

**THE ROLE PLAYED BY MEN IN INFLUENCING
FEMALE CIRCUMCISION AMONG THE MERU OF
KENYA**

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**A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CULTURAL STUDIES OF THE INSTITUTE
OF AFRICAN STUDIES:**

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SEPTEMBER 2003

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DECLARATION

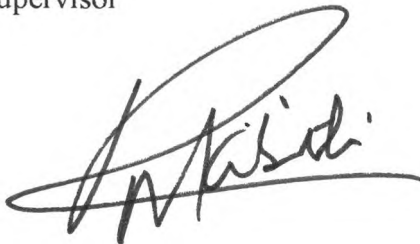
This is to declare that this paper is my original work and has not been presented for any academic award in any university

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature consists of a large, stylized 'L' followed by 'uke' and 'Mungira' written in a cursive style. There is a vertical line to the right of the signature, and the number '077' is written at the bottom right of the signature.

NKUMBUKU LUKE MUNGIRIA

SUPERVISOR

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is highly stylized and cursive, appearing to read 'Ruth Kibiti'.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my dad M’Nkumbuku M’Rintuara (Aged 83 years) for his constant encouragement despite his advanced age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My deep and sincere thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Ruth Kibiti for her untiring counsel, guidance, correction, positive criticism and understanding. I am also deeply indebted to my wife Aileen Kajuju, who spared her time to read every bit of my work from the project proposal to the questionnaire and the final sentence of this thesis. She also acted as my research assistance by distributing the research questionnaires to the informants and collecting them back when I was away for safekeeping and confidentiality.

I also wish to acknowledge the department of culture through the Director Mr. S.L Anami, for providing the funds that enabled me to carry out this study.

I am also deeply indebted to all my informants and all other persons who assisted me in one way or another in the field. In particular I cannot forget the help and cooperation received from the District Social Development Officer, Isiolo and the Principal of Thuura Boys Secondary School, Meru District. Special thanks also goes to chief Elijah Maingi of Thuura Location and chief Stanley Kathurima of Isiolo Central Location. I must also express my sincere gratitude to all those who extended to me hospitality and friendship during my field research.

Finally my appreciation goes to my sons Tony Kithinji, Shem Gitobu and Billy Clinton Mwendu for their untiring encouragement and understanding when they missed the services and presence of dad due to commitment arising from this project.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to establish whether men play any role in influencing women undergo clitoridectomy, a cultural practice that has persisted in Meru despite massive campaign against it by various women leaders and non governmental organizations. For example, the surgical operation and the associated rituals have been regarded as harmful to the physical and psychological well being of the initiates. However, more and more girls and young women are still circumcised in Tharaka and Nyambene areas of Meru. One of the aims of this study was to determine whether women just decide to be mutilated or whether they are forced by circumstances to undergo this rite. It was also important too determine whether men treat circumcised women equally with those uncircumcised. The study also looked at what forces had sustained female circumcision despite high level of Christianity in Meru. The impact of the ban and the sensitization campaigns that have been launched in Meru North and Tharaka districts was also examined.

What is presented in this dissertation is therefore a critical look and analysis of those factors that make men force women to be circumcised among the Meru community. The study aims to contribute to an issue at Kenya's women and forward looking men concern and policy makers as regards female genital mutilation.

Although the government of Kenya has banned female circumcision, the fight against this vice has been entirely left to women, who are fighting a losing battle. The study aims to bring a new dimension to this war that is making men say no to female circumcision because they are the force behind it. Since men are the overall decision-makers when it comes to family matters, they are likely to be effective against the war on female circumcision if they are properly sensitized.

By addressing the role played by men in female circumcision, this paper aims at educating the men on the dangers of perpetuating a cultural practice that has been overtaken by events and that is destructive to their beloved one's. The study was pursued through an in-depth examination of female circumcision among the Meru living on the Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Meru of Kenya live on the Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya in Eastern province. Currently the Meru people occupy the four districts of Meru North, Meru central, Meru South and Tharaka. Until early 1990s these districts used to be one large Meru district. They also occupy the central division of Isiolo district and the Tseikuru division of Mwingi district. They consist of the sub-tribes of Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Tharaka, Mwimbi and Chuka. The sub-tribes speak a language called Kimeru but the dialects differ from one sub-tribe to the other (see map on page 36)

The land of Meru is essentially an agricultural one and most of the inhabitants of Meru district are farmers. They grow crops such as coffee, tea, tobacco, pyrethrum, wheat, cotton and MIRAA – for cash crops and maize, millet, bananas, various types of beans and potatoes for subsistence. Livestock keeping is common and most people keep cattle, goats and sheep in addition to crop farming.

Like most Bantus of East Africa the traditional Meru had various rites of passage, which members of the society had to undergo before they were accepted as full members of the various councils of elders. These rites of passage included naming, circumcision, wedding, naming and separation of age-sets, becoming a member of *Njuri-Ncheke* council of elders, funeral rites etc. Though most of these ceremonies have lost their meaning and importance due to the introduction of Western education, Christianity and foreign cultures, circumcision is still highly valued particularly for male members of the society. However, clitoridectomy of girls and young women is still widespread among the Meru people despite the high level of education in the Meru lands and various government restrictions.

There are various non-governmental organizations campaigning against female circumcision among the Meru. The provincial administration has also outlawed this cultural practice that has persisted for over 50 years from the time the colonial administration first banned it in 1956.

The reasons for female circumcision are mainly socio-cultural and mythical. Many societies that practice it regard the practice as medical, a rite of passage, a mark of integration of members into religions and norms, a process of socialization and a kind of training for the future role of a woman as a mother and wife. This study looks at the contribution men have made in maintaining this practice which has been outlawed and banned by many authorities.

1.1 Background Information

The Ameru say that they originated from an Island called *mbwaa*. This story or myth, as is told, was passed from father to son or grandfather to grandson. The myth puts to a coastal Island of Mbwaa around *Shungwaha* (may be somewhere around Lamu or Malindi). The Ameru lived peacefully on this Island until they were invaded by brown people who used canoes and were very fierce fighters. The Ameru surrendered to these war-like and aggressive brown people whom they called *nguu-ntune*, meaning brown or red clothes (Rimita 1987). Later the Ameru escaped to their present day land by crossing *iria-itune* (Red Lake), possibly the swollen River Tana.

It was from these brown people colonizers that the Meru came to learn that circumcision made men fierce, brave and courageous. The first Meru men to be circumcised were operated on by a woman who was a widow of a *nguu-ntune* (brown people) who had joined the Ameru when they crossed Iria-Itune as they escaped from their colonial masters. She revealed to the Ameru elders that circumcision made Nguu-ntune men fierce and brave warriors. Thus the meru elders commanded that all young men should be circumcised in order to be as fierce and brave as their attackers. This was the origin of circumcision among the Meru men (as for the origin of female circumcision, it was accidental as we shall see later).

1.2 Problem Statement

Meru people are one of the many tribes of Kenya that have refused to abandon female circumcision. In-fact the Meru circumcises both boys and girls almost at same age in life and at the same period and time with similar initiation ceremonies.

The colonial administration made some effort to stop female circumcision as early as 1940s . The missionaries in Meru ex-communicated those members in their churches who refused to abandon female circumcision. Through the influence of the colonial administrations, the *Njuri- Ncheke*, a respected Meru council of elders that used to rule the community banned the practice in 1956 and it went underground , (Murray 1974; Kenyatta 1978, Rimita 1987). Female circumcision became illegal in Meru from 1950 and it is still a crime to circumcise a woman but the vice is still very widespread. Infact 40% of Meru women aged 18 years and above get circumcised even today.

The World Health Organization (WHO) discouraged the practice worldwide in 1952 (Nyansera 1995) on health grounds. The government of Kenya banned the practice in 1982 because of the same reason. The ministry of gender, culture and social services and the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization has renewed their campaigns to eradicate this practice. There is also a lot of support received from various organizations, churches, schools and mass media in an effort to fight this problem that is viewed as a violation of human rights against women. Various seminars, workshops and other forums have been used to educate communities on the dangers of this practice. They argue that apart from being a health hazard, female circumcision is an oppressive example of the general subjugation of women.

The Meru people cherish female circumcision as a cultural practice despite its harmfulness as compared to benefits. The practice is more rampant due to the fact that men have remained silent towards the fight to eradicate it from the community. The fact that there are very few men involved in the fight against female circumcision means that the majority of them support it's continuation. Female circumcision among the Meru people means men would like it to continue with their dominating role over women. Women have very little voice over men in this community. For an ordinary man, women are there to be seen, give birth and take the nursing responsibility and care of the family members rather than participate in decision – making, economic activity or external participation which they should leave to men. Female circumcision assists men in achieving this.

This study therefore attempts to find solutions to these problems that have made it very difficult to eradicate female circumcision among the various sections of the Meru community. Does the practice serve the traditional functions it used to serve before western Christianity, education and modernization was brought to the community? What role have men continued to play in maintaining this practice? Has awareness as advocated by those concerned made any impact on the practice? How can men be incorporated in fighting female circumcision among the people of Meru and the world at large?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study was set to find out if men play any role in influencing women to be circumcised among the Meru of Kenya. Though the male circumcision has been greatly improved medically by being circumcised in hospitals, female circumcision is still done by traditional dirty women, aged and under very unhygienic conditions in the same form that it used to be done over thousands of years ago. The study also examined whether men can be incorporated in the fight against this vice by substituting some of the reasons for the persistence of the practice.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The study investigated the various types of circumcision of women and specifically the Meru type, and for what purpose this circumcision served the Meru women. It attempted to answer various questions regarding female circumcision. Does circumcision serve the same purpose for women as it does for men? Why should women be subjected to harmful practices in the name of circumcision? What benefits do women who are circumcised have over the uncircumcised if they have all gone through the same level of schooling? The study was to investigate whether men play any role in influencing female circumcision and whether men can be used to stop this practice. How can men participate in the campaign to eradicate female circumcision? It also investigated why the campaign against female circumcision has almost failed.

This study helped to correct the notion that it is women who wish to be circumcised by showing that men have literary forced women to be circumcised in order to continue with

their male chauvinism and dominance over women. The objective of this study was to find out the probability that women circumcision has been misunderstood and they have suffered more at the oppressive hands of the men who have always wanted their superiority over women to remain unchanged.

1.4 Justification /Rationale of the study

Little if any studies have been conducted on the influence of men to female circumcision. The few studies either look at the medical aspects of female circumcision or the role or functions of the practice. None has ever considered the reasons why women end up undergoing this mutilation despite its widespread condemnation locally and internationally. It was hoped that this study would add extra information towards understanding the reasons why this practice has refused to vanish among the Meru women and beyond. This study attempts to highlight some of the reasons given for women circumcision. It also looked at those reasons that are advanced by the male members of the community. Some of the reasons for female circumcision better serve the men and have no benefits to those women that undergo this rite.

Whereas there is need to protect and preserve good and beneficial cultural aspects, it is important to critically question those practices that mistreat some of the members of our community. Female circumcision of any type is detrimental to health and socio-psychological well being of women. This study may help women in identifying these reasons that advance discrimination of women in the name of preserving tribal cultural practices. It will benefit all members of the family who are forced to follow blindly some cultural practices that have little social economic benefits to them. The men members of the community will also be sensitized to the health problem associated with the practice. The study will provide positive lessons to the youngsters, both boys and girls, on the dangers of following an outdated practice that has already been replaced by modernization. The study will also help those groups that are involved in the fight against female circumcision by incorporating men in the war against the vice. Just as other researchers have noted, the men folk will be alerted of the dangers they expose to women as they put clitoridectomy as a condition for marriage. Finally I hope that the project will/may stimulate further intellectual debates and research.

1.5 Scope of the study

The study focused on origin of female circumcision globally, the origin of circumcision as a rite of passage among the Meru and why female circumcision has proved difficult to eradicate in Meru despite the high level of education in the region. It also looked at how men have continued to influence female circumcision and how they can be used to help in the campaign against it.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on what has been written or researched, on circumcision as a rite of passage in general and female circumcision in particular. These include published and unpublished articles from textbooks, reports, thesis, journals, magazines and even daily papers. The review looks at the global situation of female circumcision in Kenya and the Meru female circumcision practices in particular. A review of the various types of female circumcision has also been looked at as well as reasons put forward for this practice and the dangers likely to happen as a result of the practice. It also has a theoretical framework to the study.

2.1 Female Circumcision International

Generally, female circumcision is practiced in every continent of the world. It has been found to be practiced in more than 26 countries in Africa. In Kenya it is practiced by more than three-quarters of all tribes in the country (Maendeleo Ya Organisation bulletin (undated)).

A survey done by researchers has revealed that all girls without exception have been circumcised in Somalia (Hosken 1978). It is also practiced by many communities in Ethiopia and Sudan. All the communities living along the red sea coast, Eritrea, Djibout and Ogaden practice a kind of female circumcision known as infibulation. This practice is also widespread to many tribes in Nigeria, Mali and Senegal. Infibulation is the removal of part or all external genitalia and stitching of the vaginal opening (see definition of key terms).

No one knows the exact time when female circumcision started but scholars have argued that it first started with the ancient Egyptians, Romans and the pre-Muslim Arabs. The Arabs practiced it before Islam to protect their shepherd girls against male attack. However, it is not a religious requirement for it is not mentioned in the holy Koran or by prophet Mohammed. As a result, Islam does not force women to be circumcised. Saudi-Arabia, the cradle for the faith of Islam, does not circumcise her women subjects.

For various reasons it seems that female circumcision has been practiced in various parts of the world (El- Dareer 1978). It is found among the indigenous communities of Australia, North and South America as well as some ancient tribes of Russia and Far East. However, though, it is declining or vanishing in many continents, it is still widespread in Africa.

2.2 Female circumcision in Kenya,

Most of population groups of Kenya continue to practice excision in different forms. However the practice is secretly done and many circumcised women will not openly admits it. Surveys of secondary schools girls done in 1975 in Meru showed all the girls were excised. Another survey carried out at Murang'a in central province in 1972 showed that more than half of all girls in secondary schools were circumcised. According to Jomo Kenyatta in his book, facing mount Kenya no Kikuyu would ever think of marrying any uncircumcised girl (Kenyatta 1938). This was also the case with the traditional Nandi, Kisii, Meru and Maasai (langley 1979, Nyansera 1995, Rimita 1987 and Duncan 1992). Majority of women are still going on with this custom in rural areas but secretly because it has been banned by many churches and provincial administration.

Although female circumcision has existed for centuries, the exact time and place where it was first performed cannot be traced. Nobody also knows what the underlying motives for this practice were. Theories and suppositions have been put forward to explain its origins. Some scholars have argued that it originated on the land around the Nile valley during the Pharaonic era when young slave girls from the lower valley of the Nile were mutilated to curtail their sexual freedom and reduce unwanted pregnancies. Both Badri and Badri (1990) and El-Dareer (1978) contend that female circumcision was first known to the ancient Egyptians, Romans, Arabs and Tsarist Russians.

Though this practice is found in every continent in the world, its spreads and origin cannot be attributed to religion, but to the conditions, which sustain it. It is estimated that over 100 million women worldwide are circumcised yearly (Duncan 1992). In Kenya, 60% of the circumcised women belong to the Bantu, Cushites and Some Nilotic ethnic

groups. These communities are the Masai, Samburu, Gusii, Meru, Somalis, Kalenjins etc. The above communities also circumcise their men but for rather different reasons.

Among the Abagusii of Kenya, female circumcision existed to serve various functions in the society (Nyansera 1995). Circumcision ceremonies were regarded as powerful socialising agents, which were used as alternatives to formal schooling. The initiation rite made the Omogusii a full adult and integrated the individual into the community. The rites are the dividing line between immature childhood behaviour and respectable adult behaviour. After initiation, a girl was allowed to choose a suitor and marry.

2.3 Female circumcision among the Meru of Kenya

Female circumcision among the Meru, just as their male counterparts, was one of the rituals towards adulthood. It had both transitional and transformational value. It had a dynamic changing of the personality, powers and capabilities of the individual.

The Meru are culturally a kin to the Kalenjin, the Kikuyu and the Embu (Kenyatta 1938) in their emphasis and practice of both circumcisions for men and clitoridectomy for women. To the Meru, they were the most important rites of passage. They were a *conditio sine qua non* of adulthood (Chege 1993) and full tribal membership. They were a gate way to marriage, procreation and participation in the religious rites and ceremonies for both men and women. For men, it was the gateway to warriorhood and active participation in the *Kiama* (clan) and *Njuri* (Councils). For women, circumcision was the gateway to full participation in *Kiama Gia Aka* (women council).

The ceremonies, dances, songs, rites and education accompanying circumcision or clitoridectomy had, as their main purpose the transformation of the initiate both spiritually and psychologically, as a preparation for their changing nature and role in society. The required behavioural change was enshrined in symbolism of practices and its discourse. The initiate was not just a recipient of social instructions and expectations but an active participant. Individual volition was central.

The fact that circumcision of both males and females was regarded as the single most important rite among the Meru meant that those who were not circumcised were regarded as children regardless of their ages. They were regarded to be immature and childish (Chege 1985) and therefore not “full members” of the community. He or she could not therefore be told the secrets of the adults. Therefore circumcision promoted the individual from childhood to adulthood.

Circumcision among the Meru introduced the individual into the active life of the community. It was after circumcision that the male members of the community were given the mandate to protect the community from enemy attacks and also to go on raids for their community. However, unlike the male members who automatically became the community warriors, women were supposed to be subdued and obedient after circumcision. They were not supposed to put any fight with men or display any signs of courage or resistance in accepting men’s rule.

Circumcision gave both men and women the mandate to procreate. It was a terrible taboo (*Mugiro*) for an uncircumcised girl to become pregnant or even engage in sex. A child born of such people could defile the land such that the land would be barren, there would be no rain and no food. In most cases, abortion was tried. If it failed, the child had either to be killed or sold to foreigners where it is forgotten. The girl and the land had to be cleaned with the blood of a sheep to avoid calamities. Un initiated boys and girls thus had to be very careful of sexual activities and conception because of its serious consequences. In the case of the boys, the punishment meted out was death. For a girl, this was considered to be the worst thing that could happen to her, second only to barrenness. Although this, in itself, did not ruin her chances of marriage since marriage was universal she nevertheless lost the pride of girlhood without gaining the pride of true womanhood. She was ostracised by her age-mates and was ridiculed by the society. Only a married man or widower would marry her and she did not have an elaborate wedding ceremony. The bridewealth paid for her was less, being equivalent only to the one paid for a divorced woman. All this happened because in the Meru view, a girl who had conceived, regardless of her clitoridectomy status was a woman (*Muka*), and not a girl (*mwari*). It

was marriage, but more, conception and procreation which transformed a girl (*mwari*) into a woman (*muka*).

After clitoridectomy, a girl's status changed from *Mukenye* (unclitoridectomized girl) to a *Ngutu* (clitoridectomized girl). However, in both statuses' she remained a girl (*mwari*) until she got pregnant or married.

Circumcision and clitoridectomy were not only important in empowering a sexual role but also in development of sexual discipline and gender identity. This was highly emphasised in the Meru ideals for manhood and womanhood, which were accentuated in the rites and discourses accompanying circumcision. Although the development of the virtues of manhood and womanhood goes back to early childhood, initiation played a central role. The achievement of the real qualities of manhood and womanhood and the physical and psychological transformation came only with the rite. The practice can thus be rightly viewed as the climax, the test, the mark and at the same time the vehicle for the individual achievement of manhood and womanhood (Kenyatta 1938).

In Meru, the concept of manhood emphasis on masculinity and manliness. It entails physical strength, strength of character, determination, fierceness, virility and self-control. Although individual women could be said to be demonstrating wisdom, the Meru did not view this generally as a quality characteristic of females (Chege 1993, Rimita 1987).

In conformity with these different expectations, although both boys and girls were expected to face the ordeal with determination and to stand the pain of the operation with courage, it is for men that the test of bravery was more critical. The female perspective was that the characteristics of physical strength and self-control were vital also in their case. However, the dominant ideology excused them if they failed to meet these standards. It was and still is, understandable for females to show weakness and lack of self-control through either crying or showing emotional and physical stress in the face of pain. This means clitoridectomy was not intended to achieve similar results as

circumcision for men. For men, to cry was and is still absolutely unacceptable. It is opposed to all the ideals of manhood.

As the future warriors and protectors of their families and the community in general, boys were expected to be not only brave but also “fierce”. The controlled and courageous withstanding of psychological and physical harassment characteristic of the ceremonies related to circumcision, and the pain of cutting of the foreskin is the mark of achieved manhood (Rimita 1987, Fadiman 1982). For women, the withstanding of the clitoridectomy pain was by intent a preparation, which symbolised their readiness to withstand the pain of childbirth. Thus it prepared the woman for her role in procreation. The women believed clitoridectomy made birth both possible and easier (Holding 1942; Murray 1974).

One common reason given for clitoridectomy recognises that the clitoris is the source of female sexual arousal and holds that too much desire might lead to a woman “getting on top of man” or “hold his private parts during coitus”. This was a taboo according to the Meru. Clitoridectomy was thus practiced not only to control woman’s sex drive but to ensure sex was for procreation only, but rather to enable a woman to control her sexual desires and have coitus only when it was customarily right (Rimita 1987).

One could argue that through clitoridectomy women were not being empowered with regard to their sexuality but that the social norms were dictating when and how a woman should satisfy her sexual desires. It would also appear as the opponents of clitoridectomy have argued that for the Meru, there is a desire to maximise male sexual enjoyment while denying the same to the females. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that in Meru view, circumcision was believed to have a purpose of enabling men also to control their sexual desires as well (Mwaniki 1995). Further more it is said clitoridectomy does not completely destroy female sexual enjoyment, it is held rather to reduce “too much” desire.

We have seen that unlike for men where manhood, bravery and fierceness were emphasised, these were not significant virtues for women. To them what was significant

was the control of sexuality. Similar to the practice reported by Levine (1959) among the Gusii, women were expected to resist men's sexual advances, more particular sex outside marriage. A woman who easily gave in to a man's advances was viewed as being sexually promiscuous. Yet, a man had to prove his manhood in overcoming a woman's resistance. However he could not do so without her cooperation as real resistance would be likely to come to public attention. These days it is mistaken for violence (Chege 1993).

Further, although circumcision and clitoridectomy prepared the initiate for adult status, this status had different meaning for men and women. The predominant cultural ideology valued circumcision for men more than clitoridectomy. Men became "*persons*" after circumcision among the Meru. This is depicted in the new names given to them. The new name had to start with the vowel *Nto*, spelt as *M'* which means *Muntu*, the Bantu name for person. Women were not given new names. In keeping with this, when Meru talk about people, they have in mind men minus women and children.

2.3.1 Origin of Meru Female Circumcision

The first Meru woman to be circumcised was rather accidental. It was in the process of being cured a disease that made her stink. After being cut off the clitoris by a man, she was cured. As a reward to this man who had cured her through clitoridectomy, she married him. She proved to be very obedient, well mannered and very well behaved. From this time henceforth, elders believed that circumcision brought women to their knees and bettered their morals (Rimita 1987).

The Meru version of women circumcision consisted of the cutting out of the clitoris and inner parts of the Vagina. It was believed that the clitoris grew after it had been cut. To prevent this occurrence the circumciser had to chase the roots as far as possible. In some cases it was necessary to insert a "CONE" like object into the vagina to prevent the two lobes from coming together when healing. In any case the girl was always required to sit or sleep with both legs apart until she had healed.

2.4 Reasons given for Female Circumcision

The reasons given for the persistence of female circumcision are many and varied. Among the Kisii, it was believed that circumcision enabled the girl to be joined with her ancestors, avoid a curse and have blessings and good luck from them. The rite also bounded the initiate to the land by use of spilt blood. Similar sentiments were true of the traditional Meru but modern Meru girls undergo this rite so as to stop ridicule, be told the community secrets, avoid social stigma and be allowed to get a suitor, get married and procreate.

In the traditional Meru, the initiation ceremony serves various functions e.g. making an individual a proper member of an adult and integrating her into community. Most of these reasons have lost their meaning and application because female circumcision is done secretly and with no ceremony because it has been outlawed. However some girls will still undergo the rite against their wishes because their parents want to fulfill a cultural requirement of their ancestors.

Other reasons given for female circumcisions globally include the desire to decrease the sexual urge of the girl at puberty and therefore she cannot have sexual relationship with a man before marriage. Also it will enable a circumcised girl when married not to engage in extra-marital sexual relationship, thus keeping moral behaviour in the society (Hosken 1978).

Some people attach religious significance to female circumcision. There are fears among many communities that uncircumcised women harbour evil spirits and are unclean. This makes them to be avoided during certain occasions (Nyansera 1995). The Bendel of Nigeria performed female circumcision on pregnant women with the fear that if the baby is male, and his head touches the clitoris, he will die. The Bagisu of Uganda believes that non-circumcised women cannot conceive. The spirits will make her childless. If by chance she conceives and bears children, they will die. The clitoris is seen as a source of evil, which causes child mortality.

The Muslim practiced female circumcision because it is a tradition (Sunna) from Mohammed. However, it is not stated in Quran. Secondly not all-Muslim countries practice it including Saudi Arabia, which is the centre for Islam. According to the Kikuyu, the initiation ceremony associated with circumcision was multi-functional. It was a means of changing ones status and it was intended to reduce collision in social relationships or both. It also helped in differentiating roles in a society (Kenyatta 1938).

2.5 Dangers and negative effects of Female circumcision

The health results for the girls and women can be catastrophic. Apart from heavy bleeding, many infections e.g. tetanus result from use of dirty tools and environment. Some of the immediate health complications include shock due to hemorrhage or neurogenic due to severe pain and fear. Some initiates are known to develop urine retention caused by fear of scalding the fresh wound or due to urethral sticture, skin-flap etc. Sometimes injury to the other parts of the genitalia e.g urethra, vagina, anal canal, perineum and the bartholian glands. Many initiates also experience infections or failure of wound healing, septicaemic and death.

Female circumcision has been noted to present chronic pelvic infections. There are also difficulties and impossible penetration by the husband for those who underwent infibulation type of circumcision. Such husbands suffer psychologically from failure to perform. The lose of arousal or interest in sex by the wife means she will not enjoy sexually for life and this may cause divorce. There are also complications during baby delivery because of the scar formed (El –Dareer 1978, Hosken 1978). The perineum cannot stretch to give room for the baby’s head to be born. Hence an episiotomy has to be done failure the baby and the mother will die.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study attempt to look at the various factors that account for the persistence for female circumcision among the Meru people. The aim is to look at the various cultural and social economic factors responsible for this persistence and how far patriarchy system of the Meru community has contributed to it. The male dominance of this community to the women may have a role to play to further this practice of female circumcision.

Female circumcision is performed as a rite of passage to move the initiate from childhood (girlhood) to adulthood (womanhood). (Kenyatta 1938, Mbiti 1969 and Langley 1979). Initiation rites and female circumcision in particular, which is practiced by many communities in Kenya including Kisii, Meru, Kikuyu, Kalenjin and the Masaai conform to these phases. By putting their daughters through initiation, Nandi parents declared their daughter's eligibility for marriage and readiness to receive suitors. Circumcision here symbolizes maturity. During this ceremony, the virginity status of the girl is checked and rewarded accordingly, with praises and gifts if found intact. However, this expectation of virginity for girls until they have been circumcised does not apply among the Akamba and the Kuria communities. For the Samburu and the Maasai, girls were not expected to get pregnant before they have been circumcised. Initiation ceremonies thus functioned to provide checks and balances.

Despite female circumcision having been banned by most governments and churches, the practices still continue. This is because it is valued by those people whom it serves a useful function. Functionalism theory states that cultural traits exist to serve specific functions in the larger system. That is functioning or doing certain roles in the system or societies.

According to Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) all the existing cultural traits serve the basic, secondary and tertiary needs of individuals in society. When they no longer serve any purpose, they are abandoned and forgotten. Thus women circumcision has been banned by various authorities because its function has been replaced by modern education. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) extended functionalism in explaining human social relationships and behavior. This is structural functionalism. Men insist on female circumcision because it enables them to control the women gender. Social behavior exists to maintain a society social structure.

Functional traits, according to Robert Merton, (1949) are the commonly recognised roles played by the cultural traits. They constitute manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are always intended while latent functions are unintended but both are

displayed in the activities. This is true to the cultural function of female circumcision. Hence when analysed using the functional theory of Malinowski, female circumcision among the Meru has a function of enabling men to continue with their dominant role over the women. Though the rite also serves women by promoting them from childhood to adulthood, the main beneficiaries of the rites are the men. Female circumcision denies women their natural rights to enjoy sex while increasing that of men.

Theories act as a basis for development of conceptual framework. The conceptual frameworks in turn guide a study through description, explanation and prediction of relationships between variables of a phenomena being researched. The phenomena under scrutiny here are the influences of men in forcing women circumcision. This research was guided by the symbolic and functional theories. The cuttings of the clitoris and the pain experienced during the operations have certain symbolic meaning to the initiate. The circumcision ceremony serves many functions within the cultural context it exists.

2.7 Hypothesis

- (i) Social – cultural factors compel women to be circumcised against their will.
- (ii) The idea of men wishing to continue their social –cultural and economic dominance over women calls for the persistence of female circumcision.
- (iii) Men play the major role in influencing female circumcision despite the dangers associated with the practice.

2.8 Operationalization of variables

The role played by men, refers to any behaviour displayed by men in relation to circumcised and uncircumcised women and girls. This will include how men react to them, how they handle them and even how they accord respect to them. Do men rate circumcised and uncircumcised women equally among the Meru. Is there any use of derogatory language against uncircumcised women by men? How do men in this community treat women? The behaviour of men influences the circumcision of women.

2.9 Definition of Key terms /Phrases

(a) Circumcision:-

It is the popular, though medically incorrect, term to describe genital operations for men and women in many societies globally. For women, it is intended to reduce or extinguish sexual enjoyment while for men it is intended to make them brave, fierce and courageous.

(b) Sunna Circumcision

It is the cutting of the prepuce of the clitoris, a delicate operation that requires surgical tools and good lighting. It is highly questionable that the old women who do the operations, mostly with crude knives, or razor blades would be capable of performing such a delicate operation, which requires knowledge of anatomy. This is the kind of female circumcision advocated for the followers of Prophet Mohammed, Muslims of Arab origin.

(c) Excision (Clitoridectomy)

This is the removal of the clitoris and sometimes part or all external genitalia. It is the most frequently performed operation. The Meru community also practices this type of female circumcision also known as clitoridectomy. In some areas, cuts in the vagina are added to make child bearing easier. The result is the opposite.

(d) Infibulation (Pharaonic circumcision)

It involves the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia including the clitoris, Labia Minora and Labia Majora, and stitching and/or narrowing of the vaginal opening, leaving a small hole for urine and menstrual flow. In order to close the vulva, thorns, herbal paste or cut gun are used. The girls' legs are then tied together for two or three weeks until the two sides of the vulva have healed together.

In Kenya, this is common with Somalis, Pokot and other Northern Kenyan tribes.

[Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation Bulletin (Undated)]

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study was mainly based on field research and library search. I carried out field research among the Meru residents living in Isiolo town and also residents of Thuura location in Meru central District. As for library and documentation search, I visited various institutional libraries, government departmental libraries as well as the various annual reports at the District headquarters of Meru Central and Isiolo districts.

3.1 Study Area and site

The map on page 36 highlights the study site / location

The study area was Isiolo Central Location of Isiolo Township and Thuura Location of Miiiriga – Mieru Division of Meru central District. This area was purposely selected for various reasons. First I have worked and lived at Isiolo Town for over ten years. As a result I have come into contact with the various Sub-ethnic groups of Meru who live and trade at Isiolo Town who are the best representatives of all the Meru people who live in the four districts of Meru North, Meru Central, Meru South and Tharaka.

My second choice of Thuura location of Meru Central District was to enable me to compare the data obtained from a rural setting with that of an urban setting. Thuura is a rural location of Meru Central District where the inhabitants are still tied between the traditional life and the modern life brought by the Western education.

Isiolo Town is about 300 kilometers from Nairobi through the Nairobi - Meru- Isiolo road. It is only 52 kilometers from Meru town and the central location, which is one of the study areas, is partly in Meru North district.

Thuura Location is about 256 kilometers from Nairobi and only 6 kilometers from Meru town. The inhabitants of this location are mainly coffee farmers but they also grow maize, beans and bananas for subsistence.

3.2 Sampling Procedure

The research mainly adopted probability sampling combined with some non-probability sampling. The target population in this study was randomly selected from the entire two locations but based on villages and or estate in order to ensure representatives in the probability of being chosen. However the key informants were interviewed on identification. The villages were further divided into households where any of the adult members of the household could be interviewed. Only one household was chosen from every estate or village selected. These were randomly selected. However some individuals were positively identified and interviewed.

3.3 Methods of data Collection

This study used both primary and secondary data sources. This means that primary data was obtained by conducting in depth interviews with individual respondents. These comprised both men and women aged over 18 years and above residing in the two study sites. A semi – structured interview guide was used to give the respondents a chance to give their own views and opinion without restricting them to particular responses.

Another method used was use of key informants e.g. respected elders, a traditional female circumciser or surgeon (*Mutani wa Muka*) and a respected women opinion holder. These people were identified by use of community/social development officers who work closely with the grass root community. Focus group discussions were also held for both women leaders and selected men from the two locations. The focus groups and key informants are very important in that they helped gather qualitative information on variables e.g. role played by men in influencing female circumcision among the Meru.

On the secondary data sources, I reviewed the various literatures available on the Meru community, Female circumcision, types of female circumcision and the dangers and risks associated with female circumcision. This was important because there may be other information that may not be captured in the primary data but well documented in articles, books, journals and even daily papers and very relevant to this research. This data included both published and unpublished materials.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the characteristics of the respondents, the nature of the current practice, the views of the practitioners and further findings and resolutions.

Both descriptive and explanatory methods of data analysis were used in arriving at conclusion. All the answers to the questions were summarized and analysed before I made any conclusion as shown below. Where necessary I have used simple tables and other statistical tools for comparison purposes.

4.1 Data Presentation

The average age of the respondents was 37 years for men and 32 years for women. Therefore the overall average age was 34.5 years. The youngest respondent male was 21 years and the oldest was 53 years. The youngest female respondent was 22 years while the oldest was 42 years. Though some secondary school students were interviewed, they were not chosen as key informants, because the nature of the questionnaire was not suitable for persons aged below 18 years. Hence in this case the age range was 21 and 53 years. Majority of the respondents were between 35 and 40 years who are the most active and informed members of the Meru community. A majority of these have a say in upholding the practice of female circumcision.

4.1.1 On Marital status

Information regarding the respondents marital status was obtained and the results tabulated as below: -

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondent by marital Status

	Men	Women	Total
Marital Status	%	%	%
Married	88	60	74
Single	7.8	40	23
Widowed	3.8	0	1.9
Total	100	100	100

4.1.2 Type of Occupation

On employment the respondents were asked to state whether they were employed and the nature of their employment. The data obtained were recorded on the table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Distribution of respondents by occupation

	Men	Women	Total
Occupation	%	%	%
Employed	57.2	70	63.6
Self –Employed	34.9	30	32.45
Jobless	0	0	0
Student	7.9	0	3.95
Total	100%	100%	100%

Majority of my respondents were on full-time employment (Salaried). These are mainly schoolteachers, Nurses and clerks in government departments. This accounted for about 63% of the respondents. About 32% of the respondents claimed to be self-employed. These are involved in small-scale trade, hawking and farming. Interestingly, nobody wanted to be termed jobless. 7.9% of the respondents described themselves as student, that is, still advancing their studies.

There are generally good employment trends in these two locations due to business – trade and rich and varied agricultural surroundings.

4.2 Data Discussion and Analysis

The analysis of the data shows that men play the major role in upholding the practice of female circumcision among the Meru of Kenya. Majority of the respondents confessed that they have undergone female clitoridectomy or their wives have undergone it. For example over 69% of men claimed that their wives or partners are circumcised. However, the women refused to disclose their status as regards clitoridectomy although about 20% openly boasted of being circumcised. This is a good indication that the practice is still very widespread in Meru though it is done secretly due to the fear of provincial administration, churches and school authorities.

When asked whether they will circumcise their daughters, about 15.5% of men answered to the affirmative while only a few women admitted that their daughters would be circumcised when they reach of age. These were only 6% of the respondents. About 50% of the respondent left it to be decided by time and conditions prevailing by then and the general community and relatives. Hence undecided, whether female circumcision is important or not in the present world.

Those respondents, who claimed to be stout Christians, tended to regard female circumcision as outdated and sinful. While those who claimed to uphold the Meru cultural values, majority of them men, claimed circumcision allowed the youth a chance to understand the world in a better perspective because matters of sexuality are rarely taught in schools and churches. The data therefore confirms that most of those women who went through clitoridectomy did so as a way of fulfilling the wishes of the parents, to avoid being ridiculed by the colleagues or to satisfy the requirement of the male partners.

Table 4.3 Reasons for Circumcision

	Men Respondents	Women respondents	Total (Average)
Reason for circumcision	%	%	%
It improves the woman's discipline and morals	58	20	39
Enables a girl to get a suitor and marry faster	72	30	51
Forced by parents and relatives	42	80	61
Prevents women from being divorced and being prostitutes	68	39	53.5

From the various reasons given by respondents for the continued persistence of female circumcision among the various clans of Meru, it can be rightfully argued that men will continue to advocate for women clitoridectomy for a long time if not properly and urgently sensitized on the dangers it exposes women to. For example over 60% of men interviewed believed that uncircumcised women are unclean, stink, clumsy and unfit to prepare food and drinks for elders. As a result those women who get married to such men before they are circumcised end-up being operated at the home of their husbands. Hence many women, over 80% reported that girls undergo female circumcision to avoid the embarrassment of being 'cut' at the home of their husbands at mature age. In some parts of Meru such as Tharaka, Igembe and Tigania men refuse to marry uncircumcised girls calling them *Nkenye and* claiming that they cannot be entrusted with secrets because they are like children despite their ages or the number of times they might have given birth. This forces girls to get circumcised so that they can get suitors to marry them and procreate.

When asked whether the behaviour of men towards uncircumcised women directly contributes to the persistence of female circumcision in Meru, 88.5% of men respondents

agreed it was the main cause. On the side of women respondents, 92% of them said the behaviour and attitude of men towards uncircumcised women is responsible for its persistence despite its negative effect to those who undergo it. For example it is very common in Meru to hear elders referring to uncircumcised women as a kid or lacking in knowledge to handle complicated matters. Men also believe that the clitoris and the surrounding foreskin secrete a cream like jelly which has a foul smell. This makes uncircumcised women stink if she stays a day without bathing. This cannot be scientifically correct because whether a woman is circumcised or not her genital organs must produce this cream since the vagina is a self-cleaning organ in order to remain healthy and serve its purpose. The secretion has nothing to do with the clitoris, which is more of an external organ. The truth of the matter is that most men in Meru believe that they will not be able to meet the sexual needs of their wives if they are not circumcised. Since men in the past used to marry more than one wife or they used to keep several concubines, they thought the best way to keep all of them without resulting to giving sexual favour to other men is by reducing their sexual urge. Hence clitoridectomy used to decrease a woman's interest in sex thus submitting to one man who could be having several women. This is denying women their natural rights while increasing that of men.

Men also had the belief that circumcision brought women to their knees and improved their morals. They believed that uncircumcised women will not respect their parents, their brothers and sisters as well as the general community belonging to their clans and extended relatives. Men equated uncircumcised woman to an uncircumcised man, who could not lead the community, marry or even have sexual intercourse with Meru women. Even uncircumcised girls are not allowed to have sex with uncircumcised men, who is referred to by many names of boy, kid, not fully matured, gentle and stupid. The Meru people have a belief that uncircumcised man cannot be a king, president or even Prime Minister. This is because any community leader must be an adult male, and what makes a man an adult is undergoing circumcision. It is a condition for every Meru male.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATION.

5.0 Introduction

The analysis of the main factors influencing female circumcision among the Meru people, has conclusively indicated that all the three hypothesis have been proved right by both primary and secondary data. This chapter draws together the major observation and explains the implications of a practice that benefits one section (gender: men) of the community while causing damage to the remaining half (women). This is largely because social activities are controlled by men. People or organisations campaigning against female genital mutilation must understand the roles played by men in female circumcision to be able to win this campaign. In other words female circumcision is interpreted differently by men and women each serving different interests. This study has therefore attempted to provide insights into the nature and forces behind female circumcision.

5.1 Conclusion and remarks

From what we have learnt from the respondents, it is right to argue that men play the biggest role in influencing female circumcision among the Meru. It is from the comments, beliefs and stereotypes propagated by men that women are forced to be circumcised. Secondly, men, among the Meru, have a believe that since they are also circumcised, there is no reason why women should not be circumcised. However, it has emerged that both men and women circumcision serve different purposes in this community. For example, while the respondents agreed that men's circumcision is a religious requirement, over 98% of all the respondents observed that women circumcision is not commanded anywhere in their different religions. This was also true of those respondents who claimed to be Muslim believers.

Another interesting findings was that all the respondents agreed that while male circumcision made them brave, fierce, strengthened their physical character, courageous, virility and self-control, these were not significant virtues for women. On the contrary female circumcision was supposed to control their sexuality hence enabling them to resist men's sexual advances. A woman who easily gave in to a man's advances was viewed as being sexually promiscuous.

Thirdly, while men's circumcision made them "persons", this was not so for female circumcision. Whether circumcised or not, women were supposed to show mercy, be caring, submissive to men and cry on behalf of men. Infact all women were supposed to wail loudly in times of mourning while men were supposed to show courage, maturity and guidance in such difficult times. Those men who were over-came by grief and cried for the loss of their loved ones were ridiculed, molested, castigated and called "women".

Finally circumcision of women enabled men to extend their unquestionable dominance over women, children and visitors. This was made possible through the teachings received during and after circumcision. During seclusion, women initiates were taught that it was always the wish of God that men should rule over women. Men were the natural leaders and women should always respect them. Circumcision of women thus benefits men more than women. It only acted as an indicator for their maturity, and readiness to engage in reproductive activities. Female circumcision does not confer any status on women as it does on men.

5.2 Recommendations

It has emerged that female circumcision has lost its original meaning among the traditional Meru. Therefore it will be appropriate if we can give its alternative to those communities that still practice it. This is because to remove a functional cultural trait from people is not quite easy. Majority of the respondents interviewed claimed that the role played by female circumcision as a rite of passage has not been replaced by the teaching of the modern education, Christianity and westernization because sex education, which was the area mainly covered during initiation and seclusion period has become a taboo to be discussed between parents and children. The church, particularly the catholic faithfuls also discourage any teachings around sex education because it encourages immorality. As a result the youth have been left to explore this dangerous area on their own, sometimes via television and pornographic magazines. The results are devastating, leading to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, depressions and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among the teenagers.

Since the teaching received during the seclusion period was the single most important factor that converted a girl child to a mature woman, an alternative to “physical cutting” will be very appropriate. This has been experimented and practiced in Tharaka section of the Meru by a non-governmental organization called *Ntanira na Mugambo*. When translated into English this N.G.O is known as “circumcise only with words”. This community based CBO has created the missing link, which uncircumcised girls and young women have been lacking. It has proved popular among the local people because it recruits the eligible girls into seclusion houses without cutting their genital organs. Once put into these seclusion houses, the candidates are taught how to grow into respectable and responsible wives. This includes such topics like cooking, cloth mending well as housekeeping. Just as those physically circumcised who graduated after such education, “the circumcision with words” also graduate after three to four weeks in seclusion and the initiates are presented with gifts, new clothes and praises. They are also given new status in the society. As a result of this, the NGO *Ntanira na Mugambo* has received funding from Maendeleo ya Wanawake and other international organisations.

Another recommendation arising from the above data analysis is to involve more people in the role of eradicating female circumcision. In particular, more men should be recruited in this campaign since the study has revealed that they are the main players in this practice. Men should be made to understand that uncircumcised women do not stink and the clitoris will never grow too long even if a woman lives a ripe old age. All girls, circumcised or not, need good guidance, encouragement and support from their parents to grow up and become respectable and responsible adult, with good morals.

To prevent more girls from undergoing this rite, the community should be educated on the various charters and laws against female circumcision. Female circumcision violates the right of the girl child to information, good health, education, equal treatment and the right to choose since majority of them are circumcised before they are eighteen years old.

Finally is to recommend that those girls and young women who are already circumcised should be involved in this campaign of female circumcision. Their views and advocacy against female circumcision will provide a wonderful opportunity when they tell friends,

family, and community members about the dangers and consequences of this practice, from a personal perspective. Young and educated men should be encouraged to marry young and beautiful uncircumcised women who will make excellent wives since they will enjoy sex, have little complications during child delivery and less risks in contracting venereal diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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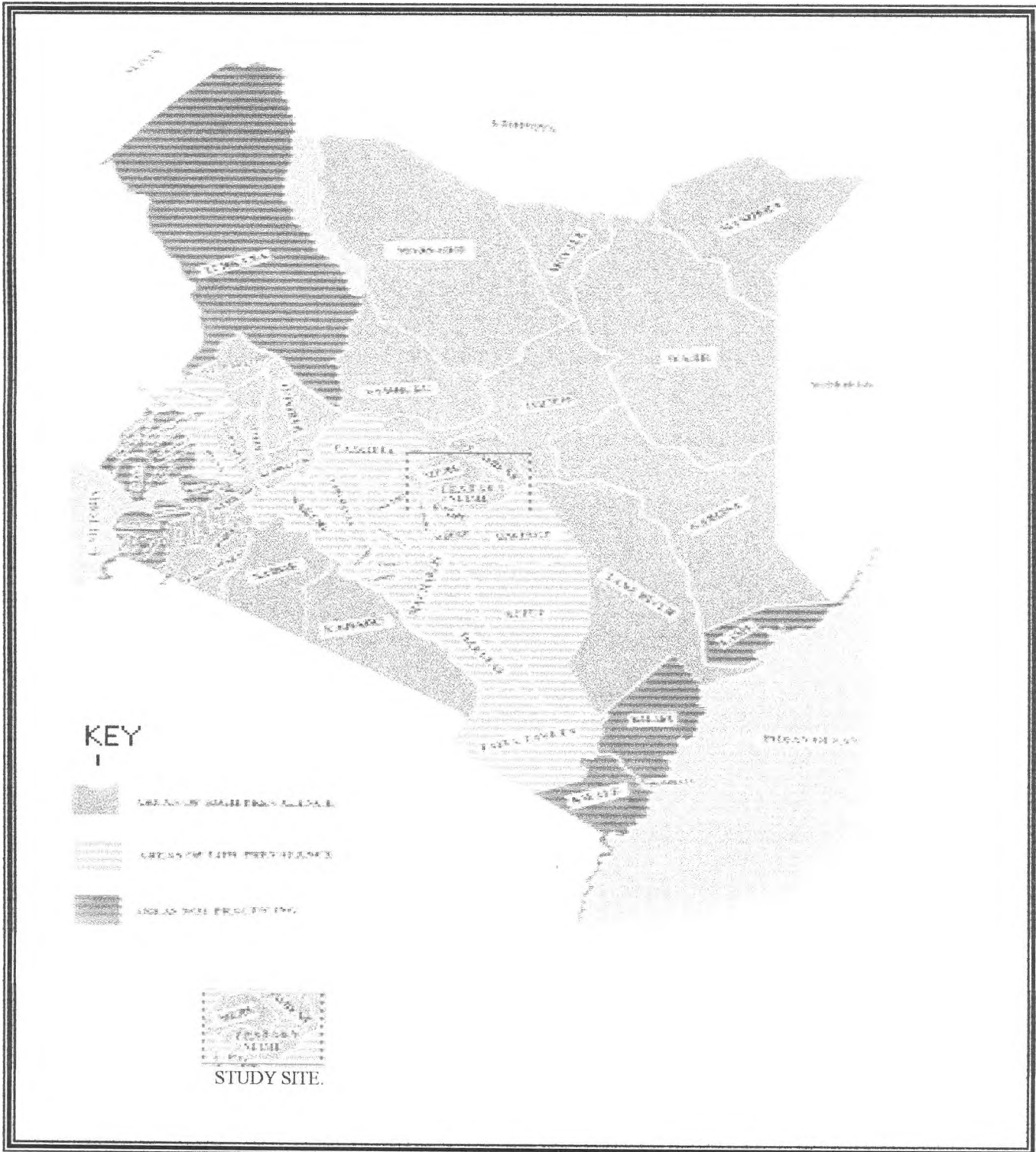
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GLOSSARY

<i>Graduate Woman</i>	:	Literary meaning a well-tutored woman in the traditional Ways and customary laws of the Meru
<i>Kuwata Monki</i>	:	Holding the fire: This is usually the commencement of the Schooling or teaching given to the initiate while in seclusion. It has some elements of beginning to instill discipline.
<i>Kiama</i>	:	Clan Council
<i>Conditio sine qua non</i>	:	Something that has no known option. A must for every Meru.
<i>Iria – Itune</i>	:	Red Sea or lake (Tana River)
<i>Nguu – Ntune</i>	:	People in brown cloths or simply brown people (Arabs)
<i>Mbwaa</i>	:	A coastal Island near Malindi where the Meru believe to have come from before their present settlement.
<i>Njuri</i>	:	Council
<i>Njuri Ncheke</i>	:	The famous Meru council of elders which used to make Laws and ensure that they are followed by all merians. It is Still active and respected.
<i>Kiama Gia Aka</i>	:	Meru women’s council
<i>Mugiro</i>	:	Taboo highly feared
<i>Muka</i>	:	woman
<i>Mwari</i>	:	A girl or unmarried female who has never given birth.
<i>Mukenye</i>	:	Uncircumcised woman

- Ngutu* : Newly circumcised woman
- Ntaane* : Newly circumcised boy
- Nto(M')* : Initials added to the name of a man indicating the transition from boyhood to manhood: that is a Circumcised man, and thus a “real man”. It literary means “a person”.
- Muntu* : Bantu name for “a person” in Meru only circumcised men Acquire this title of *Muntu*. The rest are referred to as women and children.
- Murungu* : The God of Meru. Also known by other names.
- Mutani was Muka* : A woman circumciser.
- Kimeru Prayer* : *We Murungu ; Kini-Kiru, ningukuria untethie ngie na Twana tutwingi, twiji na tukenye. Nani ngukuria umpe Ng'ombe na Mburi cia kubarera* (Almighty God; the most Merciful, I implore you to give me many children, boys and Girls. And I ask you to give me cattle and goats for their Maintenance.
- Ntanira na Mugambo*: Circumcise with words (this is where the girl is put into seclusion house for a certain period to receive social and sex education without undergoing the real clitoridectomy)

MAP OF KENYA SHOWING THE DISTRICTS OF MERU AND STUDY SITE.



THE PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO ESTABLISH WHETHER MEN PLAY ANY ROLE AND INFLUENCE IN FORCING WOMEN TO UNDERGO CLITORIDECTOMY BOTH IN THE CURRENT AND THE TRADITIONAL MERU

Your answers will enable me carry this important academic research for my post Graduate studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi.

Do not write your name

1. Tribe
2. Your age
3. Sex
4. Religion
5. Job Status Employed Self-employed
 Jobless Student
6. Marital Status Married Single
 Widowed Student
7. Are you aware of female circumcision as an initiation rite among the Meru?
.....
8. Did you undergo it or your wife
9. If you have girl children, do you intend to have them circumcised?
 Yes No Not decided
10. Do you approve the Meru type of female circumcision
 Yes No
11. If your answer is yes, give reasons.....
12. If your answer is No, give reasons.....
13. If your answer is No, what do you think should be done for those Merians' still doing it to stop it
14. Infibulation, which is practiced by the Somali and Boran of Kenya, is the cutting of the clitoris, the Minora and majora Labias and then sewing or fastening the vulva with thorns or thread leaving only a small hole. Do you consider this to be female genital mutilation? Yes No
15. Is female circumcision a requirement of your religion as circumcision of Men to Jews?
 No Yes Not Sure
16. Female circumcision used to serve a cultural function in the traditional Meru. Does it serve any purpose today?.....
17. In some parts of Meru e.g. Tharaka, Igembe etc, over 75% of girls are still getting circumcision. What do you think of such areas?.....
18. Circumcision as an initiation rite used to serve as a form of schooling or training in the traditional Meru. Do you think this has been replaced by modern schooling and churches Yes No

Give reason for your answer.....

Which of the following is true or false in regard to female circumcision

19. Female circumcision makes a girl mature, a full and responsible member of the community
 True False
20. Female circumcision is voluntary wish of the girl to show stamina and courageousness.
 True False
21. Girls are forced to be circumcised by parents and relatives
 True False
22. Female circumcision enables a girl to get a suitor (Boyfriend) and marry faster
 True False
23. Uncircumcised women are unclean, clumsy and childish
 True False
24. Delivering uncircumcised women a baby the mid-wife may get blind because the ancestors are not happy. True False
25. Uncircumcised women are more likely to be prostitutes or engage in extra-marital sex due to their too much demand for sex.
 True False
26. Circumcised women are rarely divorced because they know how to handle their husband better than uncircumcised ones.
 True False
27. Who is more discipline in today's modern Meru
 Educated uncircumcised wife
 Educated circumcised wife
 Traditional educated wife
 It does not matter whether circumcised or not but depends with Individual wife.
28. For men, if you are marrying now, will you marry a circumcised woman or uncircumcised one?give reasons.....
29. Do you think, in the traditional Meru and in those areas of Meru that female circumcision is still rampant men contributed to it by talking ill' or badly of uncircumcised women?
 Yes No
30. Circumcision of women in the past used to make them obedient to their husbands, brought them to their knees and used to improve their morals. This was due to the teaching received during initiation ceremonies and confinement. Do you think female clitoridectomy serves the same purpose today when there are no ceremonies and teaching because it is done secretly
 Yes No
31. Is it true that circumcising a woman makes her more active, fertile and likely to have more children?
 Yes No.
32. Circumcising a women makes intercourse more pleasurable for a man
 True False No Difference
33. Men fear to marry uncircumcised women because they fear to fail to meet their extra sexual desire, hence forcing the woman to seek it outside marriage
 True False

34. Fear of divorce makes women not to question their husbands sexual practices at the expense of their own needs

True False

Give reasons

35. Men always feel that it is their right to have sex when they demand it and not when their wives need it?

True False

Do you consider the following as some of the reasons why girls and young women continue to undergo clitoridectomy in some parts of Meru?

36. To reduce their sexual urge or desire by cutting of the Clitoris

Yes No

37. So that they can be clean because uncircumcised women are believed to be dirty stink and cannot make gruel or traditional porridge for elders

Yes No

38. So that they can get married and have children because men in their areas don't marry uncircumcised women

Yes No

39. To avoid being circumcised at the home of their husbands as it has happened in some parts of Meru.

Yes No

40. Circumcision makes baby delivery easier

Yes False

Opposite

41. Uncircumcised women are regarded as children and cannot be trusted with secrets

True False

Thank you for your cooperation.

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