

KERIO Valley Development Authority was established by an Act of Parliament in August 1979. The Act was initiated with the purpose of trying to focus interest and resources into this area which for historical, geographical and other related reasons has lagged behind in the socio-economic development of Kenya.

In the middle of last month, the Institute of African Studies

held a seminar with the objective of assembling all the written material on the Upper Kerio Valley and to bring together all the people interested in the region to simplify the task for those entrusted with development plan-

ning to be better equipped. Entitled "The Kerio Valley — Past, Present and Future", the seminar was attended, among others, by government officials in ministries concerned with development projects, scientists and social scientists. "We concentrated on the human factor because man is and must always be the centre of development and not the materials which so often appear to be the case", Dr. Kipkorir says.

The papers given at the seminar represented a variety of subjects ranging from man's

exploitation of water resources to agricultural and medical practices. The seminar indicated the important cultural features of the valley and ways and means which promote the development of the area.

"At the back of our minds was of course our concern with traditional culture." In the case of the Kerio Valley, the strongest element is the irrigation system and medical care," Dr. Kipkorir said. The Kerio Valley has a complete and very effective irrigation furrows which are said to have been constructed from the Kerio River 400 years ago. These

irrigation furrows are owned and manned by the various clans in the valley. The water, in comparison to the fields to be irrigated, is limited and is therefore regulated in a complex rota that has been devised over the years.

Dr. Kipkorir said that if a modern irrigation system is introduced without taking into consideration the existing one, this will have a traumatic effect on the lives of the people concerned.

"Some members will now become a labour force doing a job that was before communally done. The other members will

turn into consumers who are expected to pay for the services rendered to them. Along with this, bureaucracy, which had previously been unknown, will be a permanent feature". "The institute is not against modernisation or introduction of bureaucracy, Dr. Kipkorir said. But the effectiveness of what is already in practice should be taken into consideration.

In the field of medical care, he believes that with a place as remote as Kerio Valley, and with such a scattered population, the notion of relying on modern health care delivery is highly self deceiving.

Services being rendered by traditional medicine men, surgeons and gynaecologists in Kerio Valley should be improved and supplemented instead of being done away with altogether.

"We must see that any dimension of development that is undertaken is going to fill a gap and not just concern itself with replacing the old methods", Dr. Kipkorir said.

# Human factor 'vital to Kerio Valley's progress'



DR. Kipkorir . . . Human factor the centre of development.

# Cultural dynamics 'indispensable in development'

**'PLANNERS MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS'**

KENYA's development planning has in the past been too Western oriented and planners have, until recently tended to assume that science, technology and development have nothing to do with culture.

This is the opinion of Dr. Ben Kipkorir, the Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi.

"We, at the Institute believe that imported technology comes clothed very thickly in the culture of the people who are exporting it to us."

For this reason, the Institute, has been fighting a battle to convince the Ministry of Economic Planning that any meaningful development plans have to take the culture of the people into consideration if they are to attain any degree of success.

President Moi has always told Kenyans that they have to move from the known to the unknown. This has not been the case with development planners. We have found that they often move from the unknown to the unknown."

A typical development plan, says Dr. Kipkorir, is sometimes drawn up in some city in the developed world or Nairobi and then superimposed on a local community about whom little was previously known and whose views and cultural prejudices were not considered.

"If we are to plan a water project for the people of Kitui for example, the thing to do is not to send experts from New York to Kitui to map out the water system because you might end up with a beautiful water system but nowhere near the people it was meant for. People may have moved."

It is therefore not surprising, says Dr. Kipkorir, that many projects planned diligently with great concern for the welfare of the people have floundered because some cultural dynamics have not been taken into consideration.

He feels that if the metropolitan planner visited the field and studied the local situation and sought to relate his objectives to the cultural dynamics, he would be more

By **WARIARA GACHIE**

assured of a certain amount of success.

To avoid cultural trappings which come with extremely technological development, planners have to be in a position to recognise and understand what the country's needs are.

"Take the broadcasting system for example," he continues, "it is an important tool for development. It is necessary for political programmes, entertainment, general information and education"

But it is also very important for disseminating alien culture.

This, he believes, is a subtle, slow but extremely effective way of introducing an alien culture to the people. The cultural dimension of development need never be obvious, Kipkorir says, but can become deeply entrenched in the minds of the people.

Dr. Kipkorir is encouraged to see that the Ministry of Economic Planning is beginning to work more in consultation with the institute. The lack of concern for the preservation and promotion of indigenous Kenyan culture in the past prompted the setting up the Institute.

It owes its foundation to the pioneering work of intellectuals of the early years of independence with the aims of conducting research on promotion of Kenyan culture. In the past ten years, the institute has made significant contribution to the study of cultures of the people of Kenya. As an integral part of the university of Nairobi it is treated on a par with the faculties. It is responsible for initiating, co-ordinating and directing its own programmes of applied and interdisciplinary research in African pre-history and history, ethnography and social anthropology; linguistics; musicology; traditional and modern arts and crafts; and religion and other belief systems.

The Institute has since 1979, been working in close collaboration with Government ministries in gathering data on the Kerio Valley.

# Full-day classes urged in private schools

By **NELSON OSIEMO**

PRIVATE secondary schools which operate double sessions should revert to full-day courses as soon as possible, the Minister for Higher Education, Mr. J. J. Kamotho, has said.

Mr. Kamotho said operation of half-day sessions was "professionally unacceptable." Students in such schools were denied full benefit of education since they were made to learn for only a half day.

During an exclusive interview with the *Sunday Standard*, which was also attended by his Permanent Secretary, Mr. J. T. arap Lefing, and the Director of Education, Mr. J. M. Kamunge, the Minister said that he expected managers of such schools to implement his suggestion immediately.

He said, however, that he appreciated the situation would "take time" to correct since the exercise could affect both parents and students.

Several Nairobi schools operated double sessions, with some students attending classes in the mornings only and others in the afternoon.

The Minister said a working committee had been set up to

formulate a system of financing higher education. The financing will include fees chargeable in all government maintained, harambee, private and missionary schools.

Mr. Kamotho declined to commit himself that fees chargeable in both harambee and private schools were exorbitant, saying: "I shall be unfair if I single out the schools."

He, however, agreed that some Government schools charged higher school fees and performed poorer in examinations than some harambee schools.

"Just as I am not satisfied with the performance of some Government secondary schools, I am not happy with the performance of some harambee schools," he said.

The Government had undertaken to train more secondary school teachers with an aim of alleviating understaffing in schools.

"Our policy is to assist harambee secondary schools with head teachers, and finally provide all teachers," he said. The aim was to stabilise the teaching profession so that harambee schools could offer better services expected of them.

The minister said contributions made by harambee schools in the education system surpassed the failures.

They absorbed more students at Form One level than Government schools.

Mr. Kamotho praised President Daniel arap Moi for "pressing us every time so that we could realise parents' problems." The Ministry was concerned with "how best" the fees charged at both harambee and private schools was used "to the benefit of students."

Mr. Kamotho pointed out that the relationship between his ministry and harambee schools was "good", and the schools "appreciate what we give them."

He appealed to parents not to cry out that charges at harambee schools were exorbitant, since the maintenance was costly.

The charges were relative, Mr. Kamotho added.