THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN GIRLS ALTERNATIVE RITE OF PASSAGE AMONG THE AMIIRU

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original work and it has not been submitted for a degree in any other university or any other award.

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DEDICATION

To thee in whom I walk and move and have my being Oh Lord God Almighty.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO Community Based Organizations
CCG Christian Circumcision Ceremonies
CRP Circumcision Rite of Passage
FC Female Circumcision
FGC Female Genital cutting
FGM Female Genital Mutilation
GARP Girls Alternative Rite of Passage
GK Government of Kenya
GTRP Girl Tradition Rite of Passage
GTZ German Technical Cooperation
HRA Human Rights Activists
HRO  Human Rights Organizations
IR    Initiation Rite
IRP   Initiation Rite of Passage
MYWO  MaendeleoYa Wanawake Organization
NGO   Non-Governmental Organizations
NM    Ntanĩra na Mūgambo
PATH  Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
PIK   Plan International Kenya- country
PO    Participant Observation
RP    Rite of Passage

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Amĩĩrũ  The central Kenya bantu speaking people occupying the north eastern slopes of Mount Kenya.

Clan   This is a very large group of family connected because of their distinct language dialect.

Culture Denotes values, norms, institutions and artifacts of a community expressed in various ways including music.

Enculturation The process by which a culture is transmitted from one generation to another.
Emic Refers to the meaning of music as perceived by the performer and society.

Face the knife Undergo genital mutilation.

Function of music The purpose that music serves.

Ntaano cia aari The rite that initiates girls from childhood into adulthood.

Modernity All aspects of the present time including formal education, socio-economic and technology.

Music This term is used in this work to denote all the musical activities that accompany the initiation ceremonies.

Non-Traditional Music that is not indigenous in its text and form.

Ntaano cia aari The rite that initiates girls from childhood into adulthood through circumcision and marriage.

Role The function that traditional music plays in girls alternative rite of passage.

Tharaka The locality inhabited by the Amĩĩrũ sub-ethnic group called Atharaka and commonly referred to as Tharaka community in the study.

ABSTRACT

Female initiation involving genital mutilation has been used in many parts of the world as a rite of passage ritual for many years down the history of mankind. Apparently music is one of the prominent features of this rite in almost all the cultures in which it is practised. However, most countries have abandoned these cultural practices due to formal education, Christianity and other modern socio-economic changes. These changes have contributed greatly to changes in behavior and attitude towards girls traditional rite of passage (GTRP). In modern socio-cultural context traditional GTRP has lost the meaning it had in traditional society and it is no longer a binding prerequisite for marriage. This implies that the institution that supported girls traditional rite of passage music is no longer a vogue, hence likely to disappear together with its music. In Kenya, Tharaka is among the few communities that have been cited to have prevalence in the practice of GTRP amidst much opposition from the Human Rights Activists, Medical Fraternity as well as the Government. Consequently, an alternative rite of passage (ARP) was
introduced to the Tharaka community in 1996 with about one hundred and fifty girls graduating that year. *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* (the ARP) is a festive occasion where both traditional and contemporary music is performed. The study sort to investigate the role of traditional music in girls alternative rite of passage among the Amĩĩrũ with emphasis lied on the Tharaka community. The study found out that traditional music functioned as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values and norms intended for the initiates as well as the community in traditional society. Related literature reviewed gave the research a firm grip of the significance and advocacy for eradication of girls traditional rite of passage and hence the music under study. The research made use of the theories of structural functionalism, culture-continuity and change. The purposive and snowball technique gave the required population samples required. Participant and non-participant observation, questionnaire, opinionnaire and scheduled interviews formed the methodology of the study in the field. Data collected was analyzed qualitatively and the text and music translated and transcribed to highlight the disparities in text and music content. The findings revealed that both the traditional and contemporary music was performed in girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies. The traditional music was used in its original form in terms of rhythm and melody. The texts of the traditional music were, however, modified to suit the alternative rite of passage concepts. Traditional music in GARP enhances the desire to go through the ritual for the youths who identify with it. Conclusions on the study findings, recommendations on use of traditional music in planning and implementation of anti-FGM programmes made as well as possible research areas.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Amĩĩrũ occupy the North Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. The Amĩĩrũ and their neighbours; the Embu, Mbeere, Akamba and Agikuyu who live to the South and around Mt. Kenya comprise the Central Kenya Bantu-speaking group. To the North, the Amĩĩrũ border with the Samburu, Borana and Somali.

Before the coming and establishment of colonial rule by the British, those considered to be the Amĩĩrũ were the Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Miutini and Igoji. Later on, the British administrators included the Atharaka, Mwimbi, Muthambi and the Chuka to the name (Wandibba, 1988). The region was later subdivided into Meru North, Meru Central, Meru South and Tharaka districts and presently to Meru and Tharaka-Nithi counties.

The Amĩĩrũ speak a language called kĩmĩĩrũ although each sub-ethnic group has a distinct dialect (Fadiman, 1982). The Amĩĩrũ live in mĩĩrĩga clans or groups of related people (Nyaga, 1986). Traditionally, circumcision as a rite of passage (RP) accompanied with music marked the age groups. All those who underwent circumcision at the same time belonged to the same age group structure known as nthukĩ. The structure was pyramidal with agwe, the spiritual leaders at the top to provide political leadership to the community. The next age group was the Agambi, judges who were followed by njũri nceke, a Council of elders. The nthaka, warriors form the next age group with the aana, children forming the base of the pyramid (Nyaga, ibid.).

The Amĩĩrũ life was full of rituals and ceremonies with the boy and girl circumcision initiations being the most prominent ones. The initiation rite (IR) had several stages; the first was the piercing of ears, then tattooing and finally circumcision. Mugambi (1976) observed that circumcision as a RP initiated young people into adulthood with responsibilities to the wider society. Music marked the initiation rituals celebrated by the initiates, family members and friends. During this period, the community holds circumcision celebrations in their villages. The study focuses on the girls traditional rite
of passage (GTRP), one of the initiation ceremonies performed among the Amĩĩrũ. This RP was a prerequisite for traditional Amĩĩrũ marriage. Traditionally, the GTRP was a process through which the community trained her female youth to become responsible members of the family by initiating maidens into womanhood. The initiation involved female genital mutilation (FGM) known to the Amĩĩrũ as *ntaano cia aari*, female circumcision. The music performed to celebrate the GTRP among the Amĩĩrũ gave details of the ritual, moral instructions, new roles to be taken up by the initiates as well as encouragement to face the knife. The music included *matũrũ, ũng’atio, njai* and *mpumĩro*.

However, there had been much discussion and debate on female circumcision as a RP with the colonialists and missionaries at the turn of the twentieth century viewing it as an evil retrogressive practice (Lambert, 1956, Murungi, 1991). More recently, the Human Rights Organizations (HRO) and World Health Organization (WHO) have argued that female circumcision is a breach of human rights and a health hazard (GK, 2000). Yet, the Amĩĩrũ have stuck to their girls traditional rite of passage practices. The Mendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) in conjunction with community based Organizations (CBO), Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) and the Government of Kenya (GK) (Yoder, 1999) introduced to the Amĩĩrũ community an alternative rite of passage (ARP) without FGM, but fashioned after the girls traditional rite of passage towards the end of the last millennium. The ARP first took place in Tharaka in 1996 with about one hundred and fifty girls graduating that year (PATH, 2002). The ARP *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* (NM) in *Kĩmĩĩrũ* meaning circumcise with words, involved a week of seclusion period in which life-skills education was taught to the initiates. This was followed by a day of festivities to mark publicly the transition in both traditional and non-traditional song and dance with family and friends. The girls alternative and traditional rites of passage are therefore currently in existence among the Tharaka, creating a paradox in which traditional music existed within two opposing institutions that were proposed to serve the same purpose. The study therefore, sought to investigate the role of the traditional music of the girls traditional rite of passage in this paradoxical situation.
1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Amĩĩrũ like other Kenyan communities such as the Abagusii, Akamba, Maasai, Pokot and Samburu to mention but a few, traditionally practiced the girls rite of passage involving FGM (PATH, 1998). However, the girls alternative rite of passage has been practiced among the Amĩĩrũ since 1996. Traditional music forms crucial part of both the girls traditional and alternative rites of passage. This raises the question as to whether girls traditional rite of passage music plays the same role in the girls alternative rite of passage as it did in the traditional one and whether the messages embodied in the girls traditional rite of passage song texts have meanings that are significant within the changing context.

1.1.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions.

a) What is the significance of Amiiru traditional music performed during the girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies?

b) Are there modifications on any aspects of the traditional circumcision songs used during the girls alternative rite of passage among the Amiiru?

c) Do the original texts of the traditional girls rite of passage songs embody any Messages that are relevant to the girls alternative rite of passage initiates?

d) What influence did the girls alternative rite of passage have on the use and function of the music of the girls traditional rite passage in contemporary Tharaka.

1.1.3 Research Objectives

The study sort to fulfill the following objectives:

a) Identify the significance of the traditional music used in girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies play.

b) To establish modifications of any aspects of traditional circumcision songs used during girls alternative rite of passage among the Amiiru.

c) Assessment of the relevance of messages embodied in traditional songs to
girls alternative rite of passage initiates.

d) To determine the influence of girls alternative rite of passage on the various aspects of the music of the girls traditional rite passage.

1.1.4 Research Assumptions

The study was based on the assumptions that:

a) Traditional music is significant in girls alternative rite of passage.

b) The music of the girls traditional rite passage was used in girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies.

c) Messages embodied in traditional songs are relevant to girls alternative rite of passage initiates in Tharaka.

e) The girls alternative rite of passage influenced the use and function of the girls traditional rite of passage music in contemporary Tharaka.

1.1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Female initiation with FGM has been used by the Amĩĩrũ as a rite of passage for a long time. In modern socio-cultural context, girls traditional rite passage has lost the meaning it had in the traditional society and it is no longer a binding prerequisite for marriage and other activities related to adulthood. This implies that the institution that supported girls traditional rite passage music is no longer pertinent, hence, likely to disappear together with its music. Consequently research on the traditional music of the girls rite of passage institution is important. Tharaka is one of the few communities that had been cited to have prevalence in the practice of girls traditional rite of passage amidst much opposition from the Medical Fraternity, Human Rights Activists (HRA) as well as the Government. The core of the study was to collect and document the traditional music of the girls rite of passage forming the cultural heritage of the Amĩĩrũ.

The study addresses the state of traditional music in the context of a changing GTRP. This is with a view to availing information to scholars with interest in the music of the girls traditional rite of passage of the Amĩĩrũ and Atharaka in particular, as well as those interested in ethnomusicological and musicological studies.
The findings of the study will be useful to the Ministry of Gender, Culture, Sports and Social Services. This is with reference to the departments of Gender and Culture as policy makers and the executive organs for the promotion and preservation of culture in the country. Furthermore, the study deals with issues of national and global concern, and will therefore give insights to policy makers in the HRO and the Ministry of Health. The study further hopes that the findings will inspire planners and implementers of anti-FGM programs, for example to make use of traditional music in their programs. The study avails findings that encourage those with doubts on the effectiveness of the alternative rite of passage as a substitute to the girls traditional rite of passage. At the same time, the findings of the study will be useful resource material on the traditional and modern music of the girls rite of passage of the Tharaka.

1.1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on the music of the girls traditional rite of passage performed during the girls alternative rite of passage in Tharaka. Having been cited as invariably prevalent in the practice of girls’ traditional rite of passage, Tharaka presented a suitable locale for the study. The Tharaka community is highly homogeneous and lives in three vast divisions namely Tharaka North, Tharaka South and Tharaka Central. The girls alternative rite of passage on the other hand is organized by a particular group at any given time; therefore, the study confined itself to Tharaka Central division for the actual study while the other two divisions were selected for piloting research instruments. The study examined both the text and form of various songs performed during the girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

1.2.1 Introduction

The related literature was reviewed under the following areas: the origin of the traditional girls rite of passage and its significance, advocacy for the eradication of the traditional girls rite of passage, the introduction of the girls alternative rite of passage and traditional music performed in African communities.
1.2.2 The Origin of Circumcision as a Rite of Passage.

Mwaniki (1985) gives an account of the origin of circumcision as a RP among the Tharaka, Imenti, Muthambi and Chuka sub-ethnic group of the Amĩĩrũ society. The Tharaka traced the origin of the ritual from their ancestor, father Chabugi who introduced circumcision to his sons when the Chuka and Tharaka lived together in Tharaka land. Clitoridectomy followed immediately with minor differences in the process. The Chuka, Mĩĩrũ and Tharaka circumcised the men of 20-35 years by early 1800. The age group changed to 18-24 years by 1890s due to conflicts with the Maasai, as they needed more warriors who apparently had to be circumcised young men. Mwaniki (ibid.) further observes that by the turn of the twentieth century when the colonial government and the missionaries joined forces in the fight against the clitoridectomy and the ritual ceremonies accompanying it, the practice of circumcision and clitoridectomy had entrenched their roots as RP and become an indispensable cultural practice and could not be easily eradicated. Mwaniki’s work throws useful insights to the study on the reasons for the perpetuation and resistance to change among the Tharaka.

1.2.3 The Significance of the Girl Initiation Rite of Passage among the Amĩĩrũ

Nyaga’s (1986) detailed systematic description of the life of the Amĩĩrũ from birth to death, advances that the initiation rite of passage (IRP) for both male and female served as a forum for teaching and educating the youth on good morals and bravery in all things. The IR served as a symbol of change in ones character from childhood behavior to adulthood. However, Nyaga, (ibid.) laments that these values seemed to be losing the significance they held in the traditional society. The girls traditional rite of passage like the boys’ circumcision involved genital mutilation. The rite had several stages that were accompanied with song dances beginning with the piercing of the ears, tattooing and then circumcision, which was later followed by marriage. Before the actual circumcision day, there were song dances known as matũrũ performed by the maidens ready for the RP. The maiden sang and danced many evenings. This was concluded with a daylong cerebration attended by all the villages. The festivity went on until the circumcision day. Nyaga (ibid.) describes the occasion in which music was performed during the different
stages of the ceremony. Nyaga’s (ibid.) work is significant to the study in providing insights on the functions of the music of the girls traditional rite of passage.

Mugambi (1976) observes that religious education was essential to the general education and that the two could not be treated independently. Almost every aspect of learning and every stage of human life provided opportunities for religious and moral instructions. During initiation, instructions were given through songs texts on the roles the initiates were to play. Songs therefore, accompanied ceremonies explaining the meaning and importance of the ritual. The rituals involved physical drama that revealed to the stakeholders the roles of the rituals. Through the rituals the initiates lost one way of life and are gained in another; often being given a new name. Such initiations, therefore symbolized death to childhood and rebirth to adulthood. During such occasions new knowledge was often presented as a set of beliefs to be followed without questioning, especially on marriage and family lives. The adolescent maiden learnt of sacred rites and religious mysteries, since she was to procreate life. This ability was seen as the gift from God and the ancestors to the community. Initiation admitted maidens into the childbearing members of the community. On this note therefore, sexuality was kept pure to be used only as a worthy tool for the generation the young members of the community (children). The instructions given while the initiates were recovering from physical ordeal gave the ritual its proper spiritual significance. Ceremonies that accompanied the rituals served to establish good relations with the spirit world, in hope that it would circumvent barrenness. Mugambi (ibid) work enabled the study to grasp the significance placed on traditional girls traditional rite of passage and its accompanying music among the Tharaka.

Nancy, et el (1995) in agreement with scholars mentions above observes that female initiation was more prevalent in Melanesia than elsewhere in the world where it was practiced. She (ibid.) notes that the male and female initiation rites were means through which men invoke ideas that advance their social control of women and youth. The young maidens were initiated at the age between 8-20 years with the IR functioning in various ways in different communities. She observes that the Abelam puberty rites function as a metaphor for aspects of the social body, while among the Daulo female
initiation menarche was a ritual occasion when relationships centered on the person of a young woman were opened up and closed up as soon as she was widowed. She (ibid.) reckons that, on the whole the female IR was a part of the process of achieving full personhood. The work, Nancy, et el (ibid.) gives the study vital insights on the functions of the GTRP, traditional education and social structure.

Leakey (1977) in his study advances that initiation through circumcision was commended as a rite of passage. He (ibid.) further notes that the IRP were significant in traditional societies as a process through which the youth receive education and instruction on adulthood. The rites were marked with songs and dances before, during and markedly after circumcision. However, he (ibid.) notes that cultural changes had affected the initiation rite of passage and invariably the songs and dances that accompanied them. And that failure to find an adequate substitute for the character training and preparation of citizenship given by traditional initiation RP was a major cause of the then status quo in the Kikuyu community, for example. This study is useful to the study in reference to state of traditional GTRP in the contemporary society.

Carr (1997) in a survey findings on female genital cutting (FGC) from the North, West and Central Africa, observes that FGC was widespread among the women in these regions. In some regions the practice was quite high with about nine out of ten women going through the ritual. She (ibid.) notes that traditional practitioners were the common operators although medical professionals also provided and supported the practice. Women cited tradition or custom as some reasons for supporting these practice. The women believed that the female cutting imparted favor, social acceptance and good reputation. The uncircumcised women were viewed as less attractive to men, hence not likely to marry. Uncircumcised women were also seen as likely to become promiscuous. The FGC practice had some economic underpinnings as it provided an important source of income for families in terms of higher bride price. The community benefited from feasts or celebrations that took place in conjunction with the initiation of maidens. The festivities involved the purchase of special outfits, presents and other items that boosted the local economy. The traditional communities profit from the proceeds. In
some areas where a particular cutting (infabulation) was common, the practice provided a source of continuous income. The reason for that was that operators were needed throughout the life of a woman. The procedures performed during childhood, before childbirth, and after childbirth as well as after a divorce or death of spouse. However, Carl’s (ibid.) notes that the daughters of urban and educated women were less likely to undergo genital cutting. Such women gave medical complications as reasons for opposition the FGC. Carl’s (ibid.) work is important to the present study as it presents the factors perpetuating the practice of girls traditional rite of passage and with it ritual music. It also points out issues raised by those opposed to the GTRP, some of which feature prominently in the GARP music in songs such as ntano cia aarĩ (song No. 10).

Senoga-zake (1986) reveals that the Tiriki of Western Kenya had adjusted to cultural change in the circumcision rite of passage (CRP) and practiced both the traditional and the modern one, that is, the Christian circumcision ceremonies (CCC). He notes that traditional ceremonies were organized in stages in which song, dance and drama were included. The songs used in the ceremonies were mostly satirical. However, the song texts used encouraged the initiates to be brave and overcome the pain during circumcision. The traditional ceremonies were observed all the cultural taboos, barring women from participation in the male CRP. Senoga-Zake, (ibid.) observes that the CCC use modified traditional circumcision songs by retaining the melodies but changed the texts to suit the western Christian idiom context. The study benefited from Senoga-Zake’s (ibid.) work as it highlights some aspects of the ARP especially the religious tinge in girls alternative rite of passage music Ntaano cia aarĩ (song No.10).

1.2.4 Advocacy for Eradication of Traditional Girl Initiation Rite of Passage

The UN Conference paper 4 of 1985 observes that more than 130 million maidens and women worldwide had undergone FGM and each year nearly 2 million more maidens are at risk of having to go through FGM. The UN Conference paper 4 (ibid.) work advocates for the eradication of the GTRP involving FGM and has been useful to the study as it raised issues, whose content was viewed from a musical point of view concur with ARP sentiments reveals in its music, Ntaano cia aarĩ (song No. 10).
Anika (2000) observes that the participants of the UN Decade for Women dealing with female circumcision in Africa in 1985 articulated the need to know where the women lived. What they did and why they did what they did. Such knowledge was paramount for them as women leaders, for them to devise programs that would be meaningful to the women in their advocacy for the eradication of female circumcision practices. Anika's (ibid.) work benefits the study as it brought to light issues of advocacy for girls alternative rite of passage and the eradication of girls’ traditional rite of passage evidenced in ARP music Twaana tutu (song No.5).

Forward (2000) observes that FGM was a traditional practice that involved cutting or altering the genitalia as a RP for social-cultural reasons. Further noted was the fact that some women who underwent FGM had health problems such as hemorrhage, shock, pain, infection and difficulties during birth. Others had psychological and sexual problems that could damage maidens’ lifetime health. The factors that aggravate these potential health hazards were the type of Female Genital cutting (FGC) that the maidens experienced and the practitioner’s expertise and tools hygienic conditions. Access to adequate health care posed a potential hazard. Further observation was that for the previous twenty-four years FGM had increasingly been recognized as a health and human rights issue among the governments, the international communities and professional health organizations. As a result, consensus against FGC had emerged and strong efforts made at both the international and community levels. NGOs working locally and internationally implement the majority of FGM abandonment programme’s, an example, in Kenya is the Plan International Kenya (PIK) working then in Tharaka. This work is useful as it advances issues for the advocacy for the eradication of the girls’ traditional rite of passage practices and which the study attests to through the song texts (song No. 10).

WHO (2000) strongly condemns the physicians, nurses and midwives who perform the procedure due to the growing recognition of the risk associated with FGM and heightens concern regarding the possible role of FGM in HIV transmission. This work of WHO (ibid.) is useful to the study in that it highlights the reasons for advocacy for the
eradication of TGRP. The song texts of the ARP had such content where the initiates urge their mothers and grandmothers who were the practitioners to stop showing the initiates of ARP how the girls traditional rite of passage were important see (song No.10).

1.2.5 The Alternative Rite of Passage

PATH (2002), Observes that families that abandoned the practice faced considerable social pressure and the uncircumcised girls subjected to ostracism from their peers. The ARP was therefore developed to provide social support to those girls and families who were going against social norms. The ARP was modeled after the traditional RP that marked the transition to adulthood for the maidens in many ethnic groups in Kenya. The traditional rites typical of the Amĩĩrũ included five to seven days of seclusion during which groups of maidens were provided with family life education from their mothers and other relatives as they recovered from the ritual. The ARP is designed to provide an opportunity for parents and maidens who chose not to circumcise to maintain the positive cultural traditions associated with the transitional rite of passage. The girls alternative rite of passage like the girls traditional rite of passage for the Amĩĩrũ included a week of seclusion in which life-skills education was given and a day of festivity to mark publicly the coming of age of the maidens, and to celebrate with family and friends. After the first girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies in 1996, the participating families became more vocal advocates against girls traditional rite of passage and the maidens felt more self-confident in their decision and formed anti-FGM support groups in their communities. PATH (ibid.) further notes that although the ARP were based on the assumption that parents and maidens who participated had already made the decision not to circumcise, the Population Council (1999) report notes that for some the ARP offered the encouragement to take the final step of stopping the practice (and hence the music that accompanied it). The work is essential in facilitating the comprehension of the paradox in which the traditional music of the GRP is found.
1.2.6 Traditional Music

Nketia (1963) notes that to understand how a traditional music function in culture, consideration on how the music is organized in relation to activities of everyday life is paramount. He (ibid.) observes that music in African communities was socially controlled. There was a distinction between musical events, events that are arranged around a program of music and non-musical events found in the same society. Nketia, (ibid.) gives an example of traditionally prescribed combination of musical and non-musical events, such as the puberty festivals. The festivals celebrations followed a marked pattern that was repeated on every occasion. The music performers of puberty festivals for maidens in Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and those of Southern Ghana were solely women. The Klamaof Adangme was an example of such performance. He (ibid.) therefore, presents the puberty rites’ music as functional music. And further notes that the form of African song is derived partly from the contexts in which it is used and partly from the form of the texts on which the melody springs. Nketia’s (ibid.) work is useful to the study as it shades light on the African music of the girls traditional rite of passage.

Roberta (1999) writing on form and structure of the traditional music performed in African communities observes that the Call and Response song form was the most distinctive character of African music. In that type of singing the solo calls out with a complete or incomplete sung theme carrying a certain message and the chorus would responds with a complete theme or an answer that formed the completion of the soloist’s message. The call and response forms is performed in many creative ways. The suitability of the form was maintained in the flexibility with which it was organized providing for adaptation, expansion and shortening as well as augmentation and diminution. This depended on the goals and needs of the songs at the time of performance. The goals and needs of the songs at the time of performance were influenced by cultural changes in values, beliefs, norms and artifacts leading to textual and structural changes. Roberta (ibid.) further expands on the form by giving two categories of songs that arose from the form. The forms were the high text load songs and the low text load songs. A high text load song is one that has many varied words and phrases while a low text load song is one that has few words and phrases that are varied.
The scholar describes several other types of the call and response forms and his work serve as reference to the study in regard to musical analysis.

1.2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by two theories that is, the structural functionalism theory and the theory of culture change. The structural functionalism theory advanced by Durkheim (1938) states that society as a structure, made up of substructures each of which must function effectively in order to support the wholesome functioning of the main structure. The substructure of the society includes various institutions. According to this theory, the initiation rite of passage ceremony and all its functionalities belong to the cultural institution. All the societal institutions are influenced by the change that affects the society. In this study, the girl rite of passage is seen as one of the institutions forming the Amĩĩru societal substructure. The structural functionalism therefore applies automatic change to various societal substructures. The girl rite of passage ceremony has been influenced by the socio-cultural changes affecting the entire society. Hence, change occurring in all its elements such as music as well as the emergence of girls alternative rite of passage in which new social cultural concepts dominate the textual element of music. The use and function of traditional music as it were in the girls traditional rite of passage, therefore changed in the context of girls alternative rite of passage to uphold the social cultural concepts of the changing Amĩĩrũ society.

The theory of culture change as advanced by Merriam, (1964) states that change is a constant variable in human experience although rates of change differ from one culture to another and from one aspect to another within a given culture. The rate of change in the girls traditional rite of passage among the Imenti group of Amĩĩrũ is faster than that of the same rite of passage among the Tharaka community according to Karimi wa Murungi (personal interview 2006). The theory of culture change further states that no culture escapes the dynamics of change over time since culture is also stable, that is, no cultures change wholesale and overnight as the threads of continuity ran through every culture. Among the Tharaka change seems to be gradual with the girls traditional rite of passage melodies being accommodated within the girls alternative rite of passage. Therefore,
change must always be considered against a background of stability. The theory of culture change further holds that culture change can be observed as it occurred in the past, that is, through diffusion as achieved cultural transmission. Most communities among the Amĩrũ have such achieved cultural change within the rite of passage institutions for both male and female. Among these groups, the male RP changed to the Christian circumcision rite of passage (CCRP) performed and organized by the Churches and the female RP to the current girls’ alternative rite of passage performed and organized by groups like Ntanĩra na Mugambo. The theory of culture change emphasis on the stability and selectivity in culture with music considered as the most stable element of culture and ritual music more stable than other types of music. The theory was useful in determining the aspects of the music of the girls traditional rite of passage that changed when used in the girls alternative rite of passage. The textual content of the traditional songs of the Amĩrũ girls traditional rite of passage changed but the rhythms and melodies of the songs were retained.

1.3 Research methodology

1.3.1 Research Design

The study collected data from the field. The data was summarized and categorized into themes. The descriptive research method was used to analyzed the role of ritual music and to described the influence of the introduction of the girls’ alternative rite of passage on the traditional music of the girls’ rite of passage.

1.3.2 Population and Sampling

1.3.2.1 Population

The study targeted the female population in Tharaka. The accessible population was in the Marimanti division of Tharaka district. The study also targeted elderly men who were key decision makers in the community.
1.3.2.2 Sampling

To avoid subjectivity and since there were no estimates available of the proportion in the target population assumed to have had the characteristics of interest, 50% of the accessible population was used as recommended by Fisher (1983). Given that the Tharaka community is highly homogeneous, and that alternative rite of passage is organized by a particular group at any given time, a total of 100 respondents were used.

1.3.2.3 Purposive Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used as it allowed for handpicked cases with required information in respect to the objectives of the study and hence the selection of the targeted population locations vital to the study namely Marimanti in Central Tharaka. Population sampled used the following age criteria each consisting of subjects with information that meet specific objectives of the study: These adult men and women of ages 18-60 years, maidens 8-20 years thus ensuring a reasonable target population representation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Respondents (no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-37</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-48</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-59</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table: 1** Age distribution of population interviewed

1.3.2.4 Snowball Sampling

Snowball Sampling was used to determine the interviewee women, maidens and adult men that played the key role in decision making in Tharaka community. Initial
subjects identified through purposive sampling technique named others until the required population was reached.

1.3.3 Research Instruments

1.3.3.1 Participant and Non-Participant Observation

The study used both the participant observation (PO) and non-participant observation to attain first-hand information. The PO provided further checking and monitoring of field information that was necessary for evaluating data gathered through various research instruments as well as evaluating informants’ imperative data to the study.

1.3.3.2 Non-Participant Observation

Non-participant observation was used to obtain information during performances.

Plate 1. 1 Researcher participates in an ARP performance

Photo by Mrs. Kithinji
1.3.3.3 Questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire was used to enable respondents from the two categories to respond freely. That gave the respondents the opportunity to own up for their response. The instrument was essential in acquiring information on what, how and why particular kind of music was performed during the traditional GRP and ARP.

1.3.3.4 Opinionaire

The research instrument required respondents to express their opinions in writing. The instrument gave the study an emic view of the impact of ARP and social context of the music of the GTRP in Tharaka. The study instruments were translated into the local dialect as need arose.

1.3.3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted just before and immediately after the performances. These provided the study with the emic view of the music performances. See plate 2 showing an in-depth interview session.

Plate 1. 2: Researcher during an interview

Photo by Mr. Mbaabu J.
1.3.4 Study Equipment

The research equipment included a smart radio cassette recorder and digital camcorder Sony Hc46 to capture still, audio and audio-visual aspects of the music performances and interviews.

1.3.5 Data Collection

1.3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected in the field from the target population sample, after a pilot study was done in Tharaka north and Tharaka south divisions to determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments to be used in actual data collection. Questionnaires and semi-structured interview were personally administered and findings analyzed qualitatively to verify the validity and reliability of the research equipment. Participant and non-participant observation was used in the study to gather first-hand information, while questionnaires and opinionnaire were administered personally to the participants. The interviews and the music performances were recorded and transcribed for both text and musical analysis.

1.3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from articles, books, journals, periodicals, websites, published and unpublished theses and dissertations related to the study. These were from the relevant institutions. The institutions from which the secondary data were collected included the Kenya National Archives, the Institute of African Studies, UNSECO, Kenya National Library, Moi library, Kenyatta University; Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, Nairobi University and the Bureau of Educational Studies Libraries.

1.3.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was carried out on data collected in the field. Data collected were categorized in terms of themes and coded to enhance analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaires, interviews and opinionnaire were read and summarized. The videotaped
and recorded data were edited, categorized and used to facilitate detailed textual and formal analysis. The songs collected were transcribed for both texts and music analysis. The texts were translated and analyzed. The musical transcriptions were analyzed in terms of structure; that is, melody pitch, scale range melodic contour, intervals, rhythm and tone raw. Musical transcription was done manually using a keyboard Yamaha R350. For music print the finale 2003 and 2011 music software was used.

1.3.7 Research Ethic

The research permit for this study was obtained from the Ministry of Education on 11/6/2006. In the field permission was acquired from the administration officer that is the chief of Tharaka Central Division. Institutional Managements allowed the study to interview both the teachers and pupils. Individuals agreed to be interviewed. However most of the respondents requested to remain anonymous.
CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE AMĨĪRŨ

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the locality and its physical features, the people, the language, foods and the socialization process of the Amĩĩrũ community.

2.1.1 The Land of the Amĩĩrũ

The Amĩĩrũ lived in the once large Meru District with its major town sharing the name. The district covered an area of 9922 square kilometres, with a population of about 1.2 million people and a population density of up to 400 people per square kilometre (Wadiba, 1988). It had seven administrative divisions, namely; North Imenti, South Imenti, Nithi, Tharaka, Tigania, Igembe and Timau. The district was later sub-divided into three districts, namely; Nyambene District to the north, Meru and Tharaka Nithi to the south, and recently, into North Imenti, South Imenti, Nithi, Tharaka, Igembe and Tigania districts and currently into Meru and Tharaka Nithi counties (see map 2.1).

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Tharaka District Development Plan 2002-2008

MAP 2.1: The Map of Larger Meru
Meru District has a variety of climatic conditions. The climate is a result of the wide variety of the district’s physical features.

2.1.2 Physical Features of Mĩrũ

Mt. Kenya is one of the striking features in the west standing at 5,380m above sea level. Its dome slopes gently towards the north and eastwards forming the East plateau of Kenya (Wandibba, 1988). A similar feature is the Nyambene hills in the northeast standing approximately 2,500m above the surrounding plateau. The Nyambene range and Mt. Kenya were formed through volcanism. The southern slopes of Mt. Kenya have deep incisions carved into its bedrock by large rivers. The other parts of the district are mainly plains to the north composed of the Nyambene volcanic lava with rocky soils, which gently descend to about 850m. The lowlands form the east and southern parts of the district stretching from the lower slopes of Mt. Kenya to the border of the district. The lowlands slope is gentle and falls to the Tana River, leaving the district at 300m above the sea level (Wandibba, 1988). The rivers from the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya drain into Tana River.

These are mainly the large rivers, which include the Thuci, Kathita, Nithi, Thingithu, Mutonga and Ruguti. Drainage from the southern flanks of the Nyambene range also flows into the Tana River. The major rivers from the range are Thanantu, Ura and Thangatha (Wandibba, 1988).

2.1.3 Soils

Loam and clay soils are common in the district. However, loam soil is dominant ranging from the dark brown loams from the tuff on the smooth downs of Timau areas to peaty loams on the alpine meadow between 2,800m and 4,200m. These soils are poorly drained. Therefore, they hold little agricultural activities. The soils between 1,500m and 3,000m and the Nyambene hills consist of strong brown loams from volcanic ash. The southeastern parts of the district are covered with dark red sandy loams that are poorly drained. These soils cannot support meaningful agricultural activities. The brown calcareous loamy sands form the surface of the land between 300m and 1,500m in the eastern and northern parts of Meru District. The northern and northeastern parts
bordering Isiolo District have poorly drained dark brown to aronage-brown clay soils (Wandibba, 1988).

2.1.4 Climate

Meru District receives long rains between the months of March to May, and the short rains between the months of October and December. The highlands of the southern and southeastern slope of Mt. Kenya get about (1,250 - 2,250) mm of rainfall annually. The lowlands receive less rainfall annually, that is, about (380 - 1,000) mm. The rainfall distribution in the district is influenced by the rain shadow north of Mt. Kenya and northwest of the Nyambene range. The moist parts of the eastern lowlands receive an average of (750 – 1,000) mm. Some of the drier parts of Meru District receive an average of 500mm or even less annually. The physical features and the climate of the district greatly influence its temperature and vegetation. The temperature ranges from an annual mean of 20ºc in the highlands around Mt. Kenya to a mean of 35ºc in the low and dry areas around Tharaka, Kianjai, Meru national park and the northern parts towards Isiolo District (Wandibba, 1988).

2.1.5 Vegetation

The vegetation in this district is mainly forests and grasslands. The highland forests and highland grasslands cover the slopes of Mt. Kenya and the Nyambene hills, at between 1,976m and 2,736m above the sea level. In these forests, both the indigenous and exotic hardwoods and softwoods are found. These include the cedar and the Meru oak, camphor and the podocarpus. The summit of Mt. Kenya is covered by montane moorland and grassland. The eastern and northeastern parts of the district are covered by dry bush with trees. This vegetation covers areas near Isiolo, Meru Game park, Tharaka and Mutuati. Thus, Meru District is endowed with an active population engaging its enormous force in various agricultural activities, supported by various physical and climatic conditions.

2.2 Amĩũrũ Foods

The Amĩũrũ traditionally engaged in crop farming, animal rearing, hunting and gathering honey. The staple food of the traditional society is the different types of millet and
various types of pulses, cassava, arrowroots, yams, sweet potatoes and sugarcane. The animals kept include cattle, sheep and goats. The cattle were important to the Amĩrũ because of their significance as bridal wealth. The cattle also are valued for their milk, meat and hides. The staple foods were valued significantly, as they were associated with various social occasions and rites in traditional society.

The Amĩrũ have a variety of pulses Ncabĩ, black beans, nthoroko, cowpeas, ncugu, pigeon peas and nono, garden peas. The mwere bulrush millet, ugĩmbĩ finger millet and mũya, sorghum were vital components of the rites of passage. Other food crops were ikwa, yams, matũma, arrowroots, mĩkwaciĩ, cassava and mĩrĩjo, sweet potatoes were greatly valued due to their ability to stay in the soil for long periods after maturity. These foods served the people well during low rainfall and drought seasons. Sugarcane was also valuable to the Amĩrũ who used it to brew beer for their leisure time and marriage rituals. All these traditional foods are still grown today but with varying quantity due to introduction of cash crops, right from the time of colonization (Wandibba, 1988).

2.3 Movement and Settlement

The Amĩrũ trace their origin in a small island called Mbwa at the Coast of Kenya in the eighteenth century. Oral traditions dealing with the origins of every section of the Amĩrũ, except the Chuka, regard Mbwa Island as their ancestral home. Fadiman, (1982) gave an account of how the Amĩrũ were invaded by the Nguo Ntune (red cloths), that is, the Arabs and this led to their migration up the Tana River to the present settlement at the foot of Mt. Kenya. According to Mbiti (1969), the Amĩrũ believed that God led them to their present land. They had a religious leader called Mũgw, whose office and figures had mythological origin and were connected with the origin of the Amĩrũ nation. During the migration, Mũgw Koome Njue provided political leadership.

2.4 Organization of the Amĩrũ

The earliest clans of the Amĩrũ were formed, based on social organization that took place at the shores of the ocean, as they fled from the oppression of the Nguo Ntune. They divided themselves into three groups and each of these became a clan, after
crossing over from the island into the main land. The first group to cross the deep waters did so at night. That is, in the darkness and hence, became the cia njirũ, black clan. The second group crossed over at dawn and became the cia ntune, red clan and the third clan crossed over at sunrise and became the cia njerũ, white clan. Upon arrival at the foot of the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya, towards the end of their migration other sub-clans emerged. This was due to interactions with the communities found in their area of settlement. Here, some people were absorbed into other communities like the Maasai and the Turkana. Population pressure also led to further migration from the original area of settlement. The Amĩĩrũ live in clans or groups of related people called mĩũrĩga (Nyaga, 1986).

Traditionally, circumcision as a RP accompanied with music marks the age groups. All those who undergo circumcision at the same time belong to the same age group structure known as nthuki. After every circumcision, the initiates ousted those that had undergone circumcision before them from the gaaru warriors’ house. The elder nthaka who by then were married men took over the leadership from those in the njũri ncheke, council of elders. Those being relieved of duties in the council if of great integrity joined in to form agambi, the judges. The agambi, moved on to serve as the agwe, the spiritual leaders. The Amĩĩrũ therefore, present a well-organized society with a pyramidal structure, which provides the Amĩĩrũ with a social and self-control mechanism (Nyaga, 1986).

2.4.1 The Amĩĩrũ Language

The Amĩĩrũ speak a language called kĩmĩrũ, with distinct but related dialects. The dialects of kĩmĩrũ include kĩtharaka, gĩtigania, kũgembe and kũmente. There are sub-dialects within these dialects. Kĩmĩrũ is a tonal language. The intonation results in different meanings of a word. The word ĩrĩa, the one, can also mean a lake and goat feed as one changes the intonation. The language has seven vowels as opposed to the five used in English. The vowels are ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘ĩ’, ‘o’, ‘u’, ‘ũ’. The ‘a’ is pronounced as ‘a’ in karamu, a pencil or pen, and as ‘a’ in amber in English. The vowel ‘e’ is pronounced as ‘e’ in kenda, nine, and ‘e’ as in the word enemy. While ‘i’ is enunciated as in mwini, a singer, and ‘i’ in ignorance. ‘ĩ’ is articulated as ‘ĩ’ in Kĩmĩrũ and ‘a’ in any. The vowel
‘o’ is enunciated as *kwona*, to see, and ‘o’ in the word odd. ‘u’ is articulated as ‘u’ in the word *kuuga*, to say and as in curator. The vowel ‘ũ’ is pronounced as ‘ũ’ in *mũtana*, a son, and ought or owl.

### 2.4.2 Religion

The Amĩĩrũ have been monotheistic and traditionally believed that *Mũrungu*, God, had attributes of goodness and could not do them harm (Murungi, 1991). Oral traditions had it that, there was distinction between moral and immoral practices among the Amĩĩrũ. Their traditional institutions such as ceremonies, rituals, work activities and other events of the community incorporated elements of worship in their performances accompanied with music. That illustrated the significance attached to their traditional ritual practices. To comprehensively cover all about the Amĩĩrũ culture would have taken many volumes. Consequently, only the cultural aspects that lead to deeper understanding of the GRP were discussed in the chapter. In discussing the Amĩĩrũ culture, the study began with a look at their belief system.

The Amĩĩrũ believed that there was a supreme being, who was the creator of all human beings. They also believed that He created the whole world. They believed that prayer and sacrifice were to be offered to him for the welfare of mankind. The Amĩĩrũ referred to God as *Mũrungu* and as *Ngai*. They believed that *Mũrungu* had localized dwelling places. The Imenti, for example, believed that *Mũrungu* lived in Mount Kenya at Lake Saĩ. They also believed that *Mũrungu* was personal, and *mumenyi thonte*, omniscience and *Mweneinya*, omnipotent. *Mũrungu* was also called *Mũgaa* that is, the medicine man with ability to heal all diseases. Another name for *Mũrungu* among the Amĩĩrũ was *Barĩkĩba* meaning the Great One.

According to Kooje oba Mbuko (personal interview, 2006), the Amĩĩrũ believed in the existence of a spirit world involving both the bad and good spirits. These spirits were said to be more powerful than the living. The bad spirits were those associated with *nkoma*, evil. The Amĩĩrũ believed that these spirits brought evil to the members of the community for no reason at all. They believed that these spirits were capable of beating or stoning a
person. When a person got into trouble with the spirits, a sacrifice was offered to keep the spirits from mistreating the victims.

The good spirits were those of their ancestors, nkoma cia bajũjũ. They believed that once one died, the deceased was incarnated into a living dead as invisible being or spirit though they retained their physical features. Such spirits were believed to affect the lives of those alive on earth positively or negatively depending on whether they were pleased or displeased with them. The ancestral spirits were the custodians of customs and guardians of the morality of the Amĩĩrũ. As such, they disciplined only the wayward members of their family and not the whole community. Whenever they were discontented, they caused calamity to fall on the family and were only appeased by the sacrifice of a goat or a sheep, honey or cereal beer. The Amĩĩrũ, therefore, gave food and poured libation to the spirits of their ancestors who were to be treated with the same respect they had while alive. The ancestral spirits were believed to be present in all the family activities, rites and ceremonies. The Amĩĩrũ observed rituals at every stage of one’s life, right from birth to death.

2.4.3 Rites of Passage

The Amĩĩrũ were constantly exposed to religious beliefs and prayer, sacrifices and rituals that made them realize the presence and importance of Mũrungu, the spirits and the ancestors, right from birth as mentioned above. The children learnt family and clan names and history through songs. At initiation ceremonies, songs were used to give special information on the new roles the youth were to play. The most important rites in one’s life took place at birth, circumcision, marriage and death. There was distinction between ethical and unethical practices among the Amĩĩrũ. Although these practices were accompanied with music, they were non-musical social-religious activities that invoked the presence of Mũrungu and the ancestral spirits. The role of the rites was to mark a change in the individuals’ social status. They were also to confirm and strengthen the change. A sacrifice was offered to Mũrungu. The ritual was accompanied with much celebration in song and dance.
2.4.3.1 Rites at Birth

A child born into the Amĩĩrũ community was met with jubilation and much festivity. The child was supposed to be helped and guided by the community into becoming a self-reliant and responsible adult able to support the community. Four ululations were made to announce the birth of a male child and three for a female one. Both the mother and child were kept in seclusion for three days in case of a female child and four days for the male child. The seclusion was necessitated by the fact that the newly born child was not yet integrated into the community of the living according to the *Igembe* (Chege, 1985). A thanksgiving ritual was offered after the seclusion period, on the day the child was integrated into the community.

On the day of the ritual, women and children came to the homestead where they feasted and offered prayers for the child’s growth and welfare, protection and guidance by *Mũrungu*. The ritual involved getting the child out of the house in which he or she was born. The child was handed over to a girl who later on passed to other children and old women. A sheep was then sacrificed as a sign of gratitude to *Mũrungu* for the gift of a child. The spirits of the ancestors who are the invisible members of the family also partook of the meat of the sacrifice Kooje oba Mbuko, (personal interview, ibid.). The bones and the remaining parts of the sacrifice were then burnt to ashes. The Amĩĩrũ believed that there was communication between them and *Mũrungu* when the smoke went up into the sky with life of the sacrifice embedded in it. *Mũrungu* was in turn believed to send down blessing to the Amĩĩrũ. All these activities were accompanied with music to welcome the newborn into the society, congratulate the parents and to give thanks to the almighty. Four to seven years after birth, the ritual of the shaving of the first hair took place. This was a great occasion for the children in the village as they celebrated the shaving of their age mate.

2.4.3.2 Initiation Rites

One of most elaborate rites that the Amĩĩrũ went through was male and female initiation rite. Initiation at puberty involved circumcision and was a significant rite in the community with regard to the initiates and their parents. Circumcision among the Amĩĩrũ
was a symbol for adulthood and change of status in the society. The male and female rites were conducted at both the family and community levels. Before any circumcision took place, Amĩũrũ elders were consulted. They assessed the availability of food, the presence of disease or pandemic and the possibility of an attack by their enemies. Kũgerua matũ, the trying of the ears followed by gũṭũrua matũ, the piercing of the ears ceremonies preceded circumcision. The feast of kũgerua matũ was done on behalf of all the children in the family once Mwana wa kĩranga, the first born male or female became of age. The circumcision of Mwana wa kĩranga signified the entrance of the father into elderhood and the mother into past child bearing age. It was implicit that the duty of childbearing was taken over by circumcision. The mother of a circumcised person carried out the religious duties of past child bearing women (Chege, 1985). The fathers brew ncobi, the traditional beer and marua, a traditional brew, while the mother prepared other foods for the age mates of her husband. The piercing of the ears of the Amĩũrũ initiates followed. At the time when the males were ready to have their ears pierced, the nthaka requested that nkenye cia bũurũ yaa, their maiden friends have their ears also pierced. Hence, the piercing of the ears was done at the same time for both male and female. The feast for Mwana wa kĩranga was more significant than that of other children in the family.

2.4.3.3 Male Circumcision Rite

The male circumcision rite was one of the greatest steps in one’s life. The rite gave mwiji, the uncircumcised male a new perception in the eyes of the community. Nyaga (1986) laments loss of the essence of traditional circumcision today. The essence of initiation through circumcision traditionally was to inculcate high integrity, perseverance and bravery in all things. It was also meant to enhance brotherly love among the people. Those circumcised at the same time had respect for one another and had a common name bamo or bamong’o among them. This kind of respect promoted peace and reconciliations. The initiation was accompanied with various kinds of music. A sacrifice was offered by the community to Mũrungũ to ensure that the circumcision ceremony was blessed and the initiates were protected. This was done on the eve of the male circumcision at the circumcision ground. The male awaiting permission to be circumcised, sang Marũũĩ. After the permission was granted, music was mounted. The males announced their circumcision
through singing *kũrĩrĩa*. *Kũrarĩre* song texts gave counsel on moral and chest living. *Ncorobĩ* was performed after circumcision praising the brevity of the initiates. *Ntaane*, the initiates were then put into seclusion until they healed. When the seclusion period was over, there were celebrations in which songs and dances were performed. The graduating initiates were then given new names. They were called *nthaka*, and were presented to the parents who gave them *mathaga*, ammunition (See figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Nthaka-Amĩĩrũ Warrior

Source: Nyaga (1986:91)

2.4.3.4 Piercing of Female Ears

The *nthaka* informed their parents of their intentions to have the ears of their maiden friends pierced. The fathers of the young men then informed the parents of the maidens. The families of the young men then prepared for the celebrations of the piercing of the
maidens’ ears. These families prepared *ncobi* and *marwa*. The *nthaka* prepared ointment for anointing the ears of their fiancée and *nkūro*. Celebrations were held in praise of the maidens for their integrity. This rite brought honour and peace to the parents and the clansmen present. They blessed their daughters praying that their future would be bright.

### 2.4.3.5 Tattooing of the Maiden

Tattooing followed soon after the maidens had their ears pierced. It was characterized by singing and dancing at the home of the groom and of the bride to be. Tattooing was performed by a male expert, (See figure 2.2).

![Figure 2.2: Nkūro-Tattooing](image)

Source: Nyaga (1986:101)

The tattoo patterns were four lines from the stomach to back as adornment for the bride to be (Kooje oba Mbuko, personal interview 2006). The maidens knelt before the *mūkūrĩ*, tattoo expert at the tattooing ground. On the left hand, the maidens held the spear of their fiancée and on the right hand that of their brother. The fiancée would be present during the tattooing. During this occasion, singers from both the male and female sides would sing to encourage and praise the maidens. The fearful maidens would be forcefully tattooed with women holding them tightly.
After tattooing, there were great shouts of victory, *nthaka* from the male’s sides picked the spear belonging to the grooms to be, and those from the maiden’s side picked theirs. The women singers and dancers came to help the maidens to their feet. They embraced them and praised them in song as they escorted them home to their parents’ homes. Ladies chosen from their village would take care of them. The ladies would anoint the wounds with oil brought to the maidens by their fiancées. This process was done for three days after which *nondo*, ochre was applied until the wounds healed. After this, the maidens were adorned and well-fed for one year in preparation for circumcision and thereafter marriage.

2.4.3.6 Female Circumcision Rite

The circumcision day was announced. The period between the announcement and the actual initiation day is known ǔngatio, and the initiate, *nthamari* (see figure 2.3).

![Figure 2.3: Nthamari - Maiden](image)

Source: Nyaga (1986:105)
The initiates sang songs in praise of their fathers, their mothers, the young men from their clan and the children in the village. A diviner was sought before circumcision took place. He was consulted to expel any evil forces that could harm the initiates. A sacrifice was offered by the community to Mũrungu to ensure that the circumcision ceremony was blessed and the initiates were protected. This was done on the eve of initiation at the circumcision ground.

On the other hand, the parents of the female initiates offered honey and finger millet to Mũrungu and the spirits of the ancestors and prayed for the blessings and protection of the circumcision ground. On the eve of mwana wa kĩranga’s initiation, the father of the initiate offered sacrifice. The blood of the sacrificed sheep was left to pour at the ground as a libation to the spirits of the ancestors. They were also offered pieces of meat. The elders who had come to give advice to the parents of the initiates and all the members of the family took the remaining meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones and remains of the sacrificed sheep were burnt to ashes. The smoke going up was believed to signify communication between the Amĩĩrũ and God.

Similar to the male circumcision, the female initiation is to make a female respectful, persevere and be brave in all things. Maidens who cried during circumcision could not get young men to marry. They were married to young men who had not stood upright morally. Such maidens could not counsel young maidens nor participate in any social activities. They were seen as cowards in all things. The maidens to be circumcised sung and danced to matũrũ music. The mwana wa kĩranga among the initiates organized these dances. They danced in the open ground for six consecutive days in the evenings or at times skipping a day. On the sixth day, rwĩmbo rwa gĩtindo dance was performed. The sixth day on which the dance was performed was a significant occasion that attracted the whole community where the maidens praised the age groups.

Circumcision was the climax of the ritual. The women sang their heart out awaiting the initiate’s circumcision. The helpers sang songs that encouraged the initiate to be strong and courageous. The initiates were circumcised and the brave ones were embraced,
praised, and honoured in songs. After circumcision, each of the initiates was taken to her parent’s home. There, they were nursed and advised on their new status. The initiates who were now called *ngutu* healed within a year. And immediately they were married off.

2.4.3.7 Amĩĩrũ Marriage

*Ngurano ya a mĩĩrũ* Amĩĩrũ marriage, and the Amĩĩrũ *mũranũ* wedding were holy and no Amĩĩrũ was married off or married without a wedding. The Amĩĩrũ youth were respectful and took the counsel of their parents and that helped them enter into marriage. Female circumcision prepared the maidens for marriage. This initiated them into the childbearing stage. There were rituals and ceremonies that accompanied marriage. These were to invoke *Mũrungu*’s presence in the couple’s lives. Sacrifices to *Mũrungu* were performed if the maiden were virgins and were acceptable to *Mũrungu*. Sex before marriage was a taboo among the Amĩĩrũ. Sexuality was kept pure for procreation and the propagation of the community. The sacrificial sheep were offered at the maidens’ parents’ home, while honey and finger millet were offered to God and the ancestral spirits early in the morning at the homesteads of the grooms.

Marriage followed female circumcision, that is, after the initiates healed. The groom took dowry consisting of *ncoobi* and *mbaakĩ*, tobacco to the clan of the maiden, so that the maidens’ fathers could bless them before they left for the new home. The wedding day was announced. The bridegroom was escorted to the brides’ home by his clansmen on the wedding day. The couple was blessed and prayed for by the parents of the bride. These parents gave them some grass reeds and a she goat. The couple and their escort returned to the groom’s home. At the grooms home the couple was received by the family members. The bride would refuse to enter the home until the parents-in-law came for her. The groom’s mother would first receive the bride into her home and bless her by giving her *kaari* a small girl saying; *kũũrũka taata, Ndakunenkera mũgwati wa mwana*, (come in I give you a baby sitter). The father-in-law would also receive the bride into his home and bless her by giving her a boy saying; *kũũrũka taata, Ndakunenkera mũrithi wa mburi na*
ng’ombe, (come in I give you a herds boy). The bride would receive the gifts and then be led to her mother-in-law’s house.

In the evening, the couple came together in their house; knew each other and the marriage was consummated. Though the bride now known as mūchiere had their own house, she was not allowed to make meals there. All the meals were made in her mother-in-law’s house for as long as it pleased her. The mūchiere was only allowed to cook in her own house after the mother-in-law placed a cooking pot filled with food to cook on the fire stones in mūchiere’s house. From then on, she made meals in her house and served her father-in-law every meal except breakfast. Later, the mūchiere conceived and bore children. After mūchiere knew of her conception, she looked for a reputable woman from her village to be her mwijũkia, midwife and helper throughout her childbearing age. The role of mwijũkia was to advise and counsel the mother to be on matters concerning childbearing and motherhood. When mūchiere was due, mwijũkia was called upon to assist. The baby would be born and kept in seclusion for four days in the case of a boy and three days for a girl. The child would then go through the lifecycle of the Amĩrũ.

2.4.3.8 Death Rites

The Amĩrũ always anticipated death at old age, hence, only the grandparents had this rite performed on their behalf. The fat of the sacrificial ram was melted and smeared on the dead body and on the grave. The mwana wa kiranga sprinkled water on the dead body saying, ūroĩta kuraa may you go to a rainy place. This was a prayer for the dead to go to a place of peaceful rest. According to Evangeline wa Murungi (personal interview, 2007) if a person died before attaining old age, there were no ceremonial rites done for him. The deceased body was tied with a rope and the mother of the late pulled it into the forest. The deceased body would be left there to be devoured by the wild animals. The Amĩrũ began to bury their dead in the earth after the invasion by the white man and eventual colonial rule in their land.

Culture is not static but dynamic and as such is bound to change with time. These traditional institutions have been affected by these changes taking place with time. With
the coming and establishment of the missionaries and the colonial government at the turn of the twentieth century, many of Amĩrũ traditional institutions, ceremonies, and rituals took a new turn. The Roman Catholic missionaries settled in Mũjwa, presently South Imenti in 1911, and others in Kaaga in North Imenti. Some of the Amĩrũ were converted to Christianity, which did not approve the traditional practices of the Amĩrũ as they were considered evil. They, therefore, prohibited their converts from participating in the Amĩrũ traditional practices. The new converts abandoned their cultural practices due to the notion that their traditional practices were evil and retrogressive. This was in favour of the white man’s religion and culture.

The converts and their children were introduced to formal education, brought into the Amĩrũ country by the colonial government thus, superseded the African education transmitted formally through the various traditional institutions. Schools were attached to various churches. The first priority was given to the converts in endeavor to alienate the Amĩrũ from their traditional way of life. The Amĩrũ, therefore, turned away from traditional beliefs and use of song and dance in worship and other cultural occasions. This marked the beginning of the erosion of the various traditional institutions and subsequently the music supported by them. The Amĩrũ had a well-established system of government led by njũri ncheke, a council of elders but this too was weakened by the introduction of colonial political and power systems of governance.

The Amĩrũ society has changed since then with only a few important aspects of social and cultural traditions remaining in a form of adapted contemporary realities. The traditional ritual institutions have not been spared either. The male initiation has given in to Christian circumcision and the girl initiation to the ARP. The music of these institutions has changed with much of it being lost in the process.
CHAPTER THREE

MUSIC OF THE AMIİRŨ SOCIETY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter encompasses the rich musical cultural heritage of the AmiİRũ. It presents the traditional music, contemporary music as well as ritual music which form the basis of this study.

3.1.1 Music

The AmiİRũ have a rich cultural heritage unique to their way of life enculturated through music. Their vocal and instrumental music display the uniqueness of this heritage before the white man’s cultural value intrusion.

Music to the AmiİRũ signifies the socialization process. This process embraces the whole sphere of life; leisure, praise and encouragement, self and corporate entertainment. The AmiİRũ vocalized all their music. Kuina means singing hence kuina rwĩmbo in kĩmĩĩrũ means singing a song. Musical performances, vocal, instrumental, song or dance are all referred to as rwĩmbo, song. Rwĩmbo is a vital ingredient of the AmiİRũ music so much that even in instrumental performances some bits and pieces of song feature prominently. Rwĩmbo therefore, is the oldest form of music-making among the AmiİRũ. According to Karimi wa Murungi (personal interview, 2006) kuina iku kwa rumagia urũmwe bwa AmiİRũ (It is singing that seals the unity of the AmiİRũ community) enunciating the prominence of rwĩmbo.

Different members of the community performed the huge repertoire of the AmiİRũ music. The old, youth and children, men and women all participated in different performances. In one performance, one participated as a performer while in others one participated as a member of the audience. The songs carried meanings and messages in their texts to both the performers The AmiİRũ performed music in the evenings under the moonlight. This enabled members of the community to participate either as performers or as part of the audience. However, songs such as lullabies and those of leisure performed during
babysitting and cattle herding were performed during the day. The Amĩĩrũ music could be categorized as lullabies, children songs and others as discussed in the chapter. and the audience. The messages revolved around cattle, people and the daily chores.

3.2 Traditional Music

3.2.1 Lullaby

Mothers, grandmothers and babysitters lulling the babies to sleep performed Ithathayi lullabies. Ithathayi were sung to comfort the babies, assure them of safety, security and provision of basic needs. Oo kira mwana and kira mwana kira maitu were songs sang to this effect.

3.2.2 Children Songs

Young girls and boys performed children songs during the day. These were songs for entertainment. They also included action songs that helped the children in counting and learning their genealogies. Children educational songs taught them the various aspects of life.

A song like wakarathe (see song No.1 p. 51) taught children the various activities that they would engage in as adults. Activities such as animal husbandry, blacksmith, home-making and the art of war were taught through these songs. During cold days the children sang and danced to songs like matoro mboro to keep themselves warm.

Older children performed kĩbuchũ songs and dances for entertainment. The older Amĩĩrũ children were expected to work on the farms during the day. Consequently, the boys and girls sang and danced kĩbuchũ in the early evenings, during the short rains when there was some food in the farms.

3.2.3 Story Songs

Ndwimbo cia ngono, story songs were performed as interludes during story-telling sessions. They were also used to link one story to another. Children performed these
songs to keep awake waiting for evening meals. Stories such as those of “the hare and the elephant”, and those of “gacururiga” (name of a beautiful girl) were accompanied by very interesting songs that captivated the children throughout the story sessions. The performance of story songs was around the fire as the grandparents or parents told children stories to keep them busy.

3.2.4 Praise Songs

The Amĩĩrũ sang songs in praise of their heroes and cattle. Marĩrĩ songs were sung by the Akũrũ elders and nthaka while herding cattle. These songs praised the herd of cattle as they went out to the grazing fields and as they returned home in the evening. The lead cow would be greatly praised. The songs highlighted the characteristics that made the lead cow outstanding. The songs soothed the herd and made it manageable as it grazed. Cattle herders also used Marĩrĩ to pass time as they grazed.

Renta an old men performance was sung exclusively by Akũrũ. Renta and kĩbũcho songs were performed under moonlight during mũnyaro, the month of February after harvesting. The villagers gathered at a central place in the village to attend Renta. All people young and old would gather at the venue. Renta performance was to extol the achievements of a clan, a person in the village. Renta was performed to taunt the neighbouring clan and their heroes during their leisure. Consequently, neighbouring clans attended each other’s Renta to counter any negatives thrown to them by their rivals. The performances included exchange of words from itharia, soloists of the different clans to expose the best kĩtharia, soloist. These performances were used as a forum to train people in the art of using words of wisdom and captivating language. Renta songs were in a form of competition where the best kĩtharia was declared a celebrity in the lager community.

3.2.5 Educative Songs

Rĩbũũ, like Renta was performed at a central place in the evenings. All the members of the clan attended this performance. Rĩbũũ offered the community an opportunity to hear and know the upcoming itharia. The itharia who excelled in Rĩbũũ graduated to participate in
Renta. Rĩbũĩ performances were used to equip the clan with life skills. The songs instilled acceptable virtues in the society and condemned and abhorred cowardice, laziness and poverty. Rĩbũĩ songs also praised hard work in the society especially that of those who risked their lives in enemy lands in search of food and pasture. The Amũrũ nthaka would venture into enemy land in time of drought in search of food and pasture. Their success would be hailed during Rĩbũĩ performances.

The girls performed matũrũ music after a bumper harvest. Matũrũ songs were performed during the day and early evenings. The performers accompanied the songs with tũmĩtĩ sticks that gave both rhythmic and percussive effect. Matũrũ songs were also performed during the night at the home of the married women.

3.2.6 Ritual Songs

The Amũrũ accompanied rituals with song and dance. However, some of the rituals called for song and dance while others for chants. Rituals that involved animal or grain sacrifices called for chants. The rain-making ritual was carried out when the land experienced along spell of draught. The elders made oil from the custard seeds in their homes and sprinkled on the ploughed land. As the elders went about sprinkling the oil on the land, they chanted prayers thaai thathaia Ngai thaai asking for Mũrungu’s intervention. When the rains still delayed, they went up the mountain to Lake Saĩ and offered animal sacrifices chanting thaai thathaia Ngai thaai.

The RP rituals invoked songs and dances. All those involved in the ritual performed the songs and dances. The male circumcision songs and dances were performed mainly by men, young and old. Authi songs and dances were performed before, during the male circumcision period and after the circumcision. A male elder led in the authi songs. The kitharia being well-conversant with the demands of the rite made the music exciting. The performance would turn into exhilaration and captivation that made the performers shout and even grunt. The performers would engage in a jumping dance in which they pretended to fight the men from other clans, depict the protective role they are to assume in the society.
The female circumcision songs and dances, on the other hand, were performed by both young and old women. *Njaĩ* songs and dances were performed throughout the circumcision period. Songs and dances such as *mboboi* were performed after the circumcision.

### 3.2.7 War Songs

Old and young men performed *Nkĩro*. The songs were for passing time and relaxation although serious messages were passed. When *nthaka* were preparing to raid another community to steal cattle, they performed *nkĩro* songs to psyche themselves for the raid. Lyrics in the songs motivated the warriors and strengthened them to face the challenge before them. *Nkĩro* songs were also used to alert the community of possible disaster such as raids. The performers used gourds and flywhisks as decor.

### 3.2.8 General Conduct Songs

*Authi, rĩbũĩ, matũrũ* and *renta* were employed as a means of the transmission of traditional values and customs. The men and women sang songs that gave instructions on interpersonal relationships in their villages and community as a whole. Members of the community also sang songs that despised men who misbehaved with small girls and their own daughters. The women who misbehaved in the community were despised in songs. This was to discourage others from such behaviour.

### 3.2.9 Instrumental Music

Performances where instruments are the sole producers of music were not common in the traditional Amĩĩrũ society. Almost all the instruments found among the Amĩĩrũ are percussive in effect and therefore, used for accompanying vocal music. The *Coro / rugoci* horn is not versatile enough to produce melodies and hence is employed in accompanying vocal music (see Plate 3 on p.41).

The *wandĩndĩ*, a fiddle chordophone was mainly played by the male youth at leisure time to accompany their serenades and other entertainment songs. The *mĩriempe* drums among the Chuka, *nkũtha* of Tharaka would be considered to perform instrumental music.
However, bits and pieces of songs were frequently present in the performances. *Giempe* a small two-sided drum and *nkutha* are used to provide rhythm and percussive effects.

Plate 3.3: Coro-horn

Photo by: Muguna H. Karoki

Music in traditional Amĩũrũ society was meant to inculcate good conduct and respect towards peer group, parents and elders. The songs advised and cautioned the member, of the community to be responsible in order to have a cohesive society.

3.3 Contemporary Music

The socio-economic changes in the Amĩũrũ community have not spared their culture, which is as dynamic as all other aspects of the Amĩũrũ life. As various cultural institutions changed, the music that accompanied them had to change too. The religious institutions of the traditional society changed since the introduction of the Christian religion by white man during the colonial rule. The Amĩũrũ stopped offering sacrifices at the shrines in the mountains and hence the music accompanying the rituals died out. Western music that accompanied Christian religious services replaced the music of traditional worship. This constituted some of the contemporary music performed by the Amĩũrũ. The hymns and other religious art songs comprised the church music. The Roman Catholic Church has of
late started to incorporate Amĩĩrũ tunes in their liturgical music. These are adaptations and therefore, add on to the contemporary music repertoire of the Amĩĩrũ.

Another type of contemporary music performed by the Amĩĩrũ is the secular popular music. These are mostly art songs composed, recorded, and sold out to the Amĩĩrũ. These songs are also given to the media houses for airing. Some of these popular musics are performed live in social gatherings such as cultural nights, bars and hotels.

Some of the music performed by schools, colleges and universities during the music festival seasons adds to the contemporary music performed by the Amĩĩrũ. Such music is performed during the music festival seasons are categorized and classified as arrangements of popular tunes and melodies resulting into zilizopendwa, Islamic religious song, Taarab music and oriental vocal music. The instrumental music classes include music performed on the various Western and Oriental instruments. There are special composition classes that deal with topics on themes based on emerging issues. These types form the Amĩĩrũ contemporary music.

3.4 Music of the Rites of Passage

The male and female circumcision ritual ceremonies were the most elaborate of all the rituals performed by the Amĩĩrũ. These celebrations involved a lot of music performances by the initiates, parents and relatives.

3.4.1 Male Initiation Songs

Male initiation song dances were mainly performed by the young and old men. The women only participated in the periphery as audience. Ntiirũ was performed by nthaka in the evenings at a central place. The audience in ntiirũ was the male youth. The songs had messages preparing males for initiation. Ntiirũ songs instilled moral values acceptable to the society. Tũmũũ, two sticks struck together provided unique percussive accompaniment, embellishing ntiiru melodies (see plate 3.4 on p.43).
Nthaka performed Authi before and after the male initiation. An older man, conversant with the requirements of the initiation led in singing of authi songs. Authi was performed in a jumping style. The men performed scenes that portrayed their bravery, mock fights showing the kill of enemies. They decorated their bodies with white ochre and wore miungĩ on their heads. They carried spears and shields in their hands and tied jingles on their legs (see plate 3.5 on p. 44).

Kīrarīre was performed on the eve of initiation day. Kīrarīre were circumcision songs performed at the homestead of the initiates. The songs used demeaning language to humiliate the mwijĩ, uncircumcised male, making him desire to be circumcised. Kīrarīre songs were also meant to encourage males to be strong when facing the knife. They prepared males psychologically and warned male initiates from going back to their mother’s hut after the rite. The songs praised mūtani, circumciser and extolled the rite of
passage. *Nchorobi* was performed by *nthaka* to remind *ntaane*, things they were taught during seclusion.

![Plate 3.5 Decorated young men for Authi dance](image)

Photo by Muguna H. Karoki

*Ntwiko* was performed by *nthaka* of different age groups. *Ntwiko* songs and dances were performed when the outgoing *nthaka*’s authority changed hands within a clan. The married *nthaka* ready to leave *gaaru* sang and danced with the unmarried *nthaka* who were to take over the *gaaru*. They carried spears and swords in their hands and tied jingles on their legs.

Women performed *kĩgarũ* during celebrations and festive seasons. The women whose children were to be initiated prepared porridge and invited other women to the celebration. The songs could demean other women who thought they were better than
others in preparing traditional porridge. Sometimes kĩgarũ was performed to pass stern messages to the clan enemies. These songs were used effectively during the fight for independence. The women formed a circle and moved round as they sang.

3.4.2 Female Initiation Songs

Music was used in the GRP throughout the period it lasted. The rite consisted of various stages in which music was performed. Traditional music was used before the initiation where it functioned as a vehicle for conveying the girls traditional rite of passage concepts. Njai songs and dances functioned as means of psychological preparation, encouragement and challenge to the initiates to face the knife and the challenges of adulthood. The songs taught the initiates proverbial language that would enable them to communicate issues without the children understanding what was being discussed according to Mbũya (personal interview). During this period, members of the community sang songs that were provocative to arousing the interest of those who were not yet initiated. These songs were meant to cause them to desire to be initiated. The women, maidens and the initiates danced njaĩ songs urging the nkenye, uncircumcised maidens to cross over from childhood to adulthood through circumcision. Thus, participation of the maidens in the ũng’atio songs and dances made their readiness for initiation known.

Maidens ready for initiation into adulthood performed ũng’atio songs. The initiates moved from one home of the relatives to another, singing ung’atio songs. The relatives gave them mathaga, gift in preparation for the initiation. The initiates adorned themselves with beads around their necks, bungles on their wrists and wore jingles on their legs. The initiates praised their parents, their ancestors as well as their clans. The ũng’atio performances went on until the initiation day.

On the initiation day, the women and maidens performed njai songs pleading with the initiates not to embarrass the community through fear. The women and maidens formed a semi-circle as they sang and danced, some going in front to show their virtuosity. After performance of several njai songs in a semi-circle, the performers danced in pairs holding and rubbing each another’s waist. The performers also formed two lines. Some maidens
held *tǔmũĩĩ*, sticks with which they produced rhythmic sounds that provided percussive accompaniment to the dance. The music gave courage to the initiate to face the knife bravely as the circumcision progressed. Those who had gone through the rite previously encouraged the initiates not to fear.

After the initiation, *njaĩ* and *mboboi* songs were performed in praise of the brave initiates. These songs were also performed to ridicule the cowards. Members of the community sang and danced to support the initiates. This enabled them be bold enough to endure the pain encountered. Traditional song and dances were used within the period of initiation functioning as a means of socialization. The songs addressed real life experiences that the initiates found themselves in, as they played their new roles in the society. The music educated the initiates on traditional values expected of them. The initiates were expected to grow into role models in speech and deed.

Traditional music reminded both the initiates and the community of their cultural heritage. The traditional music gave both the *ngutu* and the members of the community opportunity to participate in a community experience similar to that of the boy initiation. The maidens who underwent initiation within the same period entered a certain age group. This facilitated for greater cooperation among the initiates as it instilled in them a sense of belonging. This traditional music therefore, added value to the issues that pertain to the *ngutu* as an age group, creating a sense of ownership and acceptance in the group. In conclusion, the initiates learnt obedience, trustworthiness, integrity, courage and the ability to counsel and respect other people and their opinions. The music helped one preserve her culture as it reminded and gave the history of the community. It strengthened one culturally helping one make comparison between the GRP and ARP. It enhanced the cultural aspect of Amĩĩrũ traditions leading to the continuation of the traditional music as a cultural heritage of the Amĩĩrũ.

**3.5 Music in Alternative Rite of Passage**
In the traditional Amĩĩrũ society, GRP was a “must” in the life of a female (personal interview, 2006). The initiation requires a lot of music performance by both the initiates and the public. The ARP is a contemporary RP among the Amĩĩrũ introduced to counter the effects of GRP. The music of the GTRP sought to inculcate cultural values to the participants, be they performers or the audience in the society. The ARP on the other hand, enlightened its participants on modern ways of life. It also highlighted the possible effects of the GRP with a view to empowering the girl-child. The ARP approach had Western religious overtones and is an equivalent of the contemporary boy IRP practised among the Amĩĩrũ. Therefore, music employed in the ARP had a religious tinge as it employed both the traditional and contemporary musics in its approach.

3.5.1 Traditional Music

The general public has very little involvement in GARP initiation rite during seclusion. Songs and dances were performed on the graduation day when the members of the community actively participated in the initiation. In the initiation, women sponsoring the initiates and willing members of the community performed the songs and dances. Though the songs and dances were the same ones performed during the GTRP, their texts was modified to suit the ARP sentiments. The melodies, rhythms and forms used in the GRP songs were maintained. Songs performed included njai and ncungo. The performances of njai and ncungo were based on modern messages of GARP. The musics used employed plain language texts devoid of proverbs of the GTRP. Members of the community involved in ARP provoked the rest of the community to change from GRP to ARP through their music. The women were urged not to listen to the village gossip that discouraged them from attempting GARP.

During the ncungo performance, the singers informed their audience that they had refused circumcision with the knife. They informed the listener that their daughters would
be initiated through ARP and not through FGM. Even if the whole of Tharaka community were against them, those who had decided on GARP would not take their maidens for GTRP (see song no. 4 kirani kiki). The initiates informed the members of the community that they were not ordinary maidens, but those who had been initiated through ARP by noble women (see song no. 6 twaana tutu). They urged Tharaka and the whole world to turn to ARP so that they too could be informed and enlightened (see song no. 5 Taana na mugambo).

3.5.2 Non-Traditional Music

Christian religious songs and dances composed by the supporters of ARP formed the music of GARP. The texts of these songs were set to foster and popularize concepts and themes of ARP. The initiates performed the songs on the graduation day. These songs were performed in an open place where the entire community was invited to celebrate the becoming of age of their daughters. The music carried educational messages and teachings meant to create awareness and confidence on the concepts of ARP. The community was advised to change from what was considered unprofitable practices in GRP by the activists of the ARP. The Christian religious songs sung were mainly choruses that functioned as interludes between the training sessions during seclusion.

The initiates sang songs telling the community that the GRP had ruined the girls. They urged their mothers and grandmothers to stop encouraging GTRP because it had no place in the contemporary Kenyan society (see song no.10 ntaano cia aari). Contemporary Kenya here referred to the socio-economic and cultural changes taking place in the lives of the Amĩĩrũ community, in which GRP had no place. In the contemporary Kenyan society, most communities had moved away from their traditions in favour of modern way of life. This status quo had rendered all traditional institutions ineffectual. The songs brought out the fact that the creator, God himself said that the bodies of the initiates were his temple and should be kept holy in every respect. The initiates expressed their desire for support from the community, to assist in bringing changes in the society (see song no.10 ntaano cia aari)
The initiates sang to praise the ARP declaring that the excellence of GARP had spread throughout the world. They also informed the community that the education from ARP guided the girls well see song no.12 *sifa ya ntanĩra*. In their performance, the initiates narrated the history of *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* as the group that introduced ARP in Tharaka. They disclosed to the community that the criticisms they heard about the group were not true. They informed the community that the main aim of *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* group was education and urged them to join in and be educated.

### 3.6 The Role of Traditional Music in GARP

The traditional song and dance performed in GARP plays various general and specific roles. To some extent, traditional song and dance play the same role in these two forms of IRP. The specific role played by traditional song and dance in ARP was to make GARP less alien and easily accepted by members of the community. It served to make the initiates feel that they were not alienated from their culture and therefore, appreciated the ARP and felt equal with their counterparts who underwent GTRP. The traditional music helped to bring the true mental and emotional state of mind associated with these ceremonies. In view of the fact that, traditional music had teachings on adulthood and that, these songs were well known to the GARP initiates, the latter could easily draw valuable ethical messages availed in the songs. The use of traditional music therefore, made the members of the community not to panic about the changes in their culture.

Traditional music in ARP acted as a link in the transition from the GTRP to GARP. This music created a sense that ARP did not interfere with the cultural beliefs, attesting minimal difference between the two forms of RP. It enriched the culture and customs while discarding whatever was not useful in the light of ARP. A smooth transition from traditional to modern practice was facilitated through this music. The music made the initiates feel that they had passed through initiation just like those in GRP. Traditional music advanced ARP as a cultural aspect of the Amĩĩrũ, traditions leading to the continuation of traditional music as a cultural heritage.
Traditional music functioned as an avenue for socialization. It brought together both the pro-GTRP and the ARP activists. The traditional tunes were well-known to members of the community, thus drawing even the pro-GTRP members to attend the GARP ceremonies. This provided a forum for those without knowledge on the ARP activities and concepts to be enlightened. This was intended to remove the suspicions and creating trust, leading to change from the GTRP to GARP. The traditional music acts as a point of reference in terms of responsibility and moral living in their day-to-day life, making the rite a lifelong reference point. Hence, traditional music adds value to the rite by passing the relevant information.

Traditional music plays the general role of music. It serves as vehicle for the transmission of information. It passes the relevant information to its audience while at the same time entertaining. Information on the dangers of GTRP was expressed in a way that does not antagonize those who support it Karimi wa Murungi (personal interview, 2006).

Traditional music also educated the community on the rights of the girl-child and the value of education. In the traditional Amĩĩrũ society, the women took pride in GRP initiation. Whereby, the pride of a woman was based on passive adherence to the traditional way of life. In the contemporary society, the GARP music portrayed the pride of women as being in the level of educational qualification.

Traditional music served the general role of music, that of entertainment. It served to colour the occasion, in this case giving a contemporary RP ceremony a traditional taste. It entertained the initiates and the community during graduation ceremony in GARP. The members of the community enjoyed dancing, entertaining and reinforcing good morals and popularizing GARP.
CHAPTER FOUR

TEXT AND MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the text and musical transcription of songs collected in the field. Analysis of the texts is also made to bring out the meaning of the songs to facilitate inference of the role of traditional music in the girls alternative rite of passage.

4.1.1 Text and Music Transcription

The transcription of songs collected was done to the nearest possible sound to the actual sounds produced in live performance. Twelve of the songs collected in the field that had information befitting the research objectives were selected for transcription and text translation. The text translations and musical transcription of these songs used the following key; | bar lines are used for organizational purposes only. The conventional notation was applied to achieve the nearest sounds to those produced in the live performances. There are no key signatures attached to transcribed songs. This is due to the African songs dependence on the vocal pitch of the singer, or soloist in call and response performance. The transcriptions bear no time signatures due to the fact that African songs metre is entirely dependent on speech rhythm.

S = Solo  C = Chorus  A = All  Dr = Drum  Sh = shakers

4.2 TRANSCRIBED SONGS
Song: 1 Wakarathe (son of karathe)

\[ \text{Soloist} \]

\[ \text{Chorus} \]

Ai - a

Ai - a

Ai - a

-1-
1. S: Wakarathe ...Son of Karathe
   Wakarathe    Son of Karathe
   Njuu turathane  Come we shoot one another
   Njuu turathane  Come we shoot one another
   C: Aia    ...Aia

2. S: Na wandatha ...And if you shoot me
   Na wandatha  and if you shoot me
   Ngakuthijira  I will slaughter for you
   Ngakuthijira  I will slaughter for you
   C: Aia    ...Aia

3. S: Na cio nyama ...And the meat
   Na cio nyama  And the meat
   Cikirwe aturi  they be taken to smiths
   Cikirwe aturi  they be taken to smiths
4. S: *Nabo aturi* …And the smiths
   *Nabo aturi* and the smiths
   *Bature gaciu* they make a knife
   *Bature gaciu* they make a knife
   C: *Aia* …Aia

5. S: *Nako gaciu* …And the knife
   *Nako gaciu* and the knife
   *Gature iguru* it pierce heaven
   *Gature iguru* it pierce heaven
   C: *Aia* …Aia

6. S: *Na rio iguru* …And the heaven
   *Nario iguru* and the heaven
   *Riurithie ngai* it makes rain fall
   *Riurithie ngai* It makes rain fall
   C: *Aia* …Aia

7. S: *Nayo ngai* …And the rain
   *Nayo ngai* and the rain
   *Irere njau* it feeds calf
   *Irere njau* it feeds calf
   C: *Aia* …Aia

8. S: *Nayo njau* …And the calf
   *Nayo njau* and the calf
   *Ijure muka* it marries wife
   *Ijure muka* it marries wife
   C: *Aia* …Aia

9. S: *Nawe muka* …And the wife
   *Nawe muka* and the wife
   *Akie ucuru* she brews porridge
   *Akie ucuru* she brew porridge
   C: *Aia* …Aia

10. S: *Nabu ucuru* …And the porridge
This is a children’s song. It teaches them about the nature, that is, their environment. The song also teaches the children the daily activities of their community. The soloist calls on Wakarathe (the son of Karathe) to come forward for a shooting context. This introduces the children to the art of war that forms part of the informal education. Every male was expected to be a warrior after initiation into adulthood. The soloist tells Wakarathe that he would slaughter for him (an animal implied) if he would shoot him. The meat is to be taken to the blacksmiths. This brings out the form of craft that the people are involved in.

The black smiths are to make a knife, and the knife will pierce the heavens. The heavens are to make the rains to fall and the rain to grow the grass. The grass is to feed the calf. The rain is essential for the community livelihood and their animals that were an important source of income.

The calf is to marry a wife. This teaches the children the role played by cows in marriage. The sociological aspect of dowry payment is brought out. The wife is to brew porridge. The role of the wife is stipulated as that of taking care of the family by feeding them. The soloist says that the porridge is for all to take and enjoy.

**SONG 2: IUI RERIA GAMBA II (reria make noise)**

![Musical notation for IUI RERIA GAMBA II (reria make noise)]
The song *ui Reria* is a teasing song for young boys who are ready for circumcision. The boys sang this song to tease one another. The boys used it to tease the uncircumcised girls too. In this song, a boy named Reria is told to make noise and another named Riri is asked to make loud noise. They are to do so because a monkey is on the tree eating fruits. When boys were ready for circumcision they would become rowdy and troublesome, in order to compel their parents to organize for their circumcision.
The singer tells the monkey eating fruits on the tree to be leaving some on the tree, because hunger may come and exterminate old men and children. This is meant to tell their parents that they should not be using everything they harvest. Instead, they should be preserving some that could be used at the time of circumcision.

The singer then teases the uncircumcised girl saying that she has urinated on herself but claims that the rain fell on her. What the singers mean is that the girl is old enough to be circumcised yet she behaves like a small girl. The song is meant to provoke the girl and to awaken her into desiring to go through the rite of passage.

SONG 3: *MWARI TÎNKURU* (girl am not singing tortoise)
S: Mwari tinkuru
    nkuna gwe
    ...Girl it is not tortoise
    I’m singing you
C: Mwari ti nkuru
    nkuna gwe
    ...Girl it is not tortoise
    I’m singing you
S: Mwari tinkuru
    nkuna gwe
    ...Girl it is not tortoise
    I’m singing you
C: Mwari ti nkuru
    nkuna gwe
    ...Girl it is not tortoise
    I’m singing you
S: Aaa nkaina kibucu
    wairigarira
    ...Aaa if I sing kibucu
    you would wonder
C: Oo mwana
    ...Oo child
S: Nkaina kibucu
    Wairigarira
    ... If I sing kibucu
    you would wonder
C: Oo mwana
    ...Oo child

2S: Mwari tiita katheri gwe
    ...Girl I’ll not go to Katheri
C: Mwari tiita katheri gwe
    ... Girl I’ll not go to Katheri
S: Aaa Mbija kuonona na thirikari
    ikwona kamwari
    ikanta ja njau
    Aaa I might meet with police
    which sees a small girl
    and moos like a calf
C: Oo mwana
    ...Oo child
S: Mbija kuonana na thirikari
    ikwona kamwari
    ikanta ja njau
    ... I might meet with police
    which sees a small girl
    and moos like a calf
C: *Oo mwana*  
...Oo child

S: *Wakwa*  
...Mine

C: *Oo mwa*  
...Oo child

S: *Ringĩ*  
...Again

C: *Oo mwana*  
...Oo child.

*Mwari* is the general name for females – especially those who are not married. In this song the girl being sung to, does not seem to know the dances her community performs and therefore the singers highlight them for her. In the first verse, the singers inform her that the song being sung is not *nkuru* that amazes her. They also tell her that if they were to perform *kibucu* she would be perplexed.

The singers in verse two tell her that they cannot go to a place called *katheri*. This is because they might meet with a policeman who sees a small girl and moos like a calf. This song was sung to scorn those who did not involve themselves with traditional activities because of schooling, also the coming of colonial government that introduced unethical behavior according to Amĩĩrũ standards.

**SONG 4: KIRANI KIKI MBWIRE**  
(listen carefully I tell you)

![Musical notation](image)
1. S: Kirani kiki mbwire ìï  
C: Ìì mbwire ìï  
…Listen carefully I tell you  
ìï tell you

2. S: Biwi itwaregire ìï  
C: Ìì mbwire  
…Those we refused  
ìì tell you

3. S: Ìì ntaano cia irunya ìï  
C: Ìì mbwire  
…Ìì circumcision of knife  
ìì tell you
A: Wakwa mwarĩ
nti mütaana
‘Na nkagĩrĩrwa Tharaka īkeja
Īkangwata mūkono
Ntiĩ mütaana
īĩ wakwa mwarĩ nwa múgambo
īĩ mbwĩre

...Mine daughter
I’ll not circumcise her
Even if am brought Tharaka it comes
it holds my hand
I’ll not circumcise
ī my daughter is for word
ī tell you

The song is a declaration of mothers not to take their daughters for FGM. Verse one address the audience, requiring of them to be silent and attentive. The second verse unfolds the theme of the song, which is refusal. Verse three reveals the refusal to circumcise with the knife. The refrain, for every one begins the declaration of the mothers not to circumcise their daughters in the first two lines. The next three lines emphasis the decision not to circumcise through GRP against the forces from the entire Tharaka community. The last two lines conclude the declaration by informing the listener that their daughters are for ARP.

SONG 5: TWAANA TŪTŪ (these children)
Solo

Twa-a-na tu-tu ti twa mu-ce-tho i-tu-ra

Chorus

Nk-a-tha i-ta-ni-te na mu-ga-mbo i twa-a-na tu-tu

Tha-ra-ka ye-tu tu-tho i-tu-ra nka-tha i-ta-ni-te na mu-ga-mbo i twa-a-na tu-tu
Taa-ra na mu-gambo u-gwa-te ki-ri-ra i gia-ku-me-nye-ra

ra-ka e ka-mbu-gi tu-taa-ne nambii

Taa-na na mu-gambo u-gwa-te ki-ri-ra ii

Twaan-tu ti twa mu-ce-tho i-tu-ra nka-tha i-taa-ni-te na mu-
gia-ku-me-nye-ra

ga-mbo ii twaan-tu tu

Twaan-tu ti twa mu-ce-tho i-tu-ra nka-tha i-taa-ni-te na mu
1. S: Twana tũtu ti twa múcetho
   itũra nkatha
   itaanĩte na múgambo
   Ĩũ twana tutu

   ...Children these are not a joke
   they are those noble women
   have circumcised with words
   Ĩũ children these

C: Twana tũtu ti twa múcetho
   itũra nkatha
   itaanĩte na múgambo
   Ĩũ twana tutu

   ...Children these are not a joke
   they are those that noble women have
   circumcised with words
   Ĩũ children these
2. S: Tharaka yetu tutane na mbi Ĭĩ?  
   ...Tharaka ours we circumcise with what? Ĭĩ
   C: Taana na mūgambo ũgwate kĩrĩra gĩa kũmenyera  
   ...Circumcised with words you get wisdom to care for

3. S: Ĭĩ Tharaka e kambungi ĩtaane na mbi Ĭĩ?  
   ...ţi Tharaka of kambugi you circumcise with what? Ĭĩ
   C: Taana na mūgambo ũgwate kĩrĩra gĩa kũmenyera  
   ...Circumcised with words wisdom to care for

4. S: Twana tūtū ti twa mūcetho itũra nkatha itaanîte na mūgambo Ĭĩ twana tutu  
   ...Children these are not a joke they are those that noble women have circumcised with words Ĭĩ children these
   C: Twana tūtū ti twa mūcetho itũra nkatha itaanîte na mūgambo Ĭĩ twana tutu  
   ...Children these are not a joke they are those that noble women have circumcised with words Ĭĩ children these

5. S: Nthĩgũrũ yonthe ĩtaane na mbi Ĭĩ?  
   ...The whole world we circumcise with what? Ĭĩ
   C: Taana na mūgambo ũgwate kĩrĩra gĩa kũmenyera  
   ...Circumcised with words wisdom to care for

6. S: Ĭĩ Tharaka yetu tutane na mbi Ĭĩ  
   ...ţi Tharaka ours we circumcise with what? Ĭĩ
   C: Taana na mūgambo ũgwate kĩrĩra gĩa kũmenyera  
   ...Circumcised with words you get wisdom to care for

The song in the solo part of verse one, informed the community that the initiates were not maidens who go through GRP, but those who have been initiated through ARP. In ARP the noble women (uncircumcised women) circumcise the initiates through words. The chorus endorsed the solo parts. The second verse posed the question as to how the Tharaka community would go about the RP. The chorus part answered that the way forward was through circumcision with words, adding that that gave wisdom to be treasured and upheld. Verse three posed the question of modalities of the RP to the older generation of Tharaka. The chorus responded by stating that the way forward was to circumcise with words and gain valuable wisdom to uphold. In the fourth verse, both the solo and chorus parts emphasized the sentiments put forth in verse one. Verse five
inquired of the whole world the RP to be used. The chorus part maintained that the way forward was to circumcise with words. The last verse was a deliberate repeat of verse two, which posed the ardent question of the way the RP was to be undertaken in Tharaka. The chorus avidly gave the way forward as circumcision with words. Overall, the song was an appeal to the Tharaka community and the whole world to turn to ARP.

Song 6: *TAANA NA MŬGAMBO* (circumcise with words)
Nte-to ntu-ra nte-to ntu-ra nti-kumienda ii taara-ga

Nte-to ntu-ra nti-kumienda ii taara-ga

Na mugambo kenda-ukaa-me nya mantu

Na mugambo kenda-ukaa-me nya mantu
mu-gambo kenda uka-menyamantu Twika

mwe-kuru umwe-ga ii utaanage namu-gambo

kenda uka-me-nyama-ntu

kenda uka-me-nyama-ntu
1. S: Cucucucu  …Gossip
   C: Cucucucu nti kũmienda ĩĩ taanaga na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Gossip I don’t be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know thing

2. S: Nteto ntura, wee!  …Words in the village, you!
   A: Nteto ntura ntigũ cienda taanaga na mugambo kenda ũkamenya mantũ  …Words in the village I don’t want be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

3. S: Nteto e kĩrũnya, wee!  …Words of knife, you!
   A: Nteto e kĩrũnya ntikũmĩenda ĩĩ taanaga na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Words of knife I don’t want be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

4. S: Kũgwatana, wee  …Holding one another, you!
   A: Kũgwatana ntigũkwenda ĩĩ taanaga na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Holding one another you I don’t want be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

5. S: Twĩka mwekũrũ ũmwega ĩĩ  …Be a good woman ĩĩ utaanage na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Be a good woman ĩĩ be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things
   C: Twĩka mwekũrũ ũmwega ĩĩ utaanage na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Be a good woman ĩĩ be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

6. S: Nteto ntura, wee!  …Words in the village, you!
   A: Nteto ntura ntigũ cienda taanaga na mugambo kenda ũkamenya mantũ  …Words in the village I don’t want be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

7 S: Cucucucu  …Gossip
   C: Cucucucu nti kũmienda ĩĩ taanaga na mugambo ĩĩ kenda ũkamrnya mantũ  …Gossip I don’t be circumcising with words ĩĩ so that you know things

8. S: Nteto e kĩrũnya, wee!  …Words of knife, you!
A: *Nteto e kĩrũnya ntikũmũenda iĩ* …Words of knife I don’t want
         *taanaga na mugambo iĩ* be circumcising with words iĩ
         *kenda ũkamrnya mantũ* so that you know things

9. S: *Twĩka mwekũrũ ũmwega iĩ* …Be a good woman iĩ
         *utaanage na mugambo iĩ* be circumcising with words iĩ
         *kenda ũkamenya mantũ* so that you know things

C: *Twĩka mwekũrũ ũmwega iĩ* …Be a good woman iĩ
         *utaanage na mugambo iĩ* be circumcising with words iĩ
         *kenda ũkamenya mantũ* so that you know things

This song implored women to avoid the village talk and way of thinking and become open minded to be enlightened to opt for the ARP. Verse one urged the women to be good by practicing ARP so that they can be enlightened in many issues. The chorus part echoed the sentiments in the soloist’s part. The second verse highlighted the issues that the women should avoid in the village. One of them was unwholesome talk, which the chorus part of the song said was unnecessary. The chorus maintained the need to circumcise with words to be knowledgeable. Verse three presented another issue that was to be avoided as circumcision with the knife. The chorus part had the same message that is, retaining of the value of circumcising with words. The fourth verse brought forth the issue of negative unity in village that kept detrimental the community from accepting change. The chorus part repeated the same message that one should circumcise with words. The fifth verse is an emphasis on verse one which mentioned the rejection of initiation through the knife.

**SONG 7: MUCERE (Rice)**
1S. Mucere ni mwega
    Jurĩjawa na gĩciko   ...Rice is good
    C: Mucere ni mwega     it is eaten using a spoon
    Jurĩjawa na gĩciko   ...rice is good
        it is eaten using a spoon

2S. Wenda kũjũrũma
    Nenkerwa gĩciko   ....if you want to eat some
    C. Wenda kũjũrũma    be given a spoon
        ...if you want to eat some
        be given a spoon

3S. Karagita nĩ kega
    Karĩ inya kĩrĩ ng’ombe   ...Tractor is good
    C. Karagita nĩ kega     it has more strength than bulls
    Karĩ inya kĩrĩ ng’ombe   ...tractor is good
        it has more strength than bulls

4S. Wenda kũrĩmĩrwa
    Ewa karagita   ... if you want to be ploughed for
    C. Wenda kũrĩmĩrwa    be given attractor
        ...if you want to be ploughed for
        be given attractor
This song came up with the introduction of colonial rule among the Amĩĩrũ community. The white man came with him a new way of life. This new way of life saw the introduction of new kinds of food and machinery.

Verse one of the song mũcere, introduces the food called mũcere to the community. The song informs them of the use of spoons. It says ‘rice is eaten using a spoon. The use of spoon was a new phenomenon. The Amĩĩrũ had always used their hands to eat all kinds of food. Any one wishing to eat mũcere, rice, is advised to use a spoon.

In the second verse, the tractor is introduced as a better instrument of farming. Any one wishing to have his farm ploughed is advised to go for the tractor. This is because the tractor is stronger than the bull they had been using.

SONG 8: AMBIRWE KARIBARI (He was crucified at Calvary)
Je - su  nthu - ga - na  kwi - ja  ii

Li  Je - su  nthu - ga - na  kwi - ja  ii

Li  Je - su  nthu - ga - na  kwi - ja  ii

Li  Je - su  nthu - ga - na

Li  Je - su  nthu - ga - na
1. S. Ambirwe karibari macemania njira
   Kirindi kionthe ii kiramwithaira ii
C. Ambirwe karibari macemania njia
   Kirindi kionthe ii kiramwithaira ii

   …He was crucified Calvary crossroads
   people all they scorned

2. S. Ambirwe karibari macemania njira
   Kirindi kionthe ii kiramwithaira ii
C. Ambirwe karibari macemania njira
   Kirindi kionthe ii kiramwithaira ii

   …He was crucified Calvary crossroads
   people all they scorned

3. S. Oo Jesu kiramwithaira
C. Oo Jesu kiramwithaira

   …Oo Jesus they scorned

4. S. Oo Jesu kiramwithaira
C. Oo Jesu kiramwithaira

   Oo Jesus they scorned

   …Oo Jesus they scorned

5. S. Nkoma ni munthu amamire muuro
   Murungu akwija aramugambithia

   …Satan is enemy he lay below
   God he came he judged him
The first verse talks of how Jesus was crucified at the crossroad for all to see his shame. The chorus part echoes the solo part as though to lay emphasis on that fact. Verse two, emphasizes the fact that the people scorned him. Verses four and five say that the devil as an enemy lay in the valley and when God came He put him to judgement. The next two verses emphasis that God put satan to judgement. Verse eight and nine are a prayer that Holy Spirit puts a seal on the singers so that they are seen with him. The next two verses are an emphasis of the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Montana</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Nkoma ni munthu amamire muuro Murungu akwija aramugambithia</td>
<td>Satan is enemy he lay below God he came he judged him</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. S. Nkoma ni munthu amamire muuro Murungu akwija aramugambithia</td>
<td>Satan is enemy he lay below God he came he judged him</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. S. Oo Jesu nthagana kwija ii</td>
<td>Oo Jesus meet me have come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Oo Jesu nthagana kwija ii</td>
<td>Oo Jesus meet me have come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Oo Jesu nthagana kwija ii</td>
<td>Oo Jesus meet me have come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Oo Jesu nthagana kwija ii</td>
<td>Oo Jesus meet me have come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. S. Kirundu mutheru mbikira rwano Rwa wonokanio mbonagwe nagwe</td>
<td>Spirit holy put on me sign of salvation I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Kirundu mutheru mbikira rwano Rwa wonokanio mbonagwe nagwe</td>
<td>Spirit holy put on me sign of salvation I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. S. Kirundu mutheru mbikira rwano Rwa wonokanio mbonagwe nagwe</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Kirundu mutheru mbikira rwano Rwa wonokanio mbonagwe nagwe</td>
<td>Spirit holy put on me sign of salvation I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. S. Oo Jesu mbonawe nagwe</td>
<td>Oo Jesus I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Oo Jesu mbonawe nagwe</td>
<td>Oo Jesus I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Oo Jesu mbonawe nagwe</td>
<td>Oo Jesus I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Oo Jesu mbonawe nagwe</td>
<td>Oo Jesus I be seen with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SONG 9: *NUU UTİMWIJI*  (who does not know him)

\[ \mathfrak{q} = 90 \]
1. *Nuu utimwiji*  
   *Kariuki mwano Kaithuma ii* Kariuki son of Kaithuma  
   *Nuu utimwiji* Who does not know  
   *Nuu utimwiji* Who does not know  
   *Kariuki mwano Kaithuma* Kariuki son of Kaithuma  
   *Kuruku mantua ukuruka* Past events passing  
   *Cabacu mantua cabaca* Twist events twisted  
   *Jamatua akirega ii guturwa* Like ears refusing to be pierced

2. *Nuu utimwiji*  
   *Nkujautu mwano kaira’ngi ii* Nkunjautu son of Kairang’I  
   *Nuu utimwiji* Who does not know  
   *Nkujautu mwano kaira’ngi* Nkunjautu son of Kaira’ngi  
   *Kuruku mantua ukuruka* Past events passing  
   *Cabacu mantua ucabaca* Twist events twisted  
   *Jamatua akirega ii guturwa* Like ears refusing to be pierced

3. *Nuu utimwiji*  
   *M’Ikunyua mwano Mukangu ii* M’Ikunyua son of Mukangu  
   *Nuu utimwiji* Who does not know  
   *M’Ikunyua mwano Mukangu* M’Ikunyua son of Mukangu  
   *Kuruku mantua ukuruka* Past events passing  
   *Cabacu mantua ucabaca* Twist events Twisted  
   *Jamatua akirega ii guturwa* Like ears refusing to be pierced

4. *Nuu utimwiji*  
   *Rimberia mwano Muthamia ii* Rimberia son of Muthamia  
   *Nuu utimwiji* Who does not know  
   *Rimberia mwano Muthamia* Rimberia son of Muthamia
The Singer is amazed at how people get forgotten so quickly. After independence, people went to school and did not bother with the people they had known earlier on. The singer asks who does not know the four prominent people that he mentions in his song. He then talks about how events quickly pass on and how things look twisted, mixed and mixed up. The word kuruku means suddenly and cabacu mixed or twisted. Things are now twisted because older men have no time to be together as they have taken up jobs in towns or are busy in school.

**SONG 10: NTAANO CIA AARI** (Circumcision of girls)
ura ntaa-no ino cia-ri mbe-ga

Ntaa-no cia aa-ri ntaa-no cia aa-ri

Ntaa-no cia aa-ri ntaa-no cia aa-ri

ti-ga-ne-mi na gu-twi-ra

iku-thu-kia aa-na be-tu twa-bu-ro-mba bu-ti-ga-ne nacio

Ntaa-no cia aa-ri ntaa-no cia aa-ri i-ku-thu-kia aa-na be-tu
Nti-kubi-nga nti-kubi-nga nti-kubi-nga 
ni-ma-te-ne

Nti-kubi-nga man-tu ma-ma i-ni ni man-tu ma-te-ne

na-bu-me-nya-e ni Ken-ya nje-ru

Nti-kubi-nga nti-kubi-nga

Nti-kubi-nga man-tu ma-ma

nti-kubi-nga man-tu ma-ma
1. S: Ntaano cĩa aarĩ …Circumcision of girls
taano cĩa aarĩ circumcision of girls
ikũthũkia aana betu have ruined children ours
twabũromba bũtigane nacio we pray you stop practicing them

C: Ntaano cĩa aarĩ …Circumcision of girls
ntaano cĩa aarĩ circumcision of girls
ikũthũkia aana betu have ruined children ours

2. S: Nabwĩ mami …And you mother
nabwĩ jũjũ and you grandmother
tiganeni na gũtũonia stop showing us
ůra ntaano ino ciarĩ ĩbega how circumcision these were good

C: Ntaano cĩa aarĩ …Circumcision of girls
ntaano cĩa aarĩ circumcision of girls
tiganeni na gũtwĩra stop telling us

A: Nabwĩ aciari betu …And you parents ours
nītukũbũromba we pray you
bũgwatane njara you hold hands
tũtethie antu betu we help our people
Nabwĩ aciari betu you parents ours
nītukũbũromba we pray you
bũtwĩkĩre inya support us
tũtethie antu betu we help our people

3. S: Tikubinga mantu mama …Its not opposing things these
indi ni mantu matene but they are things if old
na biũmenyae nĩ Kenya nj eru and you know its Kenya new

C: Ntikubinga, ntikubinga …Am not opposing its not opposing
ntikubinga mantu mama am not opposing these things

A: Nabwĩ aciari betu …And you parents ours
Nītukũbũromba we pray you
bũgwatane njara you hold hands
tũtethie antu betu we help our people
Tharaka twabũria Tharaka we ask you
tũgwatane njara we join hands
The song in verse one told the community that the circumcision through GRP had spoiled and ruined the girls. Then verse two calls upon the mothers and grand mothers to stop propagating and encouraging the practice of GRP. The refrain section of the song was a request made to parents to strengthen, unite and help the community to change to GARP. In verse three, the song emphasized the futility of GRP in Kenya. The refrain section of the song was a request made to parents and the whole of Tharaka community to unite and bring their territory to prosperity. The fourth verse brought out the fact that the creator, God himself says that human bodies are his temple. He therefore expects the body to be respected and kept holy. The refrain was an appeal to the parents to unite and assist their community. The whole of Tharaka is urged to unite bring to their territory to prosperity. This song generally calls for change.
SONG 11: KIKUNDI CHA NTANIRA  (group of ntanira)

\[ \mathcal{Q} = 120 \]

Solo

Chorus

\[ \text{Kat-ika-ti ya Tha-ra-ka nzi-ma ha-ku-na ki-ku-ndi ka-ma hi-ki} \]

\[ \text{ki-ku-ndi ka-ma hi-ki} \]

\[ \text{chi-ka-ti ya Tha-ra-ka nzi-ma ha-ku-na ki-ku-ndi ka-ma hi-ki} \]

\[ \text{ki-ku-ndi ka-ma hi-ki} \]

\[ \text{ki-li-a-nzi-chwa na a-ki-na-ma-ma mwa-ka Ti-sa-i-ni na ti-so} \]

\[ \text{ki-li-a-nzi-chwa na a-ki-na-ma-ma mwa-ka Ti-sa-i-ni na ti-so} \]

\[ \text{Chi-ni ya u-li-nzi wa-ke bo-ra Bi. Ki-ri-ga Ka-ti-ka-ti ya Tha-ra-ka} \]

\[ \text{bo-ra Ri Ki-ri-es} \]
Rhemonsentre

ki-ku-ndi ka-ma hi-ki

Nta-ni-ra na mu-ga-mbo

Ti-sa-i-ni na Ti-sa

Bo-ra Bi. Ki-ri-ga

Tha-ra-ka mwa nda-nga-rywa
a eti Nta-ni-ra ni ya ma-she-ta-ni
Na we-ngi-ne wa-na-se-ma
ni-ya-ma-she-ta-ni

e-ti twa-la kia-po kwa ku-nyua da-mu
Na we-ngi-ne wa-na-se-ma
kwa ku-nyua da-mu

e-ti wa-si-chaa na u-du-ngwa si-nda-no
Propa-ga-nda nyi-nga-ya e-ne-

u-du-ngwa si-nda-no

a eti Nta-ni-ra ni ya ma-she-ta-ni
Na we-ngi-ne wa-na-se-ma
ni-ya-ma-she-ta-ni

e-ti twa-la kia-po kwa ku-nyua da-mu
Na we-ngi-ne wa-na-se-ma

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1. S: Katikati ya Tharaka nzima
   hakuna kikundi kama hiki
   ...Centre of Tharaka whole
   there is no group like this one
   C: Kikundi kama hiki
   ...Like this one

2. S: Kikundi chenyewe kinaitwa
   Ntanĩra na Mũgambo
   Group itself is called
   Ntanĩra na Mũgambo
   C: Ntanĩra na Mũgambo
   ...Ntanĩra na Mũgambo

3. S: Kilianziswa na akina mama
   mwaka tisaini na sita
   ...It was began by women
   year ninety six
   C: Tisaini na sita
   ...Ninety six

4. S: Chini ya ulinzi wake
   bora Bi. Kĩrĩga
   ...Under the custody of
   able Mrs. Kĩrĩga
   C: Bora Bi. Kĩrĩga
   ...Able Mrs. Kĩrĩga

5. S: Tharaka mwa ndanganywa
   Ntanĩra ni ya mashetani
   ...Tharaka your being lied to
   is of the devils
   C: Tharaka mwa ndanganywa
   ...Tharak a your being lied to

6. S: Hayo yote
   C: Hayo yote ni uongo
   ...All that
   ...All that is lies

7. S: Kujeni melimishwe
   Ntanĩra ni masomo tupu
   ...You come be educated
   ...Ntanĩra is education only
   C: Kujeni melimishwe
   A: Ntanĩra ni masomo tupu

8. S: Propagandanyingi zaenezwa
   eti ntanĩra ni ya mashetani
   ...Propaganda many are spread
   is of the devils
   C: Ni ya mashetani
   ...Is of devils
This song gave the foundation and history of *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo*, the group that introduced ARP in Tharaka. The song informed the community that the group’s main aim was to educate the initiates as well as the community. It also urged them to join in and be educated. In verse one and two, the songs indicated that there was no other group like *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo*. The group’s formation by women in 1996 under the leadership of Mrs. Kĩgira is highlighted in verses three and four. Verses five and six referred to a misconception being spread by those who were opposed to ARP in Tharaka. Verse seven invites the community to come and be educated in *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo*. Fallacies being spread about the group were outline in verses eight, nine and ten. In verse eight and nine, allegation made that *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* group was satanic and that the initiates took oaths by taking blood was brought out. In verse ten the girls were said to be given injections. Verses eleven, twelve and thirteen maintained that the Tharaka community was being lied to, and that the *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* group only endeavored to educate the community during the initiation ceremonies.
SONG 12: SIFA ZA NTANIRA (praise of Ntanira)

\[ \text{\textcopyright} = 80 \]

Solo

Chorus
1. S: *Sifa, sifa, sifa ya Ntanĩra imeenea ulimwengu wote*  
C: *Sifa, sifa, sifa za Ntanĩra imeenea ulimwengu wote*  
...Praise, praise, praise of Ntanĩra is spread worldwide

2. S: *Walimu wetu masomo ya Ntanĩra yanaongoza wasichana viema*  
C: *Walimu wetu masomo ya Ntanĩra yanaongoza wasichana viema*  
...Teachers ours education of Ntanĩra they lead girls well

3. S: *Wazazi wetu masomo ya Ntanĩra yanaongoza wasichana viema*  
C: *Wazazi wetu masomo ya Ntanĩra yanaongoza wasichana viema*  
...Parents ours education of Ntanĩra they lead girls well

4. S: *Sifa, sifa, sifa ya Ntanĩra imeenea ulimwengu wote*  
C: *Sifa, sifa, sifa za Ntanĩra imeenea ulimwengu wote*  
...Praise, praise, praise of Ntanĩra is spread worldwide

In verse one the song talks the spread and acclaim of the *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* concepts worldwide. Verse two draws the attention of teachers to the fact that education attained from this group guides the girls well. In verse three the parents are informed that education from *Ntanĩra na Mũgambo* is very profitable to the girls in terms of guidance. Verse four emphasizes the spread of the attributes of *Ntanĩra na mũgambo* worldwide.
CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED SONGS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the text and musical analysis of the songs collected in the field. The transcription of the songs facilitated the analysis of the musical structure of the songs relating to rhythm, melody, tonality and form. The text transcription on the other hand facilitated thematic and rhetoric use.

5.1.1 Analysis of Song Texts
The texts of the collected songs highlight the conflicting ideologies in a changing society. The texts in (song 10) for example, appeal to the perpetrator of female genital mutilation to stop showing the youth its value as it has been outlived. The song highlights the sanctity of the body as its creator’s declaration is in the Holy Book. An appeal is made to do away with the FGM, which has detrimental results on the girl child. Song texts in song 2 address childish behaviour associated with the uncircumcised maidens. The aim of such texts is to arouse the desire to undergo the traditional rite of passage.

Analysis of the song texts showed the moral decay in the changing society. For example in song 3, the maidens are advised to avoid visiting areas such as Katheri that could lead to immoral activities. Song No. 9 Nuutitimwiji expose the fast changing society where new concepts and aspects of life are replacing the traditional ones. Education and work in the urban areas took individuals away from their villages where communal activities such as the piercing of the ears were possible. Song No. 7 refers to how technology has replaced communal work by turning to machines such as tractors. New kinds of food introduced to the community brought with them the use of new items such as spoons, unknown to the Amiirũ who used their hands when eating.

Some song texts address rural life and warn against activities that negatively impact on the community. Song No. 6 seeks to persuade the community not to engage in gossip and other unwholesome associations that make them continue with the FGM. The text
appeals to the women to embrace the girls alternative rite of passage to be enlightened. The song texts of song No. 4 declare the resolve of the mothers who have embraced the alternative rite of passage not to subject their daughters to the knife (FGM). The initiates sing *Twaana tutu* song 5 after the seclusion period and successful initiation. In this song, Tharaka community and the whole world is implored to turn to the girls alternative rite of passage.

*Kikundi cha ntanira* (song 11) presents the history of the girls’ alternative rite of passage. The community is urged to turn to GARP and benefit from the education offered by the group. Those who advocate for GARP caution the community against the misconceptions spread by the opponents. The community is assured that *Ntanĩra* group presents only sound teachings. The song text of song 12 addresses the widespread fame of *Ntanĩra* as giving positive guidance to the initiates.

### 5.2 Themes Embodied in the Song Texts

The texts of transcribed songs address various themes. There are themes on the problems that maidens undergo in FGM, as unfolded in *Ntaano cia aarĩ* (song 10). The song explains how FGM is detrimental to both the maidens and the community. Some of the maidens lose their lives from over bleeding during and after initiation. Others develop complications during childbirth. The traditional society believed these occurrences resulted from an evil eye or displeasure of the ancestors.

Advice is a theme that focuses on the mothers and grandmothers who encourage their daughters to undergo FGM. The song is intended to appeal to them to stop such encouragement since the values attached to the FGM have become invalid in the already Kenya *njeru* changed Kenyan society. The song has a theme on change, enlightening the propagators of the girls traditional rite of passage on the changing values in the society. Theme on belief in song No.10 points the Amĩĩrũ to the creator’s displeasure in body mutilation. The creator, God expects the human body to be kept whole and holy. The song suggests that the GTRP retarded the development of the community by its
tenets that advocate for docility on the part of its initiates. The song underscores the need to embrace change for the development of the community.

_Wakarathe_, song No. 1 has themes relating to the societal socializing of the male and female children into adults among the Amĩĩrũ. Themes touching on responsibilities for each gender are highlighted. Shooting introduces the art of hunting to the male children, which was a vital skill that young men needed in order to provide and protect their families. The Amĩĩrũ expected the young men to defend their community soon after the circumcision rite of passage. The females were expected to get married and take care of their families. The Amĩĩrũ expected the youth to take up these roles immediately after initiation.

Provocation is the theme expressed in song No. 2. The song ridicules and teases uncircumcised maidens by calling them _gĩkenye_ that associate them with childish behaviour. The song aroused the maiden’s desire to go through the initiation RP. Gossip is one of the themes embodied in _Taana na Mũgambo_ song No. 5. The song warns the community against gossiping about those who undergo the alternative rite of passage. The song urges them to turn to ARP in order to know and embrace its concepts. The song discourages inappropriate associations among the villagers where unwholesome discussions are held.

_Mwari tĩ nkuru nkuina_ song No. 3 highlights the theme on moral decadency in the society. In the song, a certain police officer is cited as having this deviant behaviour. The Amĩĩrũ condemn such behaviour among adults, who express their lust for young girls openly. The song warns the maidens against visiting areas with such men. Tenacity is addressed in _kirani kiki_, song No. 4. The song talks about the resolve by mothers not to subject their daughters to FGM as culture demands. The mothers make a declaration to uphold the alternative rite of passage at all cost.

Theme on the new social status attained through initiation compares well with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ with its ultimate glory, song No. 8. The initiates enjoy an exalted status in the society after braving the pain inflicted on them during circumcision.
Thereafter, the youth attain a new status of maturity as adults. Praise for both the ARP and those who practise it are the theme of *Sifa za ntanira* (song No.12).

### 5.3 Language Use

Figurative aspects of kĩmĩrũ are used to convey relevant information to the Amĩirũ listening to the ritual songs. Idiomatic expressions are used in songs No. 3 for example, where simile is used to liken a police officer to a cow, *thirikari kwona ikamwari ikania ja njau*, literally meaning a police officer who sees a maiden and moos like a calf. The text used here literary means that the police officer behaves like a cow on heat at the sight of a maiden.

Proverbs are also used in song No. 3 for example, the singer says, ‘..tĩ nkuru nkuina’ these words are derived from the Kĩmĩrũ proverb *ũme ija nkuru kwitha nkingo* that means that one has to be wise like the tortoise which hides its head from danger. This inferred means the ability of one to make wise decisions in life. Other figures of speech for example, in song No. 6 where the text *Nteto e kĩrũnya* is used to mean literally that words of knife are used in reference to the act of circumcision, avoiding its literal description.

Offensive language is used openly in song No. 2, *Gikenye kiria gikwija ui* this is abusive, meaning that the big uncircumcised girl has come. Repulsive words such as *Kiumagirite macanca* having urinated on herself are used in broad day light performances.

Informative speech and content are employed in songs Nos. 10, 11and 12. These songs focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the girls’ traditional rite of passage and the girls’ alternative rite of passage. Respectful words like *nkatha nobal* are used in reference to uncircumcised women (song No. 5).
5.4 Music Analysis

5.4.1 Text Music Relationship

Text music relationship is quite clear from the transcribed songs. The high-pitched opening notes in song No. 10 denote a raised questioning tone as evident in figure 5.4a below.

![Figure 5.4a: Text music relationship](image)

The text indicates a question of wonder at the fast rate of change leading to the tendency to forget of the past in intertwining events. There is correlation between the text and the music as indicated in song No. 11 bar 16, where the text is accorded a highly pitched melody as a result of an urgency call made to the community (see figure 4b in song 11 bar 16).

![Figure 5.4b: Text music relationship](image)

From the song texts, there was urgency to caution Tharaka community against the rumor that raised concerns about the alternative rite of passage.

The text speech tone affects the melodic ascent and descent of songs. The syllabic inflection of certain texts of songs No.s 3 and 10 is an example. The inflections of the highlighted syllables wa-i-ri-ga-ri-ra and o-mwa-na in bar six of song No. 3 have lower intonation than the other syllables resulting in low sounds (see figure5.4c).
5.4.2 Rhythm

The Amĩĩrũ initiation girls rite of passage songs display rhythmic patterns derived from that of the spoken Kĩmĩĩrũ texts thus, defining the relationship between text and music. The poetic flow of the text renders the phrasal rhythmic patterns of the songs of figure 5.5a (see song No. 4).

The speech rhythmic patterns are derived from the text syllabic sub-divisions. Each syllable is then accorded rhythmic note value as is dictated by the spoken words for example, cu-cu-cu nti-ku-mie-nda in song No. 6 bar 1 (figure 5.5b) showing the rhythmic flow of the song.
The speech rhythm in the girls traditional rite of passage songs involves many speech interjections like ūi at beginning of the text phrase in songs No. 2 bar 1 (figure 5.5c).

and ũ at the ending of the text phrases as seen in (song 4 bar 8) figure 5.5d below.

5.4.3 Melody

The melodic structure of the transcribed songs consists of both short and long irregular phrases. Cucucucu has long phrases that open with a short one beat phrase followed by a five beat phrase figure 5.6a (see song No. 6 bar 1, 2).
Metric shifts within songs are evident in the girls rite of passage songs Nos.3, 4, and 5. Two or more metric patterns are used in some songs. In song 3, for example, the solo performs melodies in ten quaver beats (bar 14) while the chorus part constantly performs three-quaver beats melody (see figure 5.6b).
Contraction of textual phrases occurs in GARP songs as is the case of song No. 9 bar 35 where two words *mwana wa* son of, are merged to come up with a single word *mwano* that has the same connotation. The speech tones involved here led to the change of the syllables *na wa* of the spoken phrase *mwana wa* to *no* of *mwano* of the sung phrase in order to fit the melodic pattern as seen in *Nuu uti mwiji* figure 5.6c (song No. 9 bar 35).

5.4.4 Tempo

Tempo in the songs performed during the girls rite of passage varies from slow to relatively fast. Most of the traditional song melodies are rather slow as suggested by the text in *Ui reria and Kirani kiki* (songs No. 2 and 4). The contemporary songs are faster due to the text used in *Mucere, Katikati ya Tharaka and Sifa ya ntanira* respectively (songs No. 7, 11, and 12).
5.4.5 Scale

Various scales are employed in the girls alternative rite of passage songs transcribed. The pentatonic scale and hexatonic scales are the most common. *Wakarathe* song No.1; *Mwari*, song No. 3 and *Mucere* song 7, are based on the five tone scale beginning on varied notes with tone rows of G# A# C# D# E# and D E G C A respectively figure 5.7a and 5.7b.

![Figure 5.7a: Pentatonic scale beginning on G#](image)

![Figure 5.7b: Pentatonic scale beginning on D](image)

Hexatonic scales starting on different notes and with tone rows of A♭ E♭ D♭ B♭ G♭ F, D E G A B C and G A B D E F are employed in song No.s 6, 9 and 10 respectively (see figures 5.8a, 5.8b and 5.8c).

![Figure 5.8a: Hexatonic scale stating on Db](image)

![Figure 5.8b: Hexatonic scale starting on G](image)

One employs the heptatonic scale with a tone row of G A B C D E F♯ (song 11) *Kikundi cha Ntanira* as evident in figure 5.9.
Three of the transcribed songs No.s 2, 4 and 12 are built on a tri-tonic, four-note scale $E_b \ F \ A^b \ B^b$, $F^# \ E \ D \ B$ and $B \ C \ A \ D$ respectively figure 5.10a, 5.10b and 5.10c.

5.4.6 Tone Shift

Tone shift in Amíírù songs is common in RP (song10). The songs *ntaano cia aari*, song No. 10 presents tone shifts to an interval of an octave. The tonal centre of the song is B as seen in the first section melody (bars 1-18 in figure 11a). This song shifts down to an octave below as seen in the second section melody (bars 21-23 in figure 11b).
Figure 5.11a: First section melody with tonal center B

Figure 5.11b: Second section with tonal shift an octave lower

*Kikundi cha ntanĩra*, song No. 11 bar 13-16 present tonal shifts of intervals of a fifth, from G to D in the solo section and intervals of a fourth from F# to B in the chorus section (see figure 5.11c).
5.4.7 Melodic Range

The melodic range of some of the girls rite of passage songs is wide, with some songs presenting ranges of over an octave. *Nuu uti mwiji*, song No.11 bar 35 presents the highest note E in the song while bar 38 has the lowest note D figure 5.12a and 5.12b respectively.

*Mwarĩ tĩ nkuru nkuina*, song 8 has the lowest note of all the transcribed songs, G below the middle C due to the tonal inflection (see figure 5.12c).
Songs based on traditional melodies tend to use small intervals such as half tone (minor) for the interval of a second and one tone (diminished) for the interval of a third (see song 4 and 5) respectively. Songs with contemporary melodies have larger intervals of fourths, fifths and sixths (see songs No.s 8, 9 and 11). Melodic range and intervals found in the transcribed songs are presented in table 5.1 on p.134.

The smallest interval is a diminished second (see song No. 4 bar 1) while the largest interval is a major sixth in song No. 11 bar 10. Therefore, the melodic flow is in steps and short leaps of thirds, fourths, fifths and sixths (see songs No. 5 and 6 in figure 5.12a and 5.12b).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Melodic Range (lowest/highest)</th>
<th>Melodic intervals (tones) within the songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2\text{nd}</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wakarath</td>
<td>G# - E#</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ùi Reria</td>
<td>B – F#</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mwari tinklekukuina</td>
<td>G – G</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kirani kiki</td>
<td>Eb-Bb</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Twaana tutu</td>
<td>Db -Bb</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Taana namugambo</td>
<td>Ab – D</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mucere</td>
<td>G - E</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ambirwe karibari</td>
<td>G - E</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nuu uti mwiji</td>
<td>D – E’</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ntaano cia aari</td>
<td>Bb– Bb’</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kikundi cha Ntanira</td>
<td>F# - E</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sifa ya Ntanira</td>
<td>A - D</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 Performance Practice

The girls rite of passage songs are mainly performed by the female who are the participants as well as audience. Most songs are performed in antiphonal style, where the solo makes a call and the chorus responds (songs No.s 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). The soloist sings a phrase or phrases and the rest of the group respond in chorus as in song No.3 figure 5.14.

The flexibility of the form facilitates variations within its parameters. Variant forms evident in the transcribed songs are solo and chorused refrain, in which the chorus parts have the same texts and melody as the solo parts as revealed in the first melody of Twaana tutu (see song No. 5 bar 1-5).
Another variation occurs when the solo sings the whole verse and the chorus responds with an exact repeat of the solo presentation giving the soloist and the chorus parts equal phrases. This occurs where both the solo and chorus sing the same phrase to emphasize the message embodied in bars 1-2, 3-4 of the songs Mucere and Sifa ya Ntanĩra.

In some songs, the soloist performs short phrases that are in question and answer form. The chorus in turn answers with much longer phrases (see song No. 6 taanaga na mugambo). In other songs, the solo and chorus take short repetitive opening phrases that are followed with long phrases sung by both the soloist and chorus in unison as in Kirani kiki, song 4; Taana na mugambo song 6 and Ntaano cia aarĩ song No.10. The soloist in some songs performs short phrases. The chorus in turn answers with much longer phrases (see the songs no.s 4 and 6) that provides the answer or complete the question made by the soloist. Taana na mũgambo song No. 6, verse 2 presents short introductory declamatory phrases by the soloist consisting of one beat in bar 3. This is followed by longer phrases of five beats bar 3-4 of the chorus. The longer phrase repeats the statement and completes the message (figure 5.15a).

![Figure 5.15a: Introductory declamatory phrase](image)

Ending declamatory phrases emphasis, the statements of longer phrases that come before them are presented in Kirani kiki Figure 5.15b (song No. 4).
5.6 Comparison of Traditional and Contemporary Music

Both traditional songs and contemporary songs are performed during the girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies. The traditional melodies used in the ARP carry themes that scorn those who take up contemporary way of life as in verse 2 of *Mwari ti nkuru* song 3. Issues arising from a paradigm shift from traditional to contemporary lifestyle are highlighted in the song. Other songs bearing traditional melodies have contemporary text that relate to GARP concepts. *Kirani kiki, Twaana tutu* and *Taana na mugambo* (song No.s 4, 5 and 6) respectively address issues of processes followed in the girls traditional rite of passage which are not approved in girls alternative rite of passage. *Ambĩrwe karĩbarĩ* song No. 8 uses contemporary texts to address the results of the girls traditional rite of passage that is the new status in life achieved through endurance of pain, an achievement that could as well be attained through words as in the girls alternative rite of passage.

Contemporary songs address issues pertaining to the changing society and urge those who still hold on to traditional processes of GTRP to embrace the new process that does not inflict pain (see songs Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12). These songs reflect the emerging issues like family planning and devil worship that have caused alarm in the recent times. In *Kikundi cha ntanũra*, girls are said to be injected with family planning doses (song No. 11). The contemporary song texts seek to counter the misconception and deceit propagated by the opponents of change concerning new ways of carrying out girls rite of passage especially the GARP (see song No. 10).
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the summary of the discussions in the study on the role of traditional music in girls alternative rite of passage among the Amĩũrũ. The questions, objectives and the assumptions on which the study was based are discussed. The literature reviewed and the methodology used in data collection is discussed. Conclusions are made based on the findings from the field besides outlining recommendations for further studies.

6.1.1 Summary

The study investigated the music performed in girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies on the assumption that; music forms an important component of the alternative rite of passage and that music of the girls traditional rite of passage is used during the girls alternative rite of passage ceremonies. The study took the assumption that the text and music of girls traditional rite of passage carry messages that are relevant to the girls alternative rite of passage initiates and that the alternative rite of passage has influenced the use and function of music in the girls traditional rite of passage in contemporary Tharaka.

Related literature reviewed gave the study insights into the subject under study. The works of scholars such as Mwaniki (1985), Nyaga (1986), Nancy, et al., (1995) discussed the origin of circumcision and the significance of the girl initiation rite of passage. Advocacy for eradication of Female Genital Mutilation and introduction of Alternative Rite of Passage were highlighted by UN (1985), Anika R. & Nahid T. (2000), Forward (2000) and Path (2002). The literature on the functionality of the music of the initiation rite of passage structures and forms are highlighted. The influence of the alternative rite of passage on the music of girls traditional rite of passage performed during the girls alternative rite of passage is deduced.
The descriptive research method was used to analyze the role of traditional music and to describe the influence of the introduction of the alternative rite of passage on the traditional music of the girls traditional rite of passage. The population target was women, maidens and the elderly men. Purposive sampling was used as it facilitated for handpicking cases with required information in respect to the objectives of the study. The technique was useful in the selection of the target population location. Snowball sampling, participant and non-participant observation, questionnaire and scheduled interviews formed the methodology of the study in the field. Data collected and the secondary data were analyzed qualitatively. The text was translated from Kimĩũĩ to English to reveal the textual content description and meaning. The musical transcriptions were analyzed in terms of general structure to expose any variance between the music of the two rites of passage; that is, rhythm, melody pitch, scale and tone raw and intervals.

The study findings show that music plays a very important role in both the girls traditional rite of passage and the girls alternative rite of passage. This reveals that music is a very important aspect of the rite of passage among the Amĩũũ. The songs performed during the girls alternative rite of passage were both traditional and contemporary melodies. The transcriptions indicate that the melodic and rhythmic structure of the songs of the girls traditional rite of passage was maintained in the songs performed in the girls alternative rite of passage. The rhythms derived from the speech patterns and the melodic high tones due to speech intonation characterize this traditional music. Traditional songs present a limited melodic range compared to the contemporary ones. Both the traditional and contemporary songs are performed in antiphonal form.

Thus, the initiates in contemporary Tharaka community were able to identify with the music of the girls traditional rite of passage as it made the alternative rite of passage less alien. This music made the alternative rite of passage initiates feel equal with those initiates of girls traditional rite of passage. However, the findings show that the original texts of songs of girls traditional rite of passage were not used and therefore, the messages embodied in them not relevant to the initiates of the girls alternative rite of passage.
The music of the alternative rite of passage imparted to the initiates new values of life in line with the concepts of the contemporary Tharaka community. Whereas the music of the girls traditional rite of passage emphasized a stereotype docile state of the women folk, the music performed during ARP ceremonies emphasized on issues of formal education and self-actualization for every woman in contemporary Tharaka. The music performed during the ARP ceremonies therefore, made important impact on would be initiates of the girls traditional rite of passage who readily embraced the girls alternative rite of passage.

The study also revealed that the alternative rite of passage has influence on the use and function of the girls traditional rite of passage music in contemporary Tharaka community. The alternative rite of passage influenced the function of the girls traditional rite of passage music in contemporary Tharaka, where it functions as a transitional link between the old and the new, making the new less alien and easily acceptable to the members of the community. The melodies of the traditional girl rite of passage created a sense that alternative rite of passage did not interfere with the cultural beliefs, authenticating minimum difference between the two rites of passage. The GARP influence on the use of traditional music was contextual and hence minimal. The traditional melodies used in the GARP served the general role of music, that is, communication, in this case, the concepts of alternative rite of passage, and entertainment.

6.2 Conclusion

The study shows that the traditional melodies with contemporary text are employed in the alternative rite of passage ceremonies. The traditional songs used in ARP are devoid of the abhorrent and demeaning language used in traditional songs (see songs No.s 4, 5 and 6.). According to the interviewees, this language was used in traditional songs performed by the members of the community during the rite of passage to pass messages that could not be otherwise delivered. The respondents called this way of passing messages foul language. Most of the ARP songs are a duplication of the traditional melodies performed in traditional girl rite of passage but with textual modifications.
The alternative rite of passage focuses on an initiation system that does not involve genital mutilation (see songs No.s 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 12). Education and creation of awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of either of the rite of passage system are major emphases of the songs of the GARP Ntaano cia Aari (No. 10), kikundi cha ntanĩra (song 11) and Sifa ya ntanira (song 12). The traditional melodies used to enhance the concepts of the alternative rite of passage are also used as catalysts to draw the pro-traditional rite of passage to alternative rite of passage ceremonies. According to the interviewees, this goes a long way in enlightening the community on the changing social norms. Consequently, the traditional music performed in the girls alternative rite of passage does not serve the purpose it had in the girls traditional rite of passage.

The rate of change in traditional music is gradual. The traditional text that concerned itself with matters and processes of genital mutilation is gradually changing with the use of text drawn from alternative rite of passage concepts. The rhythms and melodies of the GTRP music are used with the text drawn from the ARP concepts (see song Nos 4, 5 and 6). Contemporary rhythms and melodies are used in the alternative rite of passage ceremonies songs (see songs No.s 11 and 12). Regular and irregular metric patterns characterize the girl rite of passage songs (see songs Nos 5, 7, 8 and 9). The phrasal patterns employed in the rite of passage songs are both regular and irregular (songs 6 and 8). The call and response form with its variations is prevalently employed in traditional songs. These are evident in the songs of ARP (see songs Nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12).

The songs collected, transcribed and analyzed in the study show selectivity in the elements of the traditional music that changed. Texts content of the traditional songs of the Amĩĩrũ girls’ traditional rite of passage changed but the rhythms and melodies of the songs were not affected. This therefore, establish of the linkage and catalyst role of traditional music in girls’ alternative rite of passage.
6.3 Recommendations

1) The role of girls traditional rite of passage music in contemporary Tharaka has changed and this should inspire planners and implementers of anti-FGM to use the traditional music in their programme. The traditional girls rite of passage melodies could be used to reach out to the section of community that has not embraced the current social approaches.

2) A study on the distinctive traditional music of the girls rite of passage should be done to unfold the messages embodied in it for documentation and preservation.

3) The Ministry of Gender, Culture, Sports and Social Services with reference to the departments of Gender and Culture as policy makers and the executive organs for the promotion and preservation of culture in the country should promote activities that involve community participation in performance of traditional music to ensure documentation and preservation of the same.

4) Research should be carried out on the music of the other social institutions of the Amĩĩrũ to provide apposite reference by the present and coming generations.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES
Karimi wa Murungi, 10/4/2006 10.00am at Marimanti
Kooje oba Mbuko, 14/8/2007 12.00noon at Machaka
Evangeline wa Murungi, 16/8/2007, 11.00am at Maimanti
Mbũya, 15/8/2006, 10.00 am at Kirua
Grace Kamene, 17/8/2007, 9.00am at Marimanti
James Macharia, 13/12/2007, 2.30pm at Nairobi
Mberia Zachary, 17/8/2007, 10.00am at Marimanti
APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

I am conducting a study on the role of traditional music in girls alternative rite of passage. I am requesting for your assistance with relevant information that will lead to successful completion of this task. All information will be treated confidentially and only used for the purpose of this study.

What stages do the initiates of GARP go through during rite?
What music is performed at each stage and by who?
What teaching do you get from this music?
What music does the community perform?
What message does their music carry?
Do you sing traditional GTRP songs in GARP? Why.
What is the significance of traditional music in GARP?
What impact does this music have on your life?
APPENDIX III

THE GLOSSARY OF KĪMĪRŨ TERMS

Aana  The children.
Aari  Female.
Agambi  The judges.
Agwe  The spiritual leaders.
Akũrũ  Old men
Amĩĩrũ  The indigenous people of Mĩĩrũ district
Authi  Male songs and dances performed on various occasions
Bamo or bamong’o Comrade
Barĩkĩba Great One
Coro Horn
Gaaru A warrior’s hut
Gitigania Dialect spoken by the Tigania
Gũtũrua matũ The piercing of the ears
Igwa Sugarcane.
Ikwa Yam
Ĩrĩa That one
Itharia Soloists
Ithathayi Imploremnt
Karamu Pencil
Kenda Digit nine
Kĩbuchũ Songs and dances for entertainment.
Kĩgarũ Songs and dances performed by women on various occasions.
Kĩģembe Dialect spoken by the Ĩgembe
Kĩiamenti Dialect spoken by the Imenti
Kĩmĩrũ The language spoken by the Amĩĩrũ.
Kĩraũũre Circumcision songs performed at the homestead of the
Kĩtharaka Dialect spoken by the Tharaka
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kĩtharia</td>
<td>Soloist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kũgerua matũ</td>
<td>The trying of the ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuina</td>
<td>Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuina rwĩmbo</td>
<td>To sing a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kũrĩrĩa</td>
<td>To sing songs that implied that a male was ready for circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuuga</td>
<td>To say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwona</td>
<td>To see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marĩrĩ.</td>
<td>Songs performed by males ready for circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marua</td>
<td>A traditional brew made from millet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathaga</td>
<td>Ammunition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matũma</td>
<td>Arrowroots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturu</td>
<td>Female songs and dances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mboboi</td>
<td>Initiation songs sung performed after the circumcision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbwa</td>
<td>An Island on the Kenyan coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miĩrĩga</td>
<td>Groups of related people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miĩrũ</td>
<td>The indigenous name that refers to Meru district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mĩkwaciĩ.</td>
<td>Cassava.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miĩrĩjo</td>
<td>Sweet potatoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miungĩ</td>
<td>Feathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumĩro</td>
<td>Songs and dances performed after female initiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũchiere</td>
<td>A newly wedded lady.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũgaa</td>
<td>The medicine man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugambo</td>
<td>Sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugwe</td>
<td>A religious leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũkũrĩ</td>
<td>A tattoo expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumenyi thonthe</td>
<td>Omniscience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũnyaro</td>
<td>Dry season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũranũ</td>
<td>Wedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũrungu</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũtana</td>
<td>Son</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Mūtani  Circumciser
Mūya  Sorghum.
Mwana wa kĩranga  The first born male or female
Mwene inya  Omnipotent
Mwere  Bulrush millet.
Mwiji  The uncircumcised male
Mwijĩ  Uncircumcised male,
Mwijūkia  Midwife
Mwini  Singer
mwiungĩ  Head-gear
Ncabī  Black beans.
Nchorobi  Song dances performed by nthaka after seclusion.
Nchungo  Songs and dances performed after female circumcision
Ncobi  The traditional beer
Ncorobĩ  Announcement of successful initiation
Ncūgũ  Pigeon peas.
Ndwimbo cia ngono  Story songs
Ngai  God
Nguo  Cloths
Nguo ntune  Red cloths, referring to the Arabs
Ngurano ya amĩrũ  Amĩrũ marriage
Ngutu  A term that refers to the initiate after circumcision
Ngutu  A term that refers to maidens in seclusion.
Njaĩ  Songs and dances performed during female initiation.
Njerũ  White
Njirũ  Black
Njurĩ  The council of elders.
Nkenye cia bũurũ yao  Their maiden friends
Nkĩro  Circumcision songs sung by both young and old men.
Nkoma  Evil
Nkoma cia ba jũjũ  Ancestral spirits
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nkoroi</td>
<td>A type of monkey from which the Authi dancers make their head-gear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkūro</td>
<td>Tattooing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondo</td>
<td>Ochre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nono</td>
<td>Garden peas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntaane</td>
<td>The initiates were then put into seclusion until they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntaano</td>
<td>Circumcision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntanĩra</td>
<td>Circumcise for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthaka</td>
<td>The warriors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthamari</td>
<td>A term that refers to a Maiden awaiting circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nihoroko</td>
<td>Cowpeas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nihukĩ</td>
<td>Age groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntiirũ</td>
<td>Song dances performed by young men in the evenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntune</td>
<td>Red.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renta</td>
<td>Songs by Akuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rĩbũĩ</td>
<td>Songs performed by in the evening for leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugoci</td>
<td>Horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwĩmbo</td>
<td>Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwĩmbo rwa gĩtindio</td>
<td>A song cerebration lasting a whole day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taarab</td>
<td>Art music of the coastal people of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thathaia</td>
<td>Implore Tũmĩtĩ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tũmĩtĩ</td>
<td>Sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ũgĩmbũ</td>
<td>Finger millet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ũng’atio</td>
<td>Maiden’s songs and dances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilizopendwa</td>
<td>Arrangements of popular tunes and melodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX IV

MAP OF KENYA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THARAKA

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Tharaka District Development Plan 2002-2008
APPENDIX V

DISTRICT OCCUPIED BY THE THARAKA COMMUNITY

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Plan Tharaka District Development Plan 2002-2008