increased women's social visibility?

(a) Very much 4

(b) Much 3

(c) A little 2

(d) Non at all 1

62. In which ways have this social visibility been portrayed?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

Economic Status Improvement.

63. How has your participation in the groups' activities improved your socio-economic status?

(a) 5

(b) 4

(c) 3

(d) 2

(e) 1

Constraints

64. What problems do groups experience in their group activities endeavour?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

65. In what ways do you think these problems could be overcome?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii).....
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1a. How did group come with the idea of amalgamating smaller groups into a larger one?
- b. What procedure did you use for selection of leaders of the larger (amalgamated) group?
- 2a. What criteria did you use to select the type of project activity that you are involved in?
- b. How do you finance your project? Have you ever received any type of external assistance?
If yes, what type, when and from whom?
- 3a. How do you execute your project work?
- b. What problems if any do you experience during execution, and how have you overcome them?

APPENDIX III

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1. How often does your office assist women group?
- 2. What criteria do you use to determine choice of beneficiary women group?
- 3. What type of assistance does your office offer to women groups?
- 4. Do you know of any other government office(s) or organisations that offer assistance to women groups? If yes, What type of assistance do they offer?

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF RESOURCE PERSONS

A. KEY INFORMANTS.

1. Ms Loremeta District - social officer Kajiado, In charge of women.
2. Annemie Frantzen: Netherlands Development organisation representative: Women advisor Kajiado district, Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) Programme.
3. Hellen Sition Karei: Divisional Social development assistant, Ngong division.
4. Mr Mataya: Divisional cooperative assistant officer, in charge of women, Ngong division.

KANU MAENDELEO YA WANAWAKE ORGANIZATION, LOCATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES IN NGONG DIVISION

<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
5. Hanna Nairepu	- South Keekonyokie
6. Monica Wangui	- North Keekonyokie
7. Esther Nduta	- Ongata Rongai

NB. The Ngong Location MYWO representative declined to divulge any information.

B. WOMEN GROUP LEADERS / MEMBERS RESOURCE PERSONS.

Ongata Rongai location

8. Joyce Mutel
9. Justina Keepe
10. Mary Waichanguru
11. Tecla Wanjiku
12. Waceke Ottoma
13. Wanjiku Nduati

14. Zipporah Gathoni

Ngong Location

15. Elizabeth Njeri

16. Margaret Nokunono

17. Martha Ngigi

18. Mishi Mohammed

19. Lilian Wanjiku

20. Rehema Oloiptip

South Keekonyokie

21. Hanna Nairepu

22. Naini Kamukie

23. Peris Njumbi

North Keekonyokie

24. Monica Wangui

25. Naisoi Kidi

26. Narantai Loloshon.