DYNAMICS OF HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KIGANE,
MERU COUNTY, 1963-2010

BY

DORCAS MBIJIWE K.
C50/CE/24686/2011

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 2015
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for award of any degree or any other purpose in any other university.

Signature ___________________ Date: 16/11/2015

DORCAS MBIJIWE K. (C50/CE/24686/2011)
Department of History, Archeology and Political Studies

SUPERVISORS

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

Signature ___________________ Date: 24/11/2015

DR. SUSAN MWANGI
Department of History, Archeology and Political Studies

Signature ___________________ Date: 20/11/2015

DR. MARTHA MUSALIA
Department of History, Archeology and Political Studies
DEDICATION

In honour of my late mother, Julia Mbijiwe who instilled in me the virtue of perseverance.
To my son Kenneth Murithi who offered a lot of moral support, sacrificed his comfort and leisure time to see me go through this study.
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Kenyatta University administration for offering me an opportunity to study.

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Susan Mwangi and Dr. Martha Musalia for the inspiration and guidance throughout the course of the study. Their supervision and academic contribution ensured proper progress of this work. In a very special way I appreciate the encouragement, understanding and patience accorded to me from both. To my two supervisors, I salute you.

My thanks also go to the staff of History Department of Kenyatta University who shared their valuable time, knowledge and skills with me. Dr. Kakai, Dr. Gimode, Dr. Moroko, Dr. Kisiang'ani, Dr. Kayi and others, I do appreciate them for taking me successfully through the coursework.

I acknowledge with thanks the staff of Kenya National Archives for their assistance during the archival data collection. I am thankful to the Kenyatta university library and the Meru library services for the information I gathered from their resources.

To my great friends and college mates, I say thanks a lot for intellectual and moral support throughout this study. Special mention goes to Stella Mworia, Nelson Mwiti Mburugu, Javan Mokebo, Kimanthi Vengi, and Alex Mutua. This work was successful because you motivated and strengthened me when I got to my lowest.

I appreciate my family and in particular, my son Kenneth Murithi. It was in him that I found great comfort, motivation and energy to carry on this task.

Finally, I thank Mr. Antony Bojana for being available to edit this work.

God bless you all.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .......................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ......................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ....................................................................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. ix
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS ............................................................................ x
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .................................................................................. xi
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................... xii
CHAPTER ONE ...................................................................................................................... 1

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Background to the Study ............................................................................................... 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................. 5
1.3 Research Objectives ..................................................................................................... 6
1.4 Premise of the study ..................................................................................................... 7
1.5 Justification and Significance of the Study ................................................................... 7
1.6 Scope and limitations of the Study ............................................................................... 9
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................................ 10
1.7.1 Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 10
1.7.2 Rational Choice Theory ....................................................................................... 11
1.7.3 Gender Theory ...................................................................................................... 13
1.7.4 History of Female-Headed Household in the Colonial Period in Kenya ............ 17
1.7.5 History of Female-headed Households after Independence ............................... 23
1.7.6 Female-headed Households in Africa ................................................................. 25
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................... 27

1.8.1 Research Design ..................................................................................................... 27

1.8.2 Site of the Study ..................................................................................................... 28
1.8.3 Study Population ................................................................................................... 31
1.8.4 Sampling Technique and Sample size ................................................................. 31
1.8.5 Research Instruments ......................................................................................... 32
4.2.2 Women and Education ................................................................. 95
Table 4.1: Education ......................................................................... 97
2.3 Religion ....................................................................................... 99
Table 4.2: Cultural factors ................................................................. 104
4.2.4 Diseases .................................................................................. 107
4.3 Influence of Economic Factors on Female-headed Households ...... 108
4.3.1 Women Employment in Agriculture ....................................... 109
4.3.2 Women Employment in the Formal Sector .............................. 110
Table 4.3: Employment .................................................................. 113
4.3.3 Access to Land and Property .................................................. 114
Table 4.4: Access to land and property ............................................ 114
4.3.4 Economic Hardships ............................................................... 119
Table 4.5: Economic hardships ....................................................... 120
4.3.5 Women Empowering Organizations ..................................... 122
4.3.6 Advocacy Institutions for Women’s Rights .............................. 125
Table 4.6: Advocacy Institutions for Women’s Rights .................... 125
4.4 Women Participation in Politics .................................................. 127

CHAPTER FIVE .................................................................................. 136
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......................... 136
5.1 Introduction ................................................................................. 136
5.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study ...................................... 136
5.2.1 The Ameru in the Pre-colonial Period .................................... 136
5.2.2 The Impact of Colonial Policies on the Female-headed Households .............................................. 138
5.2.3 The Socio-Political and Economic Factors Leading to the Prevalence of Female-Headed Households in Kigane Location .......................... 139
5.3 Conclusions .............................................................................. 142
5.4 Recommendations ................................................................. 143
5.5 Areas for Further Research ...................................................... 144
REFERENCES ................................................................................. 145
APPENDICES .................................................................................. 160
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: African countries with substantial numbers of women headed households...27
Table 1.2: Sample size........................................................................................................32
Table 4.1: Education...........................................................................................................94
Table 4.2: Cultural factors................................................................................................101
Table 4.3: Employment......................................................................................................113
Table 4.4: Access to land and property............................................................................110
Table 4.5: Economic hardships.........................................................................................115
Table 4.6: Advocacy institutions for Women’s rights......................................................120
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study

**Dynamics** – Refers to the changes in the family headship over a period of time. ous changes are characterized by increase in female headed households from the traditional male headed households.

**Female-headed households:** Refers to households without regular presence and support of adult male and thus depend on a woman who is the economically active household member. There are various categories of FHH: migrant husbands; husband is present but the wife is in control due to various reasons including sickness, drunkards and disorderly husbands as illustrated in Ifi Amadiume’s idea of male daughters and female husbands; the widowed and women who choose to be single but have children and women who marry other women and the senior wife takes control of the family. For the sake of this study, only three categories that is·the migrant husband,husband is present but the wife is in control due to various reasons including sickness and divorced women who were put into focus because they are the most prominent among the Meru.

**Households** – Refers to persons or groups of related and unrelated persons who live together in the same dwelling units and acknowledge one adult (male or female) as the family head. The household members share the same housekeeping arrangements and are considered as one unit.

**Women empowerment** – Refers to enabling women individually and collectively to transform unequal power relations and unjust structures and institutions, being reduced to an instrumental concept that focuses on individual rights.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANPPCAN</td>
<td>African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASAL</td>
<td>Arid and SemiArid Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPfA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADEC</td>
<td>Cancel Debts for the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBN</td>
<td>Cost of Basic Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVAW</td>
<td>Coalition on Violence Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for Women Educationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Federation of African Women Educationists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEI</td>
<td>Food Energy Intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHH</td>
<td>Female-Headed Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDA</td>
<td>Federation of Women Lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Resource Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICESCR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Centre for Research on Women’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAACR</td>
<td>Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KHRC</td>
<td>The Kenya Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KWFT</td>
<td>Kenya Women’s Finance Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LKWW</td>
<td>League of Kenya Women Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFLS</td>
<td>Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>Violence Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WID</td>
<td>Women in Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the prevalence of female-headed households increasing in Kenya today, few studies have been done to document such prevalence and the contributing factors to the same. The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of female-headed households from 1963 to 2010 in Kigane location, Meru County. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to interrogate the importance of marriage and family among the Meru before 1963, to assess the colonial policies and the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane location. Finally, the study investigated the socio-economic and political factors that led to emergence and prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane Location from 1963 to 2010. This study was guided by the rational choice theory and gender theory. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was the population of Kigane Location. The target population were male and female household heads, married women and the relevant government officials (Chief and assistant chiefs) who were the key informants in the location of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the female-headed households and government officials while simple random sampling technique was used to sample male-headed households and married women. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were used to collect data for the study. A total of 123 respondents were targeted by the study out of which 114 responded giving a response rate of 93%. Data was analysed thematically and a narrative done using historical method. It was observed that prior to colonialism, female-headed households was not a common phenomenon. With colonialism which created male labour migration women began taking up and heading households. The policies passed during the Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki regimes influenced women by giving them rights to own land and inherit property, women could have a percentage in holding public offices, accesses to resources in the same capacity as men, women were empowered to become financially stable, women got awareness of their right and equal education opportunities to all. On the social-economic factors leading to the prevalence of female-headed households factors such as education, religion and advocacy institutions were mentioned. Economic factors such as employment, access to land and property and economic hardship were found to lead to the emergence of female-headed households. The study concluded that the policies implemented by the three different regimes empowered women and that the socio-political and economic factors led to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane location. The study recommended that the women representation should be increased both at county and national levels and that the state should ensure gender balance and fare representation of women in all constitutional and developmental bodies, many educated women should come down from the urban and big cities to the rural areas where the majority are still illiterate, unsensitized and poor. This will bridge the gap and help grassroots women organise themselves. The study further recommended that gender equality should be realized through partnership of both men and women, that the leaders should accept positive charge of attitudes and a new way of doing things, that all women should unite and finally that the church roles should be flexible so that they can fully articulate the feminine nature, role and the contribution of women.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Household studies are increasingly becoming popular with the realization that the household is the society’s most common place and basic socio-economic unit. The household is a common form of socio-economic organization in most regions in the world, and often reflects the structuring of gender relations and women’s specific experience. It has been observed that the household is the arena of socio-economic subordination particularly of women (Okuro, 2002).

The steady rise in female-headed households and in the number of children living with them have important life course implications for recent cohorts of women and children (Casper & Bianchi, 2002). According to Graefe and Lichter (1999), about half of all women will experience single motherhood at some point in their lifetimes and a majority of children will live in a female-headed household. According to Bruce and Lloyd (1997), the increase in female-headed households could be due to variety of reasons including widowhood, migration, non-marital fertility and marital instability. In recent decades, an increasing number of women particularly rural women, have become heads of households because men, the traditional heads of households, have left for work or other reasons.

Unlike developing countries, in the developed ones, increased divorce rates have been attributed to the rise of female-headed households. The total divorce rate in most western European countries is approximately 30% while the Scandinavian countries,
the United Kingdom, and the United States is close to 50% or even higher (Sardon, 2002). Increased separation and desertions are also attributed to the increase of female-headed houses in developed world. Furthermore, single motherhood by choice, among the older, higher educated, working class women is on the rise in the developed countries (Sardon, 2002).

Buvinic, Youssef and Von Elm’s (1978) study brought to the fore the ‘problem’ of increased prevalence of female headship in developing countries. They argued that there was a marked growing trend in the prevalence of female-headed households throughout the developing world. Most importantly, the phenomenon of female-headed households was more predominantly concentrated in the lower income socio-economic strata. They also contended that living in female-headed households had dire repercussions for both the women who head them and for their children.

Female-headed households in developing countries deserve special attention since culturally women were typically disadvantaged regarding access to land, labour and credit. Most of Africa is patriarchal as women were and still are disadvantaged in every aspect of life making them dependent on males. Patriarchy adversely affected women and children in female-headed households which were in fact looked down upon. Traditionally also, men controlled labour as an important resource for wealth accumulation. In many of the African countries such as Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, and Kenya, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of female-headed households (FHH) in recent years. Among the main causes are male migration, the deaths of males in civil conflicts and wars, un-partnered adolescent fertility and
family disruption (IFAD, 1999). Jones (2000) concurs that single and female-headed households have become a discernible pattern in Africa’s social landscape.

**TABLE 1.1 AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of rural WHH based on polygamy</th>
<th>% of rural WHH based on migration, divorce &amp; widowhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Boulding et al. (1976)*

Whether households are women-headed due to visitor status of husbands in polygamous household or migrant husband or due to widowhood or divorce, they represent
situations where women do all the work and make major decisions as well as giving birth and bringing up of children (Boulding et al., 1976).

Boulding et al. (1976) observes that, in the world, family and household situation of women on marital status shows that 23.0% of women are never married, 62.3% are married, 11.5% are widowed and 3.5% are divorced or separated. This shows that at any particular time, roughly 40% of the world’s adult women are unpartnered.

According to a World Bank report, published in 2010, the female-headed households in Kenya were 31.7 between 2001 and 2003. By 2009, the percentage rose to 33.9 per cent (http://www.tradingeconomics.com). This is an indication of increasing female-headed households in Kenya generally.

In traditional African society, men were heads of families. There was no equality as such; both men and women’s roles were complimentary to each other. The question of equality thus did not exist. Women were required to get married and be under the care and protection of a male household head. Those that defied this status quo, though very rare were frowned upon in the Meru community. Such women were insulted and not allowed to own any property including land. The children born out of wedlock were looked at as misfits and to some extent an abomination.

According Jones (2000), there are five categories of female-headed households globally, namely: those whose husbands are migrant labourers but support their families from a distance and are consulted in major decision-making by their wives; those with regular present husbands but the wife has total authority and control of the family: she is the major decision maker, women who marry other women where the senior woman is the household head; female-headed households which result from divorce, separation,
widowhood and single parenthood by choice; and where the husband is present but the wife is in control due to various reasons including sickness, drunkards and disorderly husbands as illustrated in Ifi Amadiume's (1987) idea of male daughters and female husbands. In every African culture or traditions there are many “female – men”, paternal aunts, mothers in-law and sisters in-law. This assume the male roles in oppressing fellow women married within their families. They are often at the forefront for wanting a barren wife to be dismissed, or more wives to be married by their male relatives and the mistreatment of widows. They do all this in their ‘male” role and patriarchal system (Waliggo, 2002).

There is an important difference between men and women headed households; in women headed households, women are the sole bread winners and at the same time they have the responsibility for child rearing and for domestic responsibilities. Many married women perform these three duties, but there is husband's support even though it may be little. The rise of female-headed households points to important changes in family formation throughout developing regions that may have serious repercussions on the growth and development of younger generations. This study therefore, sought to study the changes in the categories and the growth of FHH in regard to Kigane Location.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the prevalence of female-headed households increasing in Kenya today, few studies have been done to document such prevalence and the contributing factors to the same. In Kenya, most of the existing literature lays emphasis on male-dominated history and tends to be gender insensitive. Women are portrayed as inferior or victims of male
domination. Although previous assessments of the levels and trends of female-headed leadership have not unequivocally demonstrated the existence of an upward increase, the issue is worth reconsidering particularly given the alleged implication of "modernization" of the family which in turn has multiple implications not only on the family structure but also on the wellbeing of the children and the mother. This makes the study crucial in the understanding of the categories and the dynamics as well as the genesis of the female-headed households in Meru generally and in Kigane Location in particular in a historical perspective. This study investigated the Female-headed Households in Kigane location, Meru County from a historical perspective from 1963-2010. It did this by first generally interrogating the importance of marriage and family among the Meru prior to colonialism. The impact of colonial economic, political and social-cultural policies on the family unit were also discussed noting that such policies resulted in increased cases of female-headed households due to male labour migration. The study finally investigated socio-political and economic factors that led to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed household in Kigane Location (1963-2010).

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

i) To examine the importance of marriage and family among the Meru before 1963

ii) To assess the impact of colonial policies on the emergence of the female-headed households in Kigane Location.
iii) To investigate the socio-political and economic factors that led to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed household in Kigane Location (1963-2010).

1.3 Research Question

i) How important was marriage and family among the Meru before 1963?

ii) How did the colonial policies contribute to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane Location

iii) What are the socio-political and economic factors that led to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane Location?

1.4 Premise of the study

i) Marriage was an important social aspect of the Meru before 1963

ii) The colonial policies led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households

iii) The socio-political and economic factors influenced female-headed households in Kigane Location.

1.5 Justification and Significance of the Study

Study of family institution is important since it forms the society’s foundation.

Few studies have been carried out in Africa on female-headed households such as Amadiume (1987) *Male daughters and female husbands*, Hay (1995) *African woman south of the Sahara* and Falola and Akua (2011) *Women gender and sexuality in Africa*. Very scanty literature exists on female-headed households in Kenya and especially in Kigane Location. At a time when there is an increase of female-headed households,
studies on the phenomenon need to be carried out so as to establish the cause, nature and implication on children and by extension the society at large. Male-headed households constitute the norm and are perceived as the major decision makers particularly in the Kenyan patriarchal setting. However, a focus on female-headed households makes them visible and brings forth women’s contributions.

Kigane Location was chosen for the study as most of the men have taken up *miraa* chewing and alcohol consumption leading to family breakages. The study was done in this location to investigate whether after the *Miraa* crop was banned in most of European market, and most of the crop destroyed men got back to their families to take their rightful positions as household heads. Most women to escape from their drunk, disorderly, irresponsible and abusive husbands leave their marriages accompanied by their children to secure a new residence where they take up the role of bringing up the children single handedly in the absence of the father figure. In the same breath, the impact of husbands who indulge in *miraa* chewing and excessive alcohol consumption is not felt as they have neglected their family responsibility. In this case women were the main players in the family decision-making hence, they are the household heads. Partly, this resulted in increased female-headed households.

Okuro (2002) did a study on the impact of the colonial socio-economic policies and practices on female-headed households in Kombewa, Kisumu District, 1894-1963. He found that the colonial and missionary activities transformed the existing social organizations in which gender roles were clearly defined. According to Okuro, the poverty experienced by women in the rural areas made them migrate to urban areas in search of employment. This is different from Kigane where women remained in the
rural setting struggling for survival. Thus, Okuro focused on the factors that contributed to poverty of the female-headed households while this study focused on the contributing factors to the emergence and growth of the female-headed households in Kigane. Okuro recommended further research on the same in other areas.

The findings of this study will be important to the civil society organizations fighting for women rights. This is because by establishing the trends in the female-headed households, civil organizations can come up with strategies to empower female-headed households. This can be achieved through creation of awareness of human rights to strengthen female-headed households. It will offer a means to move away from discrimination and subordination positions of the female-headed households in the society. Finally, the study will be of importance to scholars by contributing to the existing literature on female-headed households. It will in particular fill the knowledge gap by providing literature on female-headed households in Kigane. This study will also form a basis upon which other studies could be done.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the Study

The study focused on female-headed households from 1963 - 2013. It was carried out in Kigane Location in Meru County. The year 1963 has historical significance as this was the turning point from colonialism to the birth of an independent Kenyan nation. The study intended to investigate whether the men from Kigane who had migrated to provide labour in white settlers plantation came back home to play their traditional roles as heads of the house holds now that colonialism was over. The year 2010 was when there was the promulgation of the new constitution that gave women more opportunities
to participate in governance. From this dimension, this work provided a detailed foundation which interrogated the factors that contributed to the emergence of female-headed household in the colonial period and after independence in Kigane Location.

One of the limitations of the study included uncooperative respondents who were very suspicious as the study touched on their private lives and a few failed to submit their questionnaires. To overcome this challenge, the researcher had to convince the respondents that the research was purely academic and that the information given was to be handled with confidentiality. Terrain was also a limitation to the study as some respondents could not easily be accessed as their settlements were located away from the access roads. To overcome this challenge, more time was allocated for data collection and different means of transport such as boda boda were used to reach the respondents. Moreover, two research assistants were trained to help in data collection to help in traversing the vast Kigane Location. To overcome the challenges of non-response, the researcher and the two research assistants administered the instruments in person and picked them immediately they were filled.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents theoretical framework and relevant literature reviewed. The relevant literature is was reviewed on: emergence and growth of female-headed households in Africa, and in Kenya specifically from colonial to post-colonial periods.

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework

This study used rational choice theory and gender theory. These theories were chosen due to their relevance in studying female-headed households. Rational choice theory
was chosen as it helped in explaining some of the reasons behind the existence of female-headed households. On the other hand, gender theory was used to understanding the gender dynamics in society and changing relations between men and women as a result of negotiations and contracts.

1.7.2 Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is a school of thought used by social scientists to understand human behaviour. More generally, a “rational” choice is a choice based on reason. The approach has long been the dominant paradigm in psychology and economics but in recent decades it has become more widely used in other disciplines such as sociology, political science, and anthropology (Becker, 1976; Swedberg, 1990), and Green and Shapiro (1996).

Rational Choice Theory has been used by social scientists to understand human social exchange behaviour. According to Coleman (1995) the theory views individual as rational profit seeker. Generally, people purposively choose to get involved in activities or behaviours with an objective of maximizing their individual goals. It argues that every action or decision people make is preceded by a well-thought out reasoning that leads to that decision or action. It assumes that an individual chooses the best action according to stable preference functions and constraints (Becker, 1976). It states that behaviour is oriented towards self interest.

According to Coleman (1995) the theory focuses on actors who are either seen as being purposive or as having intentionality. Their actions are directed by the goals which they
aim to achieve. The author further argues that in rational choice people act intentionally to maximize their individual utility (reward and resources). They examine the environment, weigh possible causes of action and consequences, and choose what they view as the most expedient path to their goals. Expediency is determined by the costs and benefits involving the action. According to this theory women have the power to choose what is right by their own estimates. This theory was relevant to the study as it helped us to understand that actors (women) are seen to be purposive and having intentionality in their action, especially of the independent women who were heading their households by choice because marriage is not good for them all. In Kigane location education and economic independence enabled some women to leave unsatisfactory marriages from men who cannot meet their needs. Other women decided to remain single by choice and head their households.

One of the criticisms of the theory holds that human beings don’t always act in their own interest, even when they know it. It explains individual behaviour in purely rational terms but ignores non-rational human behaviour, neglecting such influences on its emotional, pathological, and moral (normative) ones. According to Stigler & Becker (1977: 76), rational choice theory generally assumes that their models apply equally to all persons under study- that decisions, rules, tastes are ‘stable over time and similar among people’.

Despite the weakness of the theory, it is useful in explaining the choice of action in an interactive situation. The theory postulates that an individual is normally governed by the attempts to maximize benefits or returns. This theory is applicable in this study considering that the some FHHs have resulted from divorce or separation after careful
thought to pursue monetary gains or move out of hostile marriages. Others may decide to pursue their jobs or careers as opposed to family life.

At the beginning of the 21st century, women are predominantly found in large scale agriculture, in commerce and in handcraft industry. There is no legal obstacle to employment of women. This has broken the traditional myth of the Victorian concept of the woman that the African woman’s home is within the boundaries of her husband’s territory. Hence, an occupation outside the house tends to make a woman independent, become equal to men when they should be superior to women from the patriarchal perspective. In this way, working class women with remunerative economic activity to provide for themselves and their children choose to head their households without husbands.

A lot of changes have taken place in Kigane Location where women participate in business and in Agriculture. This empowered women leading to their liberation from the patriarchal Meru society where everyone traditionally puts premium on wifely loyalty. This theory was, therefore, used in this study to explain how socio-political and economic factors has led to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane location. According to the theory, women make choices based on the careers and economic status between their husbands and their jobs.

1.7.3 Gender Theory

This study adopted the use of gender theory to explain the aspects of gender which is constructed by the society and dictates the subordinate positions of women in the society. This theory also looked into conflicts between sexes. These aspects have not
been explained in the rational choice theory necessitating the adoption of gender related theory.

This study adopted gender theory by Hirdman (1995) as cited in Gruphel (1991). Hirdman uses the concepts of gender contracts and gender systems. He introduces the concept of gender contract which is a broad concept that allows us to analyze the space between men and women, together with the ideas, rules and cultural norms, tasks and qualities of men and women in a society. The gender contracts between sexes taken together create the gender system.

This gender theory allowed us to consider changeability and historicity, discuss variations between men and women, maleness and femaleness and put into focus the fact that gender shaping relationship plays a fundamental socio-economic and political role. Changes occur because the system is open and can be questioned. The gender system is dynamic. Women access to education, meaningful formal and informal employment and right to own property made them gain greater personal autonomy and economic independence. Consequently women attitudes towards themselves, to men, to marriage and to the family changed. In particular in Kigane many women questioned mens authority in the family. It is not enough for the man to be the family head, he had to act like it and make family decision with the family welfare in mind. Where the woman made major decision it was because the man failed to step up his responsibilities. Economic changes and male migration resulted to many women playing an even greater role than previously providing for her family needs through food production in the rural areas or through paid work. From this when women carried the burden of most of the house hold expenditure; they were most unlikely to welcome
man's traditional authority and dictates. Then, women in many cases became defacto
and dejure household heads.

Historically, women's participation in national development was limited by the
stereotyped role that associated women with the private life. Women were relegated to
the background of traditionally docile, subservient and powerless world. In many
societies in Kenya, men controlled the public domain, were the bread winners while
women were construed as passive and always ready to accept the dictates from men. So,
to some extent, it is not the biological incapacity that hindered women from reaching
their fullest potential but rather cultural barriers, expectations and conformity. This has
since changed. In Kigane the pre - colonial households which functioned as social
control unit became increasingly rare. Women broke the cultural and customary fence
that contained them. They are no longer tied to the old system values governing the
traditionally defined roles in the family. In the 21st century, women are taking up roles
and responsibilities in the public domain that was traditionally the men's sphere.

Hirdman argues that the breakthrough of modernity meant the development of strong
sex integration impulses. One such impulse was the capitalist system which chose the
cheapest labour, often from females. Another impulse was the democratic concept, that
is, ideas about equality of human beings regardless of race, social position and sex.
These ideas of democracy grew and were shared by most women. Thus, the sex
integrating rules and the existing traditional gender system, rules of segregation and
gender hierarchies worked against each other. In this process, the male position, tasks
and qualities shrunk while female position grew.
In the 21st Century, the variance caused by capitalism has become increasingly acute. From the sex integrated society, women move into male-dominated areas, do male jobs, demand male rights. This is allowed because of the principle of “sameness of the sexes” (Hirdman, 1995). In kigane educated women with better knowledge rejected the conventional cultural prescription and the social meaning of gender. This provoked fundamental changes from the quiet, passive and unassertive woman. Many women didn’t want to be restricted to the social prescription of single gender roles and wanted to cultivate masculine and feminane roles too. Masculinity in Kigane was defined as intellectual ability and success in earning income. Many women reclaimed their ambition and intelligence by exercising them in their careers. This made them more assertive than their foremothers. This increased the latitude towards what was considered appropriate for women. Men were also changing their roles as well, for example taking care of children, cooking and making homes that was tradionally regarded as women’s work. On the other hand, women are taking careers such as mechanics, engineers, and doctors that was traditionally viewed and accepted as male domain.

This study, therefore, used the theory of gender as blue print for understanding gender dynamics in society and changing relations between men and women as a result of negotiations and contracts. It also offered a means to be aware of the forces that work in the relationship between men and women. Men and women are perceived as actors shaping their lives, and the structural obstacles and opportunities caused by gender system can be explored. The system is being created and recreated all the time in different levels of the society.
The gender theory and rational choice were therefore, used in this study to explain the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane Location. Rational choice theory explained how the socio-political and economic factors led to the emergence of FHH. Factors such as women’s education, political participation and employment contributed to the emergence of FHH. On the other hand, gender theory explained the gender dynamics in the society that have led to the change in relationships and roles of men and women in Kigane Location.

1.7.4 History of Female-Headed Household in the Colonial Period in Kenya

Colonialism was exploitative but more importantly, women suffered because European colonialists too came from patriarchal societies that were gender insensitive. Colonial occupation of Kenya in the second quarter of the 19th century, disrupted the socio-economic and the political organization of Kenyan societies.

Early literature on African families basically describes the changes observed in what was perceived as these families' progression towards more advanced family forms as a result of their exposure to Western civilization (Hunter, 1936; Schapera, 1940 & Phillips, 1953). In the context of these changes, however, these authors claim that the African family was disintegrating and becoming increasingly disorganized as a result of Western influence. Krige (1936), for example, cites loss of parental control over children, resulting in increased out-of-wedlock births as parents separated from their children in search of employment in the cities. Marriage procedures including the widespread lobola or bride price custom were becoming increasingly ignored by some Africans living in urban areas and White settlements (Nombulelo, 1998). Moreover,
western-style marriages were preferred. Consequently, obligations and responsibilities to each other and to the society which are enshrined in African marriage procedures were also disappearing, it was claimed (Nombulelo, 1998).

Rosa (1983) points out the transformation of the social function of the family as a result of breakdown of the family structure and traditional kinship is a major consequence of colonialism. According to her, the social control over access to women is the marriage mechanism which is the very cornerstone of the family system. The woman, as a producer constitutes the most powerful prospective means of production. By disrupting the traditional family by separation, the colonial system led to an overall instability of the local family system which was the foundation of the society.

In pre-colonial Upper Volta, Mossi women resigned themselves to unhappy marriage. But by 1950s, dissatisfied wives were said to have ran-off with migrants heading south (Skinner, 1965). Indeed, in the colonial period, many Mossi women seem to have been able to enforce new marital norms out of the conditions of labour migration: wives who accompanied their husbands to the towns of Ghana and Ivory Coast sometimes returned home either alone or with a co-wife to curtail their husbands' unpopular actions, as if they were going on strike (Schildkrout, 1978). On the other hand, among the Igbo of Nigeria, young mothers tended to stay in marriages, however, unhappy or poor, unless they were driven out (Emecheta, 1979).

In the pre-colonial period, one way for women to strengthen their position in their marital families was to function as men. Woman-to-woman marriage is an example of how a patriarchal aspect of customary law could be manipulated to the advantage of individual women in recent years. Originally, the very widespread custom of woman-
marriage enabled dead men to have descendants: a barren widow (or a widow with daughters only) could marry another woman who would cohabit with men of late husbands' lineage or age-grade to provide off-spring for the dead man. Some widows with children have been able to use woman-marriages as a way to avoid leviratic marriages (Oboler, 1980). The senior woman became the household head.

According to Snyder and Tedesse (1995), there is historical evidence that African women participated in economic production. Besides agriculture, women engaged in commercial activity locally and multi-European merchants. The merchant princes of west Africa remained legends for their wealth and overseas trade. Hence, in some traditional African societies, there was some balance of economic responsibility between men and women when gender parity almost existed.

According to Ifi Amadiume, the title Ogbuefi was shared by men and women who had killed a cow for the goddess. Barren women, rich widows, wives of rich men and successful female farmers and traders, these are the so called “female husbands”. In indigenous Nnobi society, the “male” roles were played by “female husbands” and women acted as female heads. Among the Igbo, the word wife meant a person who belonged to the home of a master wife, or female denoted one in a subordinate position. It was possible for men to be addressed by the term “wife” as they were in service relationship to a master, Hence, women took master or husband roles and men in wifely domestic roles (Amadiume, 1987).

Male labour migration during colonial period, placed an intolerable burden on the African women left behind. They had to increase (or at least maintain) agricultural production, feeding themselves and their children, and sometimes their absent sons and
spouses, while providing cash crops for export or market sale. Between food and cash-crop production, the amount of time women spent cultivating increased dramatically, and they still had to perform their traditional tasks of child care and cooking (Skinner, 1965). Indeed, the only area in which women’s workload did not increase was day-in, day-out role of wife. In Botswana by the early 1930s, for example, it was exceedingly rare for married couples to live together for more than two months at a time (Schapera, 1971). Followed in East and Central Africa, 40 to 60 per cent of all males were away from their villages at any given time (Richard, 1939; Harris, 1959). In Upper Volta, about 20 per cent of Mossi male migrants did not return home to join their families for the rainy season planting in the 1950s (Skinner, 1965:68).

To build the apparatus of the new colonial states and produce exports, African colonies at the turn of the century had enormous labour requirements. In their effort to force able-bodied African males to leave their homes and go to work in European-owned enterprises, taxation was introduced in most of Africa by 1903. In the course of the colonial period, men and later women had to work in order to get the money to pay taxes. The first tax was usually levied on huts, which amounted to a tax on wives, so that polygamous men had the greatest tax burdens (Arrighi, 1970). Some men sent their sons into wage labour to pay the family’s tax obligations (EAP, 1912).

The colonial government felt that Kenya had large reservoir for labour. Various factors compelled them to take employment outside their homes for example, land scarcity in the African reserves, search for higher living standards, preference to work in the industries, need to pay taxes and bride wealth and taste for African goods. Male labour migration left considerable number of women without male company; therefore, women
got involved in hoeing and trade. Workload of women increased both in land under cultivation and due to absence of men on wage labour contract (Fadiman, 2012).

The 1901 hut tax ordinance empowered the commissioner to impose tax in all huts used as dwelling places. Men's mobility for work increased affecting the families. Many women entered a new world with a number staying without husbands who left to work in the capitalist world to raise the required tax. The burden of household production fell solely on women as they were left taking male roles in the homestead (Okuro, 2002). Thus, the development of labour-intensive plantation in Agriculture in the whitelands after 1908 as well as the need for male soldiers and potters in the world war 1 increased the male labour migration from all parts of Kenya. As from 1914, large numbers of men worked in many parts of the protectorate (Okuro, 2002).

During the colonial period in western Kenya among the Luhya, evidence indicates that previously unmarried women with independent thoughts and income used their wealth to marry wives and found lineages, either in their own names or those of fathers or brothers (Hay, 1982). But it was the palm-oil producing areas of West Africa that women could own palm trees, wealthy women often married wives to acquire a cheap labourforce whose heirs they could also control in pre-colonial time (Bohannon, 1968). Where women could not own palm trees, such as among the Igbo, they traded, and married women traders sometimes married “one wife after another” as their businesses expanded and they needed more help (Uchendu, 1965). In both these cases, we see women using customary law to bond a small labour force to their own enterprises, and to strengthen and underwrite their otherwise tenuous position as household head and employer.
The practice of polygamy in Kenya and in Africa in general in the colonial period offended the very strict western Christian views about monogamy. All efforts were made to eradicate it. They demanded "the registration of the first marriage not only to teach the indigenous communities that the administration did not recognize polygamous contracts as valid according to the protectorate laws, but also to mean protection of the first wife in any of the protectorate courts and a dissolution of such marriage could only be obtained by a man in a legal divorce (Fadiman, 2012). Hence, wives in polygamous families were sent away with children by their husbands who wanted to get baptized and become Christians (Nzioki, 1986). The wives kicked out of their polygamous arrangements together with their children became heads of their households. This was a common occurrence among the Meru.

In pre-colonial times, Kikuyu women had their own gardens which fed their families; men had their own gardens in which women worked, the produce from which was either stored or sold. Kikuyu men were said to have made all major decisions about socio-political and legal affairs, and all decisions about what to plant in their own gardens (Kenyatta, 1937; Kershaw, 1975). Hence, women were burdened by working in their husbands' plots and were considered irrelevant in the public domain. The belief among the Meru was that the woman was to be controlled and contained in the private sphere as the customs required.

Almost one hundred years later, the situation for the poorest families in Kiambu was reversed. Among the landless (half of whom had the insecure use of some land from their clans) and the virtually landless, food crops were generally all that families grew, and they preferred to cultivate those foodstuffs that required the least labour, so that the
wife could work for wages whenever possible. Women’s wage was used to purchase additional staples. The men worked, but in unskilled jobs with very poor pay: men earned enough to pay their taxes, and to maintain themselves in Nairobi with weekly contributions from their wives. It is the women’s work that ‘makes the difference between abject poverty and subsistence. The husband’s absence means that the poor Kiambu wife is the major decision-maker on virtually all matters. Indeed, the landless Kikuyu husband’s burdens have not lightened with the passing of traditional period, his decision-making role has been reduced, and his dependency on his wife has increased. Thus, women have obtained new power, which some husbands resent and regard as illegitimate, since it originates in their poverty, (Kenyatta, 1937; Kershaw 1975). This study therefore sought to assess the reasons for the emergence and prevalence of female headed households in the colonial period in Kenya.

1.7.5 History of Female-headed Households after Independence

In the post colonial-period, it was believed that almost half of all the poor in the US. lived in families headed by women in various stages of the life-cycle. According to one study on the subject, in 1984, 16 per cent of all white families, 25 per cent of all families of Hispanic origin, and 53 per cent of all black families, were headed by women (Gimenez, 1987). According to Reddock (1984), in the Caribbean, more than a third of all households were not headed by male bread winners. Research has shown that the number of households headed and economically supported by women is increasing, particularly in the rural areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Youssef & Hetler, 1984). Men have either migrated to the cities in search of wage work or gone
into more remunerative areas leaving their women and families behind. It is well-known that men who have migrated to the cities or to other countries not only are away sometimes for 20 years, Obbo (1980), but that they often partly or totally give up their responsibilities as providers for the family. Particularly in Africa, the woman has become the major if not the sole supporter of rural households (Mali, Ghana, Brazil, Togo, Liberia, Nigeria and parts of Uganda) (Carr, 1980).

By the late 1980s, it was estimated that of the world’s total households, female-headed ones constituted 17-28 per cent (Todaro, 1989). In countries such as the UK, Norway, Sweden, Germany, the Czech Republic, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, Chile, and Hong Kong, female-headed households represent 22-32 per cent of the total (United Nations, 1995). In the 1990s, the average proportion of FHHs was highest, at 35 per cent, in the Caribbean, where consensual and visiting unions are prevalent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, FHH were almost 10 per cent in Niger and Burkina Faso to 46 percent in Botswana and 40 per cent in Swaziland (United Nations, 1995a). In Ethiopia, estimates of FHHs in urban areas ranged from 35 to 50 percent (World Bank, 1992). According to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the tendency towards an increase in FHHs was very well-marked during the 1980s in urban areas in Latin America, and “it is highly probable that the trend was maintained throughout the 1990s. Between 1980 and 1992, of total urban households, the percentage headed by women increased in 10 out of 12 countries” (ECLAC, 1995). In 1992, the proportion of all urban households headed by women ranged from 17 per cent in Mexico to 28 per cent in Honduras.
According to Kelly (1983), Mexican men migrated to the Mexican and United States border in the early 1980s in search of jobs. As a result, women and children remained in Mexico while men migrated into the United States to work. Over time, many men failed to return to their families left behind leaving an increase in female-headed households in towns. In this case, this fostered the emergence of female-headed households among a population that previously lacked this form of family organization. This is an indication of the changes in the family headship which had started taking root in different parts of the world. Although Kelly’s work was on Mexican women, it was the case with Kenya where male labourers were required to migrate in search of jobs in urban centers and settlers farms. This was the same case in Kigane.

1.7.6 Female-headed Households in Africa

The marked presence in towns of husbandless women, living singly or without legal husbands and in economic independence is one characteristic of African women in towns today. It is marital instability which pushes these women into the city. This is associated with wives who desert their husbands in their desire to be free, wish to feel emancipated which is shared by many women both illiterate and literate. They were able to decide their own destiny and be independent of men all together (Little, 1973).
Table 1.1: African Countries With Sustantial Households Headed by Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d Ivoire</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>1972/72</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic year book (1987)
According to Rimita (1988), oral traditions told by the descendants of Kikuyu describe the local social order as having emerged from the taming of reproductive and sexual issues. One legend recounted in twentieth-century Meru speaks of a distant time when women chose their husbands, children belonged to mothers, bride wealth did not exist and incest and divorce were rampant. This state of affairs, according to the legend, was only corrected through the introduction of female initiation and bride-wealth, practices that disciplined women, made husbands household heads, and strengthened marriage as an exchange between families (Rimita, 1988). From this legend, the origin of the Meru contemporary society was the overthrow of the matriarchal authority by the patriarchal order. Traditionally, the Meru women remained loyal, respectful to their husbands and all the males in their lineages. Women upheld marriage values and would not divorce especially after the dowry was paid and had children. Female-headed households were unknown and where widowhood occurred, arrangements were made to inherit the wife.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The researcher used the design to describe the nature and development of female-headed household in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in Kigane Location. Descriptive survey design was concerned with finding out who, what, where and how which was the concern of this study. Descriptive design was used to describe the phenomenon of female-headed households in depth in a natural setting from the point of view of the respondents. This
design, therefore, was appropriate as the researcher was at a position to historically describe female-headed households in Kigane Location, Meru County.

1.8.2 Site of the Study

Meru County is one of the forty-seven counties of Kenya. The County borders Isiolo County to the North and North East, Tharaka County to the South West, Nyeri County to the South West and Laikipia County to the West. Meru is an agricultural county but also a business and educational centre for Eastern and North Eastern parts of Kenya. The major agricultural crops grown include coffee, tea, French beans, timber and miraa (http://themerucounty.com/). Meru County has a total population of 1,356,301; 320,616 households and covers an area of 6,936.9 Km². The population density is 195.5/ Km² (http://themerucounty.com/). Kigane location is on latitude S 0° 4' 0 and longitude E 37° 39' 0. It is occupied by a section of the Meru and immigrants from neighbouring locations and sub-counties such as Nkuene Location, Meru Central and Maara sub-counties. The major economic activities of the location are banana growing, tea, coffee, dairy farming, horticulture and small scale business. The maps of the study area are as presented below.
Source: KNBS (2009)
1.8.3 Study Population

The target population were male and female household heads, married women and the relevant government officials (chief and assistant chiefs) in the location of the study.

1.8.4 Sampling Technique and Sample size

Purposive sampling technique was used to facilitate snowballing for female-headed households. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample male-headed households and married women. The main advantage of this sampling technique was that it gave equal chances for male-headed households and married women to participate in the study. This was based on the fact that male-headed households and married women are many in the location of the study. The study also targeted chief and assistant chiefs because they work at the grassroots and hence, had much information on the occurrences of divorce and spousal deaths in the location.

A total of 123 respondents were sampled ranging from 18 years, which is constitutionally taken as the year of adulthood to 85 years. The respondents constituted 40 male heads, 40 married women, 40 female heads and 3 government officials (a chief and the two assistant chief). Lindsey (1985) observes that the minimum permissible sample size is 30 sample units and argues that the error in basing a conclusion about an entire population on a small sample is likely to be very small. The researcher used Lindsey’s observational idea in sampling male and female-headed households and married women in Kigane Location. Sampling was done as presented in Table 1.2.
Table 1.2: Sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Sample per Sub-location</th>
<th>Number of Sub-locations</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married Women</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed households</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-headed households</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Chief</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Chief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.8.5 Research Instruments

Primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data was collected from the archives, oral interviews, questionnaires and focused group discussions while Secondary data were collected from books, journals, thesis among others. In the selection of the instruments to be used in the study, the researcher used questionnaires due to their characteristic that they can be used to capture large amounts of qualitative data. On the other hand, open-ended interview schedules were used due to their characteristic that they can be used to capture information that would otherwise not be captured using questionnaires. The weakness of the primary and secondary sources regarding their unreliability, level of bias and subjectivity was taken into account. Through corroboration, such biases were eliminated.
Questionnaire

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from male and female heads of the sampled households. Both open-ended and closed-ended question guides were used to collect data for the study. The questionnaires were divided into different sections whereby each section addressed questions to achieve each of the specific objectives of the study.

Key Informant Interviews

The researcher used interview schedules to collect data from the area chief and the two assistant chiefs. Interview schedules were used based on the fact that more people are willing to communicate orally than in writing, this provided data more readily in an interview. Two elderly men and one elderly woman (80 years and above) who lived through the colonial period were also interviewed as key informants.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were held with married women from Kigane Location. Married women were part of the respondents to get balanced data having developed questionnaire tool for unmarried women. The preparation of the FGD involved the formulation of questions relevant to the topic. Members were selected on the basis of common characteristics related to the research topic. The group size consisted of between 6 - 12 married women because with a small group each member has a greater opportunity to contribute. The researcher chose a room for the discussion that was comfortable and offered privacy so that few interruptions occurred. In the
implementation of the FGD the members were introduced to one another, were informed of the purpose of the study and the planned use for the data collected. Thereafter, the ground rules were set for the session that no derogatory statements about members and all answers were valied and legitimate. The researcher encouraged respondents but remained neutral. The discussions addressed: impact of colonial policies on female-headed households, socio-political and economic factors contributing to the emergence of female-headed households. Focus group discussion guide was used to collect the data.

1.8.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter from Kenyatta University which was used to access research permit from National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher made appointments with the area chief and the two assistant chiefs to notify and request for permission to carry out the study in their location. The researcher together with the two research assistants administered the instruments personally to the respondents who were given ample time to respond to the questions. This was to ensure achievement of a good return ratio and gave the respondents a chance to seek clarification on items which might have proved difficult to answer.

1.8.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Primary data from the field was transcribed into English where vernacular had been used. Data was edited to correct glaring errors and ensure all gaps were filled. Coding was then done to translate question responses into specific categories. Coding was
expected to organize and reduce research data into manageable summaries. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data on the influence of education, cultural factors, employment, access to land and property, economic hardships and advocacy institutions on female headed households. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and thereafter a narrative was done using historical method. The data was presented in three chapters.

1.8.8 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

The researcher had to arrange with the government officials to confirm the dates for data collection and got the consent to carry out the research in their areas of administration. This was to eliminate conflicts which might have arisen from the members of the location especially in the female-headed families.

The researcher sought for research permit from NACOSTI which was used for data collection. This clarified the aim of the research and the nature of the study thus improving cooperation from the respondents during data collection. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, the researcher also ensured confidentiality of the information given by the respondents. This was done by using the information without mentioning of the specific names of the people from whom the data was collected.
CHAPTER TWO

THE AMERU IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

2.0 Introduction

This chapter begins by looking at the historical background of the Ameru in the pre-colonial times. It deals with oral tradition regarding the origin of the Ameru, their socio-political and economic organization and finally investigated the importance of family and marriage among the Ameru community.

2.1 Historical Background of the Ameru

There is no single explanation of the origin of the Ameru people, this section attempted to give the various oral traditions argued out by various scholars, such as Imanyara (1992), Nyaga (1997) and Fadiman (1982). According to Nyaga (1997), the Ameru lived on an island (Gichigiira) before they were conquered by the Nguuntune. They put it that across the Island, they could see Buganda. It is difficult to explain why they were neighbours to Buganda and not any other related people. According to Faldiman who pursued this tradition, he concludes that the Ameru came from the Manda Island in the Indian Ocean (Nyaga, 1997).

Imanyara claims that the Ameru originated from “Urio” which literally means “North”. According to this tradition, there was no way the ancestors of the Meru could have confused direction since from time immemorial, they were guided by the sun in determining direction. They say the sun moves in East-West direction, and facing the
West, the direction of the setting sun, the right hand (Njara ya urio) would always point to the North (Imanyara, 1992).

A popular reminiscence of the Ameru past history is the Mbwa tradition (Imanyara, 1992). According to this oral tradition, they were conquered by the “nguuntune” (The Red people). Here, the Ameru were put into captivity and their freedom was infringed, dehumanized and humiliated. The Reds was a term applied to the people of semetic origin.

Koomenjue, who later became a prophet, assisted by Kauro-bechau, organized a council of wise men who led them from bondage in Mbwa which according to the oral tradition appears to have been located in Yemen. The two led the Ameru to the shores of Irietuune (red sea) where Koomenjue struck the waters of the sea with a magic rod and created a corridor of dry land for them to pass. The first group to pass did so at night and were called Njiru meaning “blacks” because of the lack of light at the time they crossed the sea. The second group crossed the sea at dawn and were given the name Ntuune meaning “reds” because they crossed at dawn when the colour of the sun was red. The third group crossed the sea after dawn when the sun was bright and were called Njeru meaning “white”. After all the people crossed the sea, Koomenjue restored the waters of the red sea as they were before by using the same mystical rod (Nyaga, 1997).

As they migrated they sang

*Kinaibuku gietu*          *Our land boisterious heroic ancestors*

*Kiari iriene*              *Was at the sea*
From this oral tradition, the Meru people claimed to have descended from a patriarch called *Mukunga* and Matriarch called *Ngaa* (Imanyara, 1992).

**Meroe as Origin of the Meru**

This oral tradition traces the origin of Ameru from the Nile basin. This is because the Meru and the Cushites share some cultural characteristics such as: cyclic age-grade system, they did not eat fish prior to the coming of the Europeans, they drunk blood from necks of animals after piercing them with arrows and that they circumcise both males and females.

**A popular song sung by the Meru goes:**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ameru twaumauu} & \quad \text{Meru people where have we come from} \\
\text{Meru} & \quad \text{Meroe} \\
\text{Meru} & \quad \text{Meroe}
\end{align*}
\]

According to Imanyara (1992), on the balance of probability, it can be deduced that the Ameru are some of the Bantu descendants of the ancient Africa’s Merotic Kingdom.

---

*Kubu ana ibeere*  
*Noisily in rattles*

*O Mirurine*  
*To Chlorophora excels forest*

*Kubu ana ibeere*  
*Noisily in rattles*

*O Mirurine*  
*To Chlorophora excels forest*
which existed over 2000 years ago and which was located in the middle Nile basin in Sudan.

In summary, each of these traditions has a different role to play in tracing the Ameru history. The Mbwa and the Island bring a picture of the hostile environment the Meru people were subjected to. The red people were hostile to the blacks hence, there was no racial harmony. The North tradition also indicates the North was not good enough for continued settlement. Therefore, the Meru had to migrate to their present areas of occupation. The widely accepted version regarding the origin of Ameru is that their ancestors fled from Mbwa (somewhere on the North of the Kenyan coast).

In all these myths the role of women is not highlighted. The leaders of Ameru from their origin were male such as Koomenjue and Kauro-Bechau. Women are not conspicuous in the stories of origin. This demonstrates the patriarchal nature of the Ameru from the very start that women could not lead and were not conspicuous.

2.2 Political Organization of the Ameru in the Pre-Colonial Period

By 1900, all the Ameru people had completed their migrations from their original homelands along the Swahili coast and settled along the lower ridges of Mt. Kenya forest. Over time, they developed elaborate conventions to deal with the problems of war and peace. The basic unit of the society was mwiriga (clans) which was composed of a number of related families (Fadiman, 1982).

Between 1896 and 1906, the final decade before colonial conquest, the oldest living of Ameru, recall the era as a time when their respective people were not formed into a
single Meru nation, but had organized into smaller units known as Miiriga (singular Mwiriga). The Mwiriga (clan), was composed of several biologically related families (Fadiman, 1979).

According to Nyaga (1997), the Ameru had no clans in Mbwa. The clans started being formed from the three men who sacrificed themselves when they were preparing to cross the red sea (Irietune). The first person to offer himself to be sacrificed was called Muntu-Waita or Gaita; descendant of the clan of Antubaita meaning a person who sacrificed himself for the good of others. The second person who sacrificed himself was called Amuthetu meaning the soil. He, therefore, formed the Amuthetu clan. The third clan was called Akiuna, Nyaga, (1997).

These three clans were highly reputed in the history of the Ameru. Other clans sprang from the three namely, Amuga, Agachiu, Amukua, antuathanju, Antueria and Abondigi. It is important to note that all these are male names. When the Meru crossed the red sea, the above clans were called by other names. The Antubaita and Amuthetu were called Njiru (black because they crossed the water while still in the dark) and Antuathanju were called Ntuune (reds because they crossed the water in the morning when the east was red). The clan of Njiru and Ntuune are considered one clan because they crossed the water at night. The clan of Akiuna is called Nthea because they reached the other side of the water when the sky was glittering with stars, Nyaga, (1997). They were formed generally to provide common defense.

The Mwiriga also bound its members by managing their lands. When necessary, individual Mwiriga temporarily combined to create larger social units. Such alliances
were usually for war purposes. When this happened, it brought the feelings of trans-
Mwiriga identity. Hence, members of the Trans-Mwiriga defined themselves as
members of a region. Two or more regions combined to form what we have today as the
major Meru sub-division such as Imenti, Mwimbi, Igoji, Tigania and Chuka (Imanyara,

To ensure that the obligation of the members of the Mwiriga was upheld, a system of
secular council called Kiama, (plural Biama) was developed, intended to operate at each
level of the Ameru life-cycle. This permitted males of every age-set to regulate their
own affairs. A number of persons, who demonstrated qualities of leadership among
their age mates, were put into positions of spokesmen (Agambi, singular Mugambi) for
matters that concerned them all. At some point charismatic Agambi joined Kiama,
known generally as Njuri meaning “council of the few”. The njuri was made of persons
considered spokesmen from the larger group’s inter-Mwiriga (Fadiman, 1982).

There is very little material on the history of Njuru Ncheke. Even those who have
attempted have not done much generally because it is a top secret organization where
non-members are kept a far and members are obligated to maintain secrecy.
Membership to this institution was influenced by marital status and age. The members
were considered wise, rich and more influential of the community. Despite the fact that
one could find a poor man in Njuru Ncheke, it was impossible to find a wealthy fool in
it.

Culture forbid women from sitting in the Njuri Ncheke meetings. They were not entitled
to make important decisions even those that concerned them. The patriarchal nature of
the Ameru society that placed men at a higher level dictated that women were not wise
and intelligent enough to make decisions outside their door steps. Possibly this was because women were regarded as outsiders as the Ameru marriage was exogenous. It was therefore feared that women would reveal the clan secrets to their enemies, including the neighbouring communities such as the Akamba and the Agikuyu. The broad and traditional role of women among the Ameru was to be a companion to her husband, a mother to her children and a home maker. Patriarchy dictated that men were to lead, protect and provide for the family. Women were to be intuitive, uncompeetactive and the nurturer. Throughout the years, society defined these roles to the point that they became synanimous with the sexes. Within this framework of patriarchal understanding, male leadership at all levels was seen as the only legitimate leadership for protection of women.

The institution that was empowered as the administrative instrument for each Mwiriga was, therefore, the Kiama and ultimately Njuri. Biama and the Njuri served their members primarily as centres of reconciliation, solving conflicts of human interest as they occurred. Decisions were, however, based on ancestral precedents, including not only the original traditions of the Mwiriga concerned, but interpretations reached by earlier generations of Kiama elders over similar conflicts (Nyaga, 1997). Hence, the ultimate function of Kiama was to determine whether conflicts arising among the living had caused those involved to depart from patterns of behaviour laid down by the ancestors.

A second council, the Kiama of warriors was subordinate to Njuri ncheke and was mandated to fight or keep society's secure from an aggressor. Members of the warriors' kiama lived in Gaaru (a traditional Ameru hut which served as a combination of
military barrack and training ground). Ameru military actions were waged for a single purpose, to capture goats, sheep and primarily cattle. The warriors were valued from the many cows they brought home. Fighting for land or its wealth was unheard of (Fediman 1982). Warriors among the Ameru were basically men, a domain of the male gender.

Women Councils Among the Meru

As previously indicated, women were not allowed in the Njuri ncheke. Consequently, they formed their own women’s council (kiama gia aka). The main duty of the women’s council was to instil societal moral values to the newly initiated girls in particular and the Ameru women in general. The council taught them respect, resilience, deference, and good manners that governed the relationship between husbands and wives, in-laws and age grades. They taught them sexual relationships, their duties and obligations to their husbands and in-laws especially the mother-in-law and how to interact with people of different age-grades (Rimita, 1988). The council also presided over female initiation. They took the initiates to the river or stream, surrounded them during the cutting and cared for them afterwards. Julia M’Mugambi who was circumcised in the 1940s remembered the song they sang as they took initiates to their seclusion hut which went as;

*Circumcised girl, come, we go home.*

You have come from uncircumcised girls, and now return to women.

Circumcised girl, come, we go home to be eating goat and no one will bother you.

You will not enter that home of your parents.

Let the parents be told ‘it has been removed’ (the clitoris).

Let her enter and get married (Nyaga, 1997).
Through such songs, women's council situated initiates as a second birth through which initiates were declared complete women of the tribe and marriageable. Among the Ameru, the uncircumcised girls (*Mukenye*) were considered unclean and unfit for marriage, the women council thus among the Ameru, ensured that girls at puberty were taken through this significant ritual. This demonstrated how important circumcision was in a man and woman's life because no man could marry a girl who had not passed through this rite of passage. In addition to transforming girls into women through initiation, women's council raised the social standing of the initiates' mother by admitting them to the council after the initiation of their first born daughter (Lynn, 2003).

The councils were responsible for the fertility of both the land and women. For instance, when the rains were late, the women's councils slaughtered a sheep and performed rituals beseeching the ancestors to release the rains (KNA/7, 1940). The council disciplined women who misbehaved and punished those that obstructed their fertility. For example, a man who beat up his wife for attending a women's council meeting, or a woman who chose to cultivate instead of attending the council activities would be cursed until he or she paid a bull to the council (Imanyara, 1992).

### 2.3 Economic Activities of the Ameru People in the Pre-Colonial Period

The Ameru institutions before the British conquest in 1908 were patrilineal. There was varying scope that provided for organizational framework for all social behaviour, and all functions were vested in kingship roles. The homestead of a single patriarch was
composed of a man, his wife/wives and children. The residence of this homestead constituted a larger and autonomous unit of economic production where the women did much of cultivation, the young men were herding cattle, sheep and goats while the elderly men did the supervision and decision-making at all levels. The division of labour was determined by age and gender. The Ameru settled along narrow pockets of agriculturally desirable soil. They did intensive cultivation of millet, bananas, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, peas while those living near the streams grew arrowroots. In the rainy period, men had no formal agricultural obligations while women were occupied in planting and weeding (Fadiman, 1982).

Crop production and livestock keeping were the main economic activities of the Ameru. Each household member had gender-specific roles to perform in the production and distribution process. Men; in building houses, the heavy work of cutting timber and putting up the frames fell on them. Women cut and carried grass for thatching. They also plastered the house with clay or cowdung. Men built fences around the homestead or gardens and also cattle pens.

The adult men were also night watchmen who protected the crops against wild animals. The entire housework was the women’s domain. They cooked, fetched water from the rivers, washed utensils, fetched firewood from the forests or bushes. According to the tribal customs which governed the division of labour, no man could indulge in these feminine chores. If he did, he was scandalized by women and it would be difficult for him to get a girl to marry.

So among the Ameru, the parents and the community at large instilled the gender expectations. In most cases, girls were brought up to embrace household duties such as
house care, fetching water and firewood while boys and men were treated as superior entities. Boys were taught on the other hand to embrace masculine duties such as hunting, sitting with elderly men to learn leadership, wisdom and to protect their families (Mbithi, 1989).

Men cleared the bushes, cut down the big trees and broke the virgin land with digging stick and hoes. Women prepared the land for sowing. Men planted yams and sugarcane for beer, tobacco while women planted maize, black beans (Nchabi), arrowroots, bananas, millet and sweet potatoes mostly for home consumption. Women farmed land for food for consumption and at the same time worked on the men’s plot. Harvest from the men’s plots was mostly for sale.

The portions of the Ameru land that had Kikuyu grass was used for grazing. The Ameru military raided other regions for livestock. The warriors were valued for how many cows, goats and sheep they brought home. Fighting for land or its wealth among the Ameru was unheard off.

To the Ameru, cattle were merely a display of wealth. For a man to be called rich, he must have owned a number of cattle. Cattle also provided milk for their diet, hides were used for beddings, making sandals, straps for tying and carrying firewood and other loads by women. Cows were never killed for food except in famine but oxen and bulls were slaughtered for festivals. Cows gave the owners prestige in the community. Alkaline deposits on the floors of certain swamps created salty water (Mwonyo) for survival of their cattle. Livestock was perceived as economic wealth in that large
numbers of cattle provided security against famine (Fadiman, 2012). No woman could own cows neither slaughter one in the traditional Ameru society.

In Meru, sheep and goats were regarded as the standard currency. To them, a man with many of these felt no less than a man with a large bank balance. They were used for religious sacrifices and purification. They provided meat and skins that were used to make clothes. The Ameru participated in the local trade, crafts and repairs. Most of these activities were restricted to women, although men were responsible for leatherwork and ironworking. This trade was strictly local with women travelling no further than their own or adjacent village markets. The goats formed the principal unit of economic exchange by means of which other animals or objects could be exchanged. The Ameru also traded with the Maasai. The Maasai who are not agriculturalists and regarded cultivation of soil as a crime against their gods, depended on the Ameru and the Agikuyu for their supply of food (Fadiman 1979). The Ameru women more often than not, surrendered their income from the trading activities because men were considered to be the keepers of the family wealth.

Hunting and honey collection were extensively practised by the Ameru. The hunters were called *(aathi ba nyomoo)*, (meat hunters) while the honey collectors were *(aathi ba uuki)*- honey hunters. Most of the time males practising this actively spent much time away in the forests. This meant that women were left in charge of the households while men were hunting. The *Aathi* possibly adopted hunting from the *Ogiek* hunting communities which they came in contact with when they first entered the Mt. Kenya forest. The Ameru were iron workers *(atuuri)*. They made spears, arrows, bows and
pangas and jembes for cultivation (Nyaga, 1997). Blacksmithing, hunting and honey collection was purely the docket of men.

In the pottery industry, all work, from the start to finish, was done by women. Men were barred by the traditions from the moulding place. The presence of men in such places was said to be bad omen on the articles and caused the pots to break to spoil the work of women. Just like the man had supreme authority in blacksmithery, so did the woman in pottery industry. Pots were needed to be used by the family for cooking, storage of water and grains and for marketing (trade). Basket making was again done by women, but there was no restriction on men handling the materials or baskets while they were being made. Men collected the materials and prepared them ready to be used by his female relatives or friends. Basket making was generally a spare job done during conversations or travelling. Baskets were used for grain storage. Apart from baskets (kitheti), large trays (gitaru) were sewn and it was used for winnowing and spreading grains in the sun to dry. Customarily, the work fell on men, very rarely a woman did it and when she did it, it was an indication that she was a widow heading her household and she has no male relatives to support her (Imanyara, 1992).

2.4 Social Organization of the Ameru

Among the Ameru, conflicts whether between two living persons or a man and his ancestors, inevitably produced feelings of disharmony. This disharmony was believed in turn to be inevitably followed by natural calamity usually taking the form of death, illness and accidents. When presented with this problem, the actual victims would seek the help of a specialist in the supernatural realm who could try to avert the inevitable
retribution by rituals permitting him to foresee the future. The specialist in these practices was the prophet. In the Biblical sense, prophet is defined as one who God has selected to communicate his words to the entire people. To the Ameru, the prophet was called (*aroria* singular *muroria*). They were visited by either individuals or representatives of the entire group for consultations regarding possible problems in matters of harvest, war and travel. This was hereditary in that the required knowledge was held within comparatively few families and transmitted from father to sons not from mothers to daughters (Fadiman, 1982).

In certain circumstances, special physical ailments, livestock sickness, failure to conceive, the death of a child were universally accepted as supernaturally imposed. The afflicted person would suspect he had been ritually poisoned by the *murogi*, (plural *aroji*) or cursed. To trace the curse, the *murogi* would mix his materials *mithega* or *muthega* (poison or magic) to declaim the desired curse and chanting

[tui... tui... tui... tui] (Imanyara, 1992). However, it appears that the concept of *urogi* was an essential element of the Ameru world view, identical to the role played by "evil" within the Christian heritage. Western societies that lacked scientific explanations for the origins of both physical calamities and anti-social behaviour tended to attribute them to the devil.

On the same breath, in the pre-colonial Ameru society, lacking explanations for the same problems projected the cause to *murogi* (Fadiman, 1982).

The Ameru believed in a supernatural being that was capable of changing human existence. They called him *Ngai* or *Murungu*. He was envisioned as a separate, distant entity, living either in the sky or on top of Mt. Kenya. If offended, he would withhold
his blessings. He was considered to be the creator and upholder of a framework within which humanity operated. The Ameru did not worship other Gods thus; they were a monotheistic society whose religious approach was theosophical (Imanyara, 1992).

Religion among the Ameru did not have sacred scriptures as the Christian Bible which is the sacred book nor special place set aside for teaching people about God. We learn the religion of the Ameru through rituals, songs, ceremonies, burials and feasts. They had enough belief in God, the giver of life, physical health, rains, warriors and livestock. He was also the creator and protector whom they could not live without. Only men sacrificed through slaughtering of the goats to appease spirits of their living dead so that they could stay in the spirit world and leave the living in peace. They prayed, sacrificed and performed their rituals on sacred grooves, hills and trees. The religious rituals and sacrifices were conducted by men only and the Ameru God was a “he” not a “she” (Nyaga, 1997). This demonstrated the patriarchal nature of the Ameru society where they had a God and not a Goddess.

Livestock was valued in religious sense, it was a means to maintain contacts between the living Ameru and the dead. To appease the ancestral spirits, for their transgression, they sacrificed their livestock to harmonize their relationship with the dead. Livestock was also necessary to pay the bride price. No marriage would take place without transferring appropriate numbers of livestock from the bridegroom to the bride’s family.

The Ameru practised circumcision of both boys and girls. The uncircumcised boy ndinguri had the foreskin of his penis trimmed. This marked the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. The circumcision ceremonies were marked by dances (kirarire) and allulations presented below;
It has landed nkabune

The knife, oh candidate

A leopard has entered the home

It has landed at Nkabune

What will it be removed with

It has landed at Nkabune

It will only have to eat a goat

It has landed at Nkabune

Has reached Tungi,

And when you hear Tungi

It has landed at Nkabune

Son of Ntoriara

It has landed at Nkabune

Your father did not cry

It has landed at Nkabune

Yes boy enter the bush

I will provoke a leopard for you
Ii chokia mungi-o-M'ngutari  
Take back M'ngutari's cap

Ii mwiji tonya kitheka  
Yes boy enter the bush

Ii wanthekaira  
You laughed at me

Maego-a-kwora  
Now your teeth are rotten

Ii mwiji tonya kitheka  
Yes boy enter the bush

Ii wanthekaira  
You laughed at me

Maego-a-kwora  
Now your teeth are rotten

Ntaa nirwa tungi  
Circumcised at Tungi

Nkinyite Itumbi  
Stepping on Itumbi

Ui gachui mwiji  
Oh knife candidate

Initiates of the same time were put under the same nthuki (age-group) (Nyaga, 1997). Circumcision was a definite stage when one became a complete member of the community to be accorded social rights and obligations. For the Ameru, circumcision had a very deep meaning. Traditional circumcision was supposed to transform one into a respectable and mature person that could marry and perform societal responsibilities. Another aspect of traditional circumcision was to get people closer to one another. Initiates of the same time formed the same age group which was closely knit. They referred to one another as Bamo or Bamong'o. The initiates were put into seclusion where the circumcision father taught them the values and norms of circumcision (Imanyara, 1992).
Upon puberty, girls were circumcised. Female circumcision was practised by the Ameru and every community in central Kenya. The uncircumcised girl was referred to as *mukeny* and the circumcised was called *ngutu*. It usually consisted of removing a woman’s clitoris at puberty.

Female circumcision was the most important maturity rite for the girls. But before this, there was the boring of ears and tattooing rites (*gukuura nkuuro*). This normally happened after friendship had been established between the girl’s family and that of her future husband.

It was a merry-making ceremony and every woman attending brought food and the most popular was the millet gruel.

Her fiancé looked for a tattoo expert to perform this rite. The significance of this was to impose a tattoo to ensure that the girl was protected from courtship by other men. So it was like a mark of his property.

The tattooing was done with four horizontal linear cuts made below the umbilical cord. Tattoos were done using a long needle and a sharp knife. The stomach skin was pierced and lifted using a needle and cut off with a knife. When this was happening, the congregation sang.

\[
\begin{align*}
Wona mukuuri & \quad \text{When you see the surgeon} \\
Ii ugakira & \quad \text{Don’t fear} \\
Wona kabanga & \quad \text{When you see the surgeon} \\
Ii ugakira & \quad \text{Don’t fear}
\end{align*}
\]
Just before the female circumcision, the girl travelled from village to village to say good bye to her relatives and to collect stock of ornaments (mathaga). She also gave presents to little children and invited various people to the merry making occasion at her home. During her travelling she was fully decorated with beautiful feathers, beads, earings, bangles and wire bands round her neck and legs. She was required by custom to invite them by a means of a song called *Rwimbo Rwa Nthamari* meaning beautiful girls song (Nyaga 1997).

**Rwimbo Rwa Nthamari**

*When she met elders she sang:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Shona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bantugi ntonga,</td>
<td>Bantugi touch me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthoni ikuthira,</td>
<td>Shyness is over,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngatuma ingi,</td>
<td><em>I will weave another,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwinamire nja,</td>
<td><em>Pass through our home,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukunde mwere,</td>
<td><em>And you drink millet gruel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwone kiria, Abwitirite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the song, the elders would know that the girl had been brought up well by her parents or her guardians and was morally clean.

When she met the elderly ladies she sang:

* Kabari ngino Mukenye,                       * Kabari, the girl's mother,  |
* Nthoni ikuthira,                             * Shyness is over            |
Ngatuma ingi,  
Bwinamire nja,  
Bukanyue mwere,  

*I will weave another,*  
*Pass through our home,*  
*And drink millet gruel.*

The elderly ladies reciprocated by ululating to the girls, she sang:

Mwarocia,  
Inandi ndaindukira,  
Tigatigueni na nduna chia nja,  
Buria bwatigua ni muko-tinda-ku?  
Kwina naku nonga nkinira mwaana,  
Kana ngikethia eekuru na kuuga  
"muka –tagwinya"

*Mwarocia, it's now, am preparing myself to leave  
Remain behind with infants of the family  
All what is left for me to ask is “how has been the day woman?  
I will sing for a child in the future and say to an elderly lady “Tagwinya"

After this, the young women could now get married. This exercise was supposed to transform the candidate into a new person who was good mannered and courageous in enduring pain (Nyaga, 1997). The girls were advised on how to be good wives and mothers. That a good wife cooks good and fast meals for her husband and the whole household is obedient to her husband in all matters, follows his dictates and respects and obeys her in-laws. So, the initiate is introduced to themes revolving around subordination, power and authority of the male (Nyaga, 1997). The uncircumcised girl
was seriously ridiculed and if she ever gave birth before this rite, she was considered bad omen.

Dowry Among the Ameru

Among the Ameru, the bridegroom’s family had the obligation to give part of all the bride wealth. The exchange between the bride and the bridegroom was not regarded as a price for a wife, as the Ameru believed it was impossible to fix value or material or monetary terms for a human being. This explains why the term *Kujukania* which literally means taking of one another was used to refer to marriages rather than *Kugurana* which literally means to buy a wife. The payment of dowry was significant as it reflected the bridegroom had enough wealth to adequately care for the family and to allow the friendship between the two young persons to be tested whether they were serious to marry (Imanyara, 1992).

Dowry, among the Ameru consisted of five items, namely; ewe, a container of honey (*giempe kia nainchu*), a heifer, a ram and a bull. All these items were shared by the in-laws. Again, this dowry never distinguished between the poor and the rich. This was because the items that constituted dowry had a symbolic meaning and this was the same whether for the rich or the poor. Another aspect of the dowry was that it provided an opportunity to establish closer relations between the in-laws, clans and communities involved. The first three dowry items indicated that the bride and the bridegroom were virgins.

Ewe signified that just as it had not been served by a ram, so was the bride for whom it had been given. The purity of the bridegroom was also signified by a small boy who
was the main escort of the dowry items to the in-laws. The container of honey (*giempe kia nainchu*), signified that there was pleasure which the couple will experience after marriage. Heifer (*also called mwari*) was given to strengthen the relationship between the in-laws besides indicating that the girl was a virgin. The heifer was so important that once it had been given, the dowry was considered comprehensive, meaning the engagement had reached a stage where it could not be broken easily. This was paid to the parents of the girl so that after giving their daughter to the bridegroom, they will remain seeing *mwaari ngombe* (heifer girl) that had been left in place of their daughter.

The ram was the sheep slaughtered in honour of the father of the girl. It signified the unity of the two families. A bull was given to compensate for the guards the parents used to give their daughter (Nyaga, 1997). By paying bride price, a man acquired full rights over his wife/wives. As he becomes the legal owner of the wife, he also becomes the owner of the children he fathered.

Through dowry the wife gained managerial and user rights to her husband’s land as well as the rights for her sons to become legal heirs to the land allocated to her. Without those items, a man could not get a wife for it is sheep and goats that were given as (*ruracio*) bride price. In this dimension, if a man had money and he wants to get married, he must buy cattle, sheep and goats because the parents of the wife to be, will not accept cash money for bride price (Nyaga, 1997).

The woman’s value was equivalent to the five items. One with many daughters could see the number of cows and goats one could expect from prospective husbands. Likewise, one who had cattle could see the number of wives to marry. This element that
saw women as commodities of trade encouraged men to work hard to get wealth to acquire wives. Lazy people were castigated since they could not get wealth to marry many wives. The more goats and sheep a man had the more women he could marry and control. (Kenyatta 1938) noted that the wealth accrued through one woman’s sweat was used by the husband to pay dowry for new wives. Domestic animals and wives were symbols of prestige and valuable assets a man treasured among the Ameru.

In all African societies, brideprice or dowry was given. In most cases it was determined by several factors, such as the status of the woman’s family in the particular community, the status of the woman herself, for example, if she had formal education and to what level. Another factor is whether the society is matrilineal or patrilineal. In matrilineal, lineage is traced through the mother and children born in a marriage belong to the mother’s family or patrilineal lineage where the children born belong to the father’s family. The bridewealth in a patrilineal society is higher because it is considered that the woman’s family is going to lose her services, for example, working in the farm and she is also going to have children for the man’s family to ensure its continuity. So, the man was supposed to compensate her family adequately for these services she would perform. The woman becomes part of the man’s family upon marriage. A woman whose dowry is not paid is ridiculed by the society for not bringing value to the family. In the long run, it’s believed that the same man will turn round and insult her for having been given away for free (Florence, 1991). A woman that was not married was disregarded by the family and the clan at large for failing to give wealth in
form of brideprice to her immediate family. From this perspective women were seen as commodities to build their families wealth status.

**Marriage Institution Among the Ameru**

Changes within the family have taken place within the last 100 years, which constitute a revolution and have fundamentally altered the life pattern of women (Hannah, 1983).

During the pre-colonial days, single parenting in Ameru was an unknown phenomenon. The religio-cultural setting in Africa during the pre-colonial days set marriage as a sacred duty that every normal person had to perform.

A cardinal feature in most African society was that men were permanent residents from birth to death but the women were exogamous who came from other clans through marriage. This meant the men who married them were related to their kins by blood but women were only related by blood to the children that they bore.

According to Henn (1978), in the pre-colonial period, there were three categories of the internal structure of the household; the top position of the household head, the middle position of the temporary dependant males who would one day attain the position of household head, and to be permanent dependants. The permanent dependants were those persons who would never become their own household heads: women in almost all African societies could never become household heads.

Mbiti (1969), argues that, in the pre-colonial period, if one deliberately refused to get married, it meant that one was cutting off the vital link between death and life. Africans did not comprehend single parenting, leave alone practising or entertaining it. Marriage was therefore, intimately linked to the religious beliefs about the continuation of life
beyond death. Single life was not upheld. Traditionally a woman without a husband was considered an outcast. So, some very intelligent girls ended up marrying stupid men because culture allowed.

Marriage was one experience without which a person was considered incomplete. It is no wonder that in Africa we find several types of "marriages" such as wife inheritance of a deceased brother, arranging for a dead man to be married in his absence and arranging for the wife of impotent man or long absent husbands to have children by close relatives or friends (Mbiti, 1969). Thus, According to Mbiti, in the pre-colonial period, the social set up did not allow singleness. In cases of singlehood, humiliation and untold suffering were faced because the religio-cultural setup did not accommodate single living.

Various examples from the African setup as given by Wachege (1992) attest to the non-existence of female-headed households in much of the pre-colonial Africa. In the pre-colonial period, a single mother among the Kamba received outright hostility and open discrimination. Among the Kuria, Wachege further notes that a pregnant unwedded girl was an abomination. Becoming pregnant before marriage among the Luo made the girl a laughing stock for severing her virginity. Among the Kikuyu, a woman who got a child out of wedlock faced all kinds of suffering and human insults. Everyone wanted to get rid of her from the parents homestead. No young man wanted her for a wife unless she was lucky to get an old polygamous man to marry her, Wachege(1992) noted that the man had to be bribed to accept her.

In case divorce occurred in traditional African communities, there followed shameful humiliation to the woman. Wachege (1992) reported that among the Embu, when a
husband beats the wife, it was always understood that the latter was in the wrong. Since remarriage by women was disapproved and discouraged, most women preferred to settle with their parents permanently after being constantly sent back home by their husbands. Wachege further noted that Embu parents encouraged their daughters to go back to their husbands even after several beatings. In this state of affairs, there seemed to be an understanding that even after divorce, the situation is not permanent.

Among the Akamba, the divorced woman hanged on the oppressive husband. When she died, her corpse was returned to her husbands' home for burial. It was believed that since she was culturally married, she does not belong to her parents even after death.

From these examples, it is clear that African traditional setting did not accept single parenthood especially of women. Every woman was expected to be under a man's headship. The women on her own was perceived as a body without a head.

The household was looked upon as a unit of economic expansion among the Ameru. In pre-colonial times, land was abundant and a household had access to as much land for cultivation, the more daughters that women gave birth to would bring wealth as bride price through marriages while the sons were to heard and defend cattle and keep the homestead safe from outside attacks. The patriarch household head was, therefore, the investor and the supervisor of household growth in all forms.

Marriage represented the most significant form of investment for a man. The more wives a husband married, the more land he could put under cultivation. Hence, the women in the marriage institution intrinsic value was the instrument of production and reproduction. In most traditional African societies and in Meru, more women meant more land cultivated. More women translated into more children. The daughters would
become producers in return since the birth of the daughter was the guarantee and continuity of labour force. From this perspective, men married many wives as a guaranteed source of labour. In these patrilineal communities and particularly in Kigane location rich men married several wives and had many children.

19th C descriptions of the Ameru wealthy men reflected the labour value of women and not simply his ownership of livestock. In addition to owning cattle, sheep and goats he possessed many wives and children. This interpretation of wealth emphasized the importance of the wife’s role in agricultural production and child bearing. This goes far beyond simple description of cattle kraal. Women were treated as assets because of cheap labour.

In Africa, the rich man was not the one who had accumulated wealth or land, land was a sacred gift of the gods, accumulation of wealth from production also meant little as well, ultimately such wealth meant owning a hoe, and almost everybody owned one. What mattered was the ability to work on the land and control enough hands to do it, (Coquery, 1997). In Meru, women and children, therefore, constituted a guarantee to real wealth, just as cattle did in the pastoral communities. Cattle was used for dowry, Hence, the more animals, the more wives and more children made one rich and wealthy (Lynn, 2003).

The woman was basically expected to be a good child bearer. Properly conceived, children were much more than valued resources in meeting subsistence needs, and potentially creating wealth. They were a source of affective and spiritual ties across generations and between the living and the dead. In Meru, the most disturbed ancestors are those who died without children. In marriages, infertility was dreaded in most
communities, because childlessness could lead to desolation of marriage. This is because getting children was a way of attaining personal and communal immortality since the longer the individual is remembered in his or her community, the more immortal he or she is believed to be (Bujo, 2000). As a giver of life, therefore, the woman is considered the intermediary between the existent and the non-existent. This view of marriage and procreation is supported by both St. Augustine and St. Paul in Christianity. To them, any kind of non-procreative sex was sinfull, Genesis (38: 4-8). This Christian teaching, therefore, reinforces indigenous belief among the Ameru and other patriarchal communities that considered women as source of life in the procreation.

Marriage is given a central place in most communities including the Ameru because it strengthens and reestablishes the community. It brings together not only the two individuals getting married but also the extensive kinship groups to which the individuals belong. It does not only concern the survival of the individual but also the community because it establishes fellowship with the living, the dead and the unborn. As Bujo (2000) rightly puts it, marriage is the narration of one’s ancestors, one’s biography and writing of one’s autobiography. Marriage among the Ameru meant that tomorrow is taken care of and the dead will be replaced by those being born as a result of marriage. The aging will be looked after by the children being born and the society will not die. The Ameru believed in a family that grew and evolved both laterally and vertically. Laterally, each member of the family was a father or a mother, uncle or aunt, in-law and everybody else as they came. The vertical branch of the family involved everybody, the living dead and the yet to be born for the continuity of the community.
This was the capacity of the family to replicate, reproduce and carry on the image of the departed. The vertical family defined the genealogical strength, the depth of the family and its roots in the preservation of family identity (Fadiman, 1981).

A woman was considered a mother and procreators to provide their husbands and society at large with the most important assets- the children. Children brought pride and honour to family and the whole society. The mother acquired new status and identity as mother so and so Kenyatta (1978).

It was very tragic when no children came from marriage. An impotent man would make arrangement for his wife to get children with another man. The children born were named after the family of the man and the wife and not that of the man who had been hired to father children for them. For a barren woman, the husband married another wife to give him children (Bujo, 2000). From the Ameru, a woman who could not produce children was called thaata (barren). The society always blamed women for childlessness. The husband had a right to divorce her and marry another woman who could give him children. This is because the society had no place for childless marriages as the children belonged to the man, his clan and the community. The society never ridiculed sterile men as arrangements were made to have sex with either a relative or friend to give him children. In some circumstances the husband of the barren woman reclaimed the dowry paid to his father-in-law, this was because without children the dowry did not serve the purpose it was paid for. Because of the value attached to children, a barren woman was ridiculed in a society. The more children one had the
more stable the woman was, in case the woman could not reproduce, she married another woman who could give her children (Imanyara 1997). Upon death of a husband, women inheritance was used to control women sexuality by ensuring her sexual needs are met. Her marriage to the brother of the deceased husband was meant to control the possibility of contamination of the family, or clan with outside blood. These arrangements also ensured property inheritance stayed in the family, a clear indication that she was a property herself. Children born from such marriages belonged to the deceased husband (Mbiti, 1969).

Literally, women were under such arrangements like it was put by the 58 year-old chief in Kigane that

*Female-headed households did not exist in the precolonial period. This was because every woman was under a male authority including the widowed. When widowhood occurred, the woman, the children and the property of the deceased were inherited by the late husband's brother. Single parenting was unknown and divorce was also very rare. Alphonce Majau, A 58 year old chief from Kigane location, (20th June 2014).*

According to (Mbiti, 1969), the religio-cultural setting in Africa during the colonial days and before set marriage as a sacred duty that every normal person had to perform. Many central African societies considered women a commodity that the husband could offer to honour a visitor, a blood brother or kinship ally. He offered his wife to his
brothers and his sister's husbands and was also allowed access to his brother's wives. This practice existed in Buganda (Perlman, 1966).

After marriage, chastity was expected from married women with infidelity receiving severe punishment including divorce. It was only the African man that the traditions allowed to be promiscuous but never the woman. Most women feared divorce, not only because it was stigmatizing, but also because the divorced woman and her parents were often required to go through the painful ordeal of returning the dowry, which had already been shared and utilized by family members and extended relations (Mbiti, 1969).

Divorce was discouraged and a woman was respected and regarded as a pillar of the home. This is supported by Rosa (1983) who states that instability in marriage in Africa were very rare before independence. However, divorce was accepted only as a final result in the following circumstances: If a woman totally rejected her husband, if a woman was involved in witchcraft, if a woman was a habitual thief, if a woman had the habit of running away from home, if a woman was found to be unfaithful, if a woman denied her husband conjugal rights, if a woman was barren in which case the husband could reclaim the dowry he paid to his father-in-law and if the husband was impotent. In this case, the woman would inform her mother-in-law that she would not stay in a house with another woman (Coquery, 1997).

Conclusive separation for good between husband and wife was extremely difficult. It was also a very awful mark that a woman would reach a point where she could no longer live with her husband. Before she separated from her husband for good, she had to be punished first by the respectable person and second by her father-in-law and give a goat to pay her husband as
penalty. In Meru, if the husband totally refused to stay with her, the council decided that such a woman belonged to the clan. In this case, the council built a house for the woman far from the husband, where she stayed with her children. From then, the husband fell under strict supervision by the council so that he might not harm her. Besides, there was no other man allowed to marry her because she was the wife of the clan. However, the council did not intervene in cases where a woman decided to return to her father’s home because she could not get a child. Such a woman was only scorned by others. A divorcee in Meru was considered a reject and was married by a widower, or someone who took pleasure in marrying women for the sake of it. There was no dowry paid for a divorced woman (Imanyara, 1992).

On the knowledge of the existence of female-headed households before 1963, the study found that 53.6% from the male-headed households and 48.5% from the female-headed households disagreed that the female-headed households existed before 1963. Fifty-one point five (51.5%) from the female-headed households and 34.2% from the male-headed households agreed that female-headed households existed before 1963. From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there were few female-headed households in Kigane location before 1963. Almost every mature man and woman got into marriage institution. The area chief had the following to say:

"Female-headed household have increased in my location over the recent past. I now know of around 58 households headed by women in my location". Alphonse Majau, A 58 year old chief from Kigane location, (20th June 2014).

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Meru people migrated from outside the boundaries of present Kenya to their present area. History reveals that they migrated due to the hostility of the
environment and in search of good agricultural land. Clan was the basis of their political organization and they had a council of elders: the *Njuri Ncheke* where women were not allowed to be members. Socially, the Ameru were religious and prayed to a God called *Ngai*. They also practise circumcision of both boys and girls. The marriage institution was also upheld among the Ameru.
CHAPTER THREE

IMPACT OF COLONIAL POLICIES ON THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on how different policies impacted on female headed households. The investigated policies included land alienation, forced labour, taxation and the kipande system. The chapter also presents the findings on the contribution of Mau Mau movement on the emergence and prevalence of female headed households.

3.2 Colonial Policies and Female-Headed Households

This section demonstrates the colonial policies that were either passed from the centre or from the Metropole and how they impacted on Africans. The colonial office considered Kenya to be one of the empire’s plural communities. Europeans, Asians and Arabs had all settled in the colony and considered themselves to have as much right to live in Kenya just like the Africans.

The coming of the British to Kenya brought about a turning point in the Meru people’s history in 1895. The Ameru and the rest of Kenya came under the British colonial rule. During this period, nearly all Kenya’s indigenous governmental institutions were demolished by the onslaught of European mode of socio-economic and political systems. In 1908, the British established colonial administration in Meru and posted the first district commissioner named Horne who was nicknamed Kangangi (Imanyakara
This section also presents the effect of colonial policies on women. The policies reviewed include: land alienation, taxation, male labour migration, the kipande system, the Mau Mau and the role of women in the struggle for independence.

3.2.1 Land Alienation

The colonial office hoped that European settlers would provide the cornerstone of a new multiracial Kenya in which the settlers would exert influence. The attraction to Kenya in particular and East Africa in general was relatively the rich agricultural possibilities which raised hopes of a healthy trade both in terms of the exploitation of indigenous crops and production of those commodities that were in great demand in Britain. As early as 1893, Lord Lugard reported enthusiastically of commercial possibilities in Kenya and the entire East African region. He noted that much of East Africa was extremely fertile, had adequate rainfall which could produce much sought-after rubber, cotton, coconut, sisal, coffee, tea, wheat and tobacco. For him, the highlands offered unlimited room for the location of agricultural settlement and stock rearing farms (Ogendo, 1991). The law was used by the British so as to acquire African land. It all started with the extension of the Indian land acquisition act to the protectorate in 1896. This act allowed the administration to acquire land compulsorily for railway construction, for government buildings and for other public purposes (Bennett, 1963). To provide land for the settlers, the colonial administration announced the land regulations in 1897. This enabled the government to offer certificates of occupancy, valid for 99 years, for those settlers willing to take up land. The commissioner was
authorized by the East African (Lands) order in council of 1901 to make grants or leases of crown land. The crown lands were defined as “all public lands which for the time being are subject to the control of her majesty. Virtually, all the territory outside the Sultan’s ten mile strip became the property of the queen of England by this Act (KNA 34/1901). In 1902, the crown land ordinance was enacted. It provided outright sale of land and leases for ninety-nine years to Europeans.

Crown land was used to mean all public lands in East African protectorate which for the time being was subject to the control of His Majesty by virtue of any treaty, convention or agreement which might be acquired by His Majesty under the Land Acquisition act of 1894 (Ogendo, 1991). And all land occupied by the native tribes of the protectorate and all land reserved for the use of the members of any native tribe. The colonial administration was left to decide on public land whether it was waste land or unoccupied land. Hence, the principal use was to recognize all unoccupied land as crown land and such land and everything attached to it was left as vacant land (Ogendo, 1991). This meant taking away the native rights in land reserved for their occupation, vest all land on the crown and left natives as tenants at will of the land they actually occupied.

A considerable number of hectares of land was alienated to the European settlers under this act. This area came to be known as the “White Highlands” where Africans and Asians were not allowed to own. When Asian political leaders like Jevanjee protested against this law, a British secretary of state, Lord Elgin in 1908 pledged that the highlands would be reserved for the Europeans only. The settlers called this agreement “The Elgin pledge”. The pledge was given legal form through the 1915 crown land
ordinance which the settlers lease for 999 years on agricultural land. The settlers could get leases for up to 5000 acres (KNA, 1910). Consequently, any claims that the Africans might have had on land were dismissed under the crown land ordinance of 1915 which re-defined crown lands so as to include land occupied by the African communities. It also stated that Africans did not have any rights to the lands they occupied as ‘reserves’. When two Africans, Wainaina and Muuto argued in court in 1922 about their rights to the land, the Judge Justice Barth reminded them that they had no such rights (KNA /37 1910).

In Judge Justice Barth’s view, the effects of the crown land ordinance of 1915 and the Kenya Annexation order in council of 1920, by which no native rights were reserved, and the Kenya colony order in council of 1921, was clearly to vest land reserved for the use of native tribes in the crown; if that be so, then all natives’ rights in such reserved land disappeared, and the natives in such crown land became tenants at will of the crown of the land actually occupied (KNA /69 1923).

The way was now open for the beginning of organized settlement in Kenya. Notices were duly issued on 31st July 1902 that land was now available for purchase or lease out. This brought in three categories of the settlers, namely: the small- upper- middle class plantation elite type many of whom came from Britain. Their desire was to establish a new loyal white dominion securely founded on the principals of British traditions and Western civilization. Among them were eccentric aristocrats such as Lord Delamere, Hindlip and Cranworth.

Second were the whites from South Africa. The South Africans aimed at creating a new country to dominate. They called it a White Man’s Country founded in the South
African image with no nonsense about equal rights for black and white. Their farming methods and objectives were all founded on South Africa precedents (Ogendo, 1991).

The third group was controlled by the multinational companies based in Britain. They were essentially engaged in land speculating and prospecting.

Finally, the settlers obtained their exclusive use of the White Highlands through the Kenya Highlands order in council of 1939. This British legislation set out the boundaries of the Highlands and reserved them for the exclusive use of the Europeans forever. In Meru, large tracks of land in Timau was leased by Lord Delamere for farming and livestock keeping. What all this meant for the Africans in Kenya generally and the Ameru in particular was, first, the loss of land. All that defined as White Highlands became the exclusive property of the foreigners. It further led to the loss of title to land even in the African reserves. These land policies effectively brought to an end the widespread migration and settlement of various people. They froze Africans into their districts which were known as reserves. Within these reserves, there was soon overpopulation especially in areas like Nandi, Kakamega and Kiambu. The Amerus were concentrated in Machaka reserve in much of the 1940s and 1950s which is in todays' Buuri sub, county, in addition to this, the policies led to over-use of agricultural land for agriculture and livestock leading to serious soil erosion in places like Machakos and central Nyanza (KNA 25/ 1932). The same applied to the Ameru generally and to the inhabitants of Kigane Location.
Africans did not own land, rather they were tenants at will of the land they occupied. The Kenyan land was a political entity and after 1915, this changed the view that in indigenous African society, land was an incident of the total culture of the people. Man–land relationship included cultivation, hunting, firewood collecting while farming was controlled by the extended family, hunting and grazing rights involved a wider segment of community’s land (Atieno, 1989).

This fact bred a lot of insecurity, for the Africans feared that the government could take away more land from them. Indeed, this happened in 1932 when gold was discovered in North Nyanza (Kakamega). In a nutshell, the land policies heightened anxiety and brought forth a very strong African feeling about stolen lands. This feeling was the foundation of African Nationalism and the focus of the struggle for independence (Rosberg & Nottingham, 1966).

As early as 1899, a legal advisor in the British foreign office warned that the administration of land if not put on legal lines may give rise to much more trouble in the future. He was echoing the English law that title to land in order to be secure, must be guaranteed by the laws of territorial sovereignty. This title was to remain the critical tool in the exploitation of land since the European settlers and protectorate authority came to believe it was legal. Hence, until the 1960s, the productive land was held and farmed almost extensively by the European settlers (Wolf, 1968). In conclusion, land for the first time was divided into racial and tribal areas. The white highlands and the African reserves with much of the best lands going to Europeans.

In an focus group discussion with women on ownership of land by women in the colonial period, one of the women mentioned that:
Women were not allowed to own property including land. When the British occupied their fertile lands for growing cash crops and livestock keeping, women concentrated in the unproductive areas such as Machaka that could not produce enough food for their families. Veronica Mwariumwe, a married woman 59 years old from Muturi Village (19th June 2014).

3.2.2 Forced Labour

The settlers not only needed land but labour as well. For example, Lord Delamere who dominated the land commission of 1925 once remarked that “Land is of no use without labour”. The colonial government hoped that Africans would provide the needed labour not only for the white settler farmers but also for public works. The basic regulations covering the recruitments of African labour were laid down in the Master and servant ordinance of 1906. The chief difficulty was to encourage sufficient men to volunteer for such work. So long as their livelihood was based on subsistence economy, the Africans saw no purpose to leave their homes (Atieno, 1989).

It was pressure from the settlers that in 1919, the new governor, Northey, instructed his chief native commissioner to issue circular to all government officials stressing the urgent need to increase labour by all possible lawful means. The Nothey circulars was framed in such a way as to put pressure on the chiefs as administrative officers to persuade able-bodied Africans into European farms to produce their quota of recruits (Northey Circular of 23rd October 1919, KNA).
Colonialism in Kenya lasted for almost 70 years. Scholars have rightly argued that policies introduced by the settler economist and the colonial governments were generally harsh and exploitative. Men and able-bodied women were forced to provide labour in the settler’s plantations in order to pay hut and poll tax. Many men then moved away from their homes to become migrant labourers. In this scenario, the majority of the women were left at home taking care of the family, within the Victorian concept of the private/public domain where the place of the woman was private and at home. In Kigane Location, the respondents noted that almost throughout colonial period, strong men were to go provide labour in the white plantations in Timau, Buuri and in Nanyuki. Behind were left the very aged men, children and women who took full control of the family in the absence of men.

The respondents mentioned that men were taken as labourers while women were left at home heading the family. This is further supported by the Northey Memorandum, 21st October, 1919). This is when the governor Sir Northey issued a circular (Northey circular of 23rd October 1919, KNA) in which all the local administration was to participate in the recruitment of labour for the settlers.

Okuro (2002) further adds that as from 1914, large numbers of men worked in many parts of the protectorate. He states that the burden of household production fell solely on women as they were left taking male roles in the homestead. According to Northey circular (1919, KNA), able bodied Africans were to provide labour for the development of the country. Second the Africans had to be forced out of the reserves to work to avoid idleness from the young natives which was likely to become vicious and effete. The settler economy could only survive through the utilization of cheap and dependable
labour. Hence, the settlers considered it their right for the government to make this happen, since the settlers had no mechanism to maintain the desired labour to enable the systems to get off. Dependability of labour had to be guaranteed during the peak seasons such as cultivating, planting, weeding and harvesting. Hence, the colonial policy was to encourage the population growth to expand availability of labour (1919, KNA). Thousands of landless Africans had become squatters on European lands. This was recommended by the Steward Land Commission of 1905 and was already being practised in the farm of "Kaffir" farming by many settlers. This was aimed at creating a pool of labour that was easily controlled by the individual settler farmer. The squatter could bring his livestock to the farm subject to the rules governing animal diseases, the settler would not charge any rent for native grazing or planting nor enter into any share of cropping agreement with the native. That the native would work for a period of less than 180 days in the year at a rate of pay or other considerations to be agreed upon by both parties (KNA 40/1904). In practice, most residents/squatters worked for a minimum of 240 days and were prohibited from having any goats on farms. They were only allowed to cultivate and keep cattle. As the number of landless Africans increased, squatter method became an important weapon in the labour recruitment arsenal for the colonial settlers and other colonial establishments (Ogendo, 1991). An African man who traditionally was the head of the household being absent for almost three quarters of the year, left the woman in total control of the homestead. Arbitrary land alienation made African squatters on the land that was once theirs. The 1918 Resident Native Labourers Ordinance (RNLO), its fundamental provision was the squatter to provide not less than 180 working days per year in the farm. In return, the
African worker and his family were allowed to live on the farm and cultivate part of the settler’s land for his own use (Kanogo, 1987). This meant the supply of sufficient and easily available labour to the settlers, for the squatters wives and children would be called at peak labour periods, especially during the harvesting period. In the mean time, ways and means were discussed on how to force ‘elders’ that is men who are not in employment and not adequately engaged in agriculture in their reserves to work. The settlers continued clamouring for the inclusion of squatters under the master and servant ordinance of 1924 which would make the squatters liable to persecution for negligence of duty (KNA 43/1925).

The findings of the study revealed that 51% of the female-headed households and 34.2% from the male-headed households agreed that there were female-headed households in the colonial period. In an interview with Assistant Chief; he stated that:

*In the colonial period, the area headman aggressively recruited the strong and able bodied men to go and provide labour in the white settlements in Buuri, Timau and Nanyuki. Between 1950 to 1960, about 15,000 men were working for in the plantations. John Mugambi, assistant chief aged 49 years (18th June 2014).*

From the findings of the study, many strong and married men found themselves providing labour in the expansive settlers’ plantations as squaters. Women were left behind concentrated in the reserves and were the household heads.
3.2.3 Taxation

The idea of taxation from the settlers' point of view was to compel the natives to work for cash employment. Collection of tax usually coincided with the peak demand periods and since the native wages were kept deliberately low, the role of taxation in the generation of farm labour was most central.

It has been correctly argued that not only were the taxes collected from the natives used to support the administration in which the white settlers shared, for whom it was planned and towards which they did not pay their just share, but taxes and their collection were arranged to provide labour to develop their estates (Dilley, 1937). In Kenya, during the colonial period, taxation was advocated covertly at times and openly at others, to increase labour supply. Wages were paid to the government in taxes which were used for the upkeep of the administration which largely benefited the Europeans.

The question of labour, taxation and land is inseparable. If the natives had sufficient land and developed it to grow productive crops, many Kenyans would secure the money for taxes independently. But this would hinder labour supply and hence, a proposal to reduce the amount of land held by natives was coupled with proposal to increase taxation. As early as 1901, a native dwelling tax, not exceeding two rupees, was introduced by the British in the East African protectorate and to Kenya in particular. This was the hut tax. It was increased in 1906-7 to three rupees and by 1910 had become a general poll tax collected throughout the country (Ross, 1974). It was stated that this was the tax used to administer Kenya and provide law and order. In 1908 when there were labour difficulties, the governor recommended poll tax for single males to be remitted for work. In May 1920, the chief native commissioner introduced an ordinance
in the legislative council which increased the native tax to ten rupees. The commissioner stressed that most natives were able to pay the increased amount and those who would not should increase their effort. In an FGD with married women, they stated that

*In Kigane and Meru generally, men left to search for jobs in Nairobi and in settlers plantations in Buuri, Timau and Nanyuki to raise the required taxes. Most of these men were polygamous Hence, the tax requirement was high. These women headed their households in the absence of their husbands".* Bridgit Karwirwa, a married 68 years old from Kaguru village (21st June 2014).

It has been widely accepted that the wages, were in general too low to be widely used as incentives to induce men to migrate from their homes and become wage labourers. Direct taxes were first imposed upon the indigenous people in 1901 being raised on huts, where by a man was liable for taxes on the huts which he was supposed to own. In 1910, a poll tax on men over the age of 16 years was added and by 1912 enforcement for non-payment could involve a sentence of up to three months imprisonment. Every married man had to pay his own poll tax and also the tax upon his hut if he had two wives or more, he would be liable for the hut taxes for each of them. This was intended to stimulate labour for the white settlers and also provide revenue for the colonial administration (Zwanenberg, 1975). Consequently, Africans in Kenya generally and in Kigane in particular had to leave their families where they were household heads to search for employment in the settlers farms to raise the required taxation and avoid imprisonment; in this regard, women were faced with double burden as they took up
roles that were traditionally performed by men. District officers employed counters, whose duty was to list the huts in the area and the able-bodied men over the age of sixteen years. The headman assisted the counters by ordering the adult males to appear for counting (KNA, 1934).

3.2.5 Kipande System

This was an identity card that the colonial government required of people belonging to the ethnic groups deeply involved in Mau Mau. These were the communities around Mt. Kenya; the Meru, Embu and Kikuyu. This document contained date of birth, place of birth, village and district, house number in the location, name of village chief and present employer.

To ensure regular labour supply, the colonial administration embarked on the kipande system. This was a system where the servant or the labourer was required to carry at all times and produce on demand a certificate of registration the Kipande, upon which was endorsed his past and current employment status. This system was suggested by the settler community from South Africa (Likimani, 1998). It was to control the movement of labourers and facilitate the retrieval of the deserters. Any employee was liable to be punished with imprisonment for failing to commence his employment at the stipulated time, absence from work without leave or lawful excuse or refusal to obey the masters command. A deserting servant with intent not to return, under the master’s and servant’s ordinance was arrested with warrant from the magistrate (Ogendo, 1991).

From 1919, labourers were required to carry identification cards (Kipande) on which the owner’s previous and current labour history was entered including the nature of
employment, date of engagement, length of contract and wages paid (Throup, 1988). Kipande system made desertion very difficult, helped to keep the labourers salaries static and turned the labourer into prisoner until when his contract came to an end and he was discharged. For the whole period when the man worked in the settlers plantations, they lost contacts with their families hence, their women took full charge of the households. Family patterns were affected by colonialism that separated family members from one another. One advantage for the bearer of the kipande was that when he had completed his work, this would be recorded on his card, thus protecting him from chiefs and recruiting agents. However, to most Africans, the Kipande became a badge of servitude and a major cause of discontent (Throup, 1988).

The 1920 Native Registration Amendment Ordinance gave the employer authority to inform the nearest district commissioner and the registrar of natives of any native desertion (KNA 33/1938). Hence, Africans were caged and their freedom of movement even to visit their families curtailed by this ordinance. On the effect of Kipande system on female-headed households in Kigane location, one of the respondents mentioned that:

Every single woman who is not employed or living with her husband must be sent back to her village. The woman who chanced to be sent back since she was single or unemployed tended to take care of the family single handedly in the absence of the male figure". Ruth Nduru, a 61 year old married woman from Rwongorunene Village (18th June 2014).
From the findings of the study, it is clear that the Kipande system made male employees be away from their homes for long periods in a given year. As a result women took full charge of their families as household heads.

3.2.5 The Mau Mau

The movement was a logical outcome of several decades of tyranny. Land alienation, coupled by repressive colonial policies were more heavily felt by the people of formerly central province (Kikuyu) and the Meru. It was obvious that the settlers had much to do in this. In 1950, a prominent settler announced “we are here to stay and the other races must accept that fact with all that it implies” (Ochieng, 1990). The Mau Mau movement was an alliance between three groups of discontented Kikuyu, the urban unemployed and destitute, dispossessed used squatters from the white highlands and poor peasants, in the central province and Meru reserves who had been transformed into a landless proletariat (KNA, 1947).

The 1937 resident’s native labour ordinance forced the Kikuyu squatters from the white highlands and settled them in Olenguruone, a settlement scheme on the Mau escarpment. These Kikuyu squatters networked with other squatters at Soy Sambu, Naivasha and Limuru. This provided the organizational framework for the development in the white highlands, where one in four of the Kikuyu population lived, of what came to be known as Mau Mau (Throup, 1988).

The development of capitalist relations undermined the economy of the Kikuyu society, destroying the traditional law, as the Kikuyu elite asserted their exclusive occupation rights and demanded the introduction of individual title deed. In this sense, the majority
who in the 19th century had enjoyed unquestionable access to land for cultivation, were devalued as land became a scarce resource. These land accumulators unjustified their acquisition in terms of English law while those whose land was taken sought to defend it by use of the customary law as applied in the pre-colonial Kikuyu traditional traditions (Throup, 1988).

At the starting of 1950, Mau Mau had spread from Nakuru to Timboroa, Ainabkoi, Kipkabus and Moiben where there were a lot of Kikuyus doing the farm and forest labour (KNA Report on native affairs 1951). After the declaration of the state of emergency in 1952, the colonial administration inflicted a lot of brutalities on the Kikuyu, Embu and the Meru such as arbitrary killings, confiscation of their livestock, forced confession, beating and other forms of intimidation.

In the white highlands, European farmers introduced a screening mechanism which reinforced a new pass system applicable to all Kikuyu, Embu and Meru (Kanogo, 1987). There was growing number of revolutionaries and underground activities to hit back at the authority. Several thousands committed freedom fighters went to Mt. Kenya and Abadere Forests to strategies for reprisals. Most were landless, had lost their stock to the government personnel, were herded into the reserves, their only real choices were starvation or life in the forest. Colonial oppression was regarded as a worse alternative than attacking from the forest. The reserves were over populated and this worsened the situation (KNA /24/ 1952).

The Mau Mau supporters administered oaths and were threatened with death if they ever reported those who had taken the oath of unity. The few who were selected to take the oath were chosen for their political insight, respectability and wisdom from God.
It was a common practice to warn all participants of severe punishment if they ever disclosed the oath. By instilling this fear, it was hoped they would deter from informing the whites about the oath (Kanago, 1987). There were people who opposed the Mau Mau for example, the Christians were against the use of violence adopted by the Mau Mau. Certainly, there were people who if given a choice, would have refused to join Mau Mau. According to Imanyara (1992), between 1948 and 1956 Meru experienced an influx of Mau Mau oathees from Nairobi and Kikuyuland. The son of the paramount chief, Jackson Angaine, from Meru was arrested because of his participation in the Mau Mau activities.

3.2.6 The role of Women in Mau Mau (In the struggle for independence)

This section will focus on the women’s contribution to the struggle for independence, to make their efforts visible to the Kenyan people. Many books have been written about the Mau Mau movements in Kenya by both local and foreign authors, but the role played by women in the bitter and costly struggle for Kenyan’s Independence has not been highlighted. According to Likimani (1998), women freedom fighters are the unsung warriors as they took part in active politics. Women travelled all over the country to meet the people, to learn and teach them. They made visits to Muthambi, Taita, Meru, Kiambu and the Rift valley. The purpose was to have all the women from all over Kenya speak in one voice, dialogue and speak in unison. Their message was “we want land and freedom” (Kabira & Ngurukie, 1997).

The women left in the villages fed and clothed those in the forest. The colonial government intended to weaken Mau Mau by complete denial of food. The women
collected, prepared and dispatched food to the freedom fighters in the forest (Tamarkin 1977). The women effort to supply the rebels with food and other necessities was built upon their long standing role as the key producers of food (KNA4/51939).

Women were the source of intelligence information which they got easily from colonial soldiers and other security sources who were fighting against the Mau Mau. They possessed the important logistical data on the movements of troops, official raids, or possible informers. This helped the freedom fighters map out their next move. These women from everywhere in Kenya and their contributions in the liberation should not be underestimated (Kanogo, 1987).

In addition to the above, there were also women who had joined the male forest guerillas because they wanted to participate in the combat. Names that have been immortalized in history are Mekatilili Wa Menza, Muthoni Nyanjiru and Moraa Ngiti.

At first, the presence of women in the forest gangs was strange because of the general belief that women could not withstand the harsh forest environment. However, women left their homes, children and livestock to fight for their land and freedom. (Kabira & Ngarukie, 1997) so, this country was bought by woman’s blood and yet any time the politicians want audience, they never think of women as fighters, but rather as looks and only listeners.

Mugo (1978) states that women were involved in the struggle for independence. For instance the Kikuyu, Embu and the Meru women were the backbone of the resistance against land alienation in the colonial times. During the Mau Mau, some women became full-fledged warriors and fought alongside men. Some of the women warriors
were commissioned to great heights within the forest army. This bears witness to their competence as warriors (Barnett & Njama, 1996).

As women continued executing Mau Mau tasks, some of them were co-opted into the political arena through the creation of dual sex councils. Mau Mau created joint man and women councils. Women’s voices were heard during Mau Mau. Earlier women only heard what had been decided. They did not help to make decision (Kanogo, 1992). From the above, leadership ceased to be a male preserve and there was no differences between male and female Mau Mau leaders. Women political abilities were recognized and some women, for example, Muthoni Ngatha rose to the senior position of Field Marshall (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997). A symbolic acknowledgement by men of female political leadership was the crowning of Wagira wa Njoroge in June 1953, as the Queen of Mau Mau (Kanogo, 1992).

Women also collected guns and ammunitions for the freedom fighters. They collected home-made guns and pistols which they rallied to the fighters hidden under their inner clothes (Kanogo, 1987). Clothes, medicine, scrap metal for making rifles, bottles for making communication were passed to the freedom fighters by these women committed to the liberation of their mother country. When their husbands and grown-up sons and daughters were fighting and dying in the forest, women were left alone in the villages where they were subjected to untold torture, rape, forced labour while their children watched. They underwent a lot of brutality until they were able to feed and educate their children. They built houses for their families and did communal work which involved making roads, digging terraces and still cultivated their farms to feed their children (Likimami, 1998).
Women were also imprisoned in Kamiti where they were treated like animals. They were beaten, tortured, both physically and mentally, others were executed but never betrayed anybody. Their suffering and blood brought the independence of this country. Women also hid the freedom fighters from the homeguards. They cut the leaves and covered the fighters and the whites would never know (Kibira & Ngurukie, 1997).

Women participated in oath taking which meant they could now take part in the fighting. Oath taking was like passing an examination. It reflected that one was a very courageous woman and could not betray her people. The oath they took was to fight for the country’s freedom and the land which the whites had taken away. Although nearly all tribes in Kenya supported the freedom fighters, it was obvious that the Central Province people were the originators, the oath operators, the terrorist attackers, and the major planners. The tribes in Central Province are the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, all surroundings, Mt Kenya. All believed in oath taking and swearing with their goats never to surrender until independence (Likamami, 1998). The Mau Mau brought division in families where only one of the spouses had taken the oath (Kanogo, 1987).

With many men in the forest, others in detention camps and prisons, the majority of women went into forced labour. A woman traditionally was the cultivator, but the law definitely stated that only able-bodied men could do communal forced labour (Kabira & Ngurukie; 1997). In the absence of most men actively involved in the Mau Mau liberation movement, the colonial government turned to women to provide labour by force. They were mistreated by the homeguards and the loyalists. In the forced communal labour women stayed there hungry all day long and had no time to attend to
their gardens where they got food, neither did they have time to attend to their cattle and goats and their children were left unattended.

Despite all these, the gardens still grew, and the children grew healthy. The secret of it all was that traditionally women were very hardworking and any single free hour from communal work, she could weed her garden, collect water, vegetables and firewood while washing and cooking was done at night. They survived single handedly as family heads while their husbands fought for independence. Women worked tirelessly to prepare enough goods to sell to buy what they did not have. On market day sellers and traders came from all directions. Some bought pigeon peas and millet to exchange for bananas, arrowroots and yams. Others brought fresh maize, vegetables and dry maize to mill for Ugali (Likimani 1998).

In interview with one of the married men on the impact of Mau Mau on female-headed households, revealed that:

*While men took to the forest to fight for independence, women remained behind to head their families and indeed took the responsibilities that were traditionally done by men. Some of the male freedom fighters died in the war, Hence, their wives became widows. To others, while their husbands were fighting, they got children from other men because they could not wait for them and thought they would never come back alive. In Kigane location, general Mwaliama, Chui and Baimungi are among those that died fighting from the Mt. Kenya forest and their wives were left widowed.* Saraphine Kairuthi, a 84 year old man from Mianguene (22th June 2014).

From the above it follows that men and women, sons and daughters of Kenya, fought the colonial systems which had subjugated them to socio-political and economic
slavery. They fought against foreign domination, waged a protracted and costly war against colonial authority that lasted for more than sixty years. Women persistently continued raising their fists against the colonial regime. They articulated matters of national concern and significance. They chose not to fear those who killed the flesh but those who could kill the spirit. The success of the struggle for our independence was joint effort of both men and women and it is only fair that the Kenyan women’s contribution should be put into perspective.

3.3 Conclusion

The colonial policies contributed to the emergence of female-headed households. Able-bodied men were recruited to work in the settlers’ plantation and do public work. They moved away from their homes to become migrant labourers leaving behind their women to take care of the family. Men left their households to search for employment to raise the required taxation and avoid imprisonment. This left women with the roles that were traditionally carried out by men. What happened to the African woman under colonialism was that the social, religious, constitutional and political privileges and rights disappeared. While the economic exploitation continued and was intensified the traditional division of labour was disrupted. Traditionally, men did all the heavy labour such as felling trees, clearing virgin land, building houses apart from conducting warfare and hunting. When men left their homes to seek employment women were left behind with every burden for their survival and their children. Since men entered the money sector in greater numbers than women, women’s work became inferior. Men’s work was therefore modern and women’s was traditional and backward.
4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents relevant literature and findings on the socio-economic and political factors that led to increased number of female-headed households in the post colonial period in Kigane Location. Different socio-cultural factors are presented such as: dowry, divorce, education, religion, diseases, the role of patriarchy and women empowerment organizations. The economic factors included are: employment, access to land and property.

4.2 Influence of Social Factors on Female-headed Households

This sub-section presents relevant literature on the social factors influencing female-headed households.

4.2.1 Patriarchy

In many of the social formations especially in Africa, patriarchal relations were the basis of women’s invisible and voiceless status in written history. Under patriarchy, women are politically, economically and socially subordinated and powerless as a gender. It is constituted at the household level with the male head of the household being a patriarch. This patriarchal ideology influences gender divisions institutionalized at the household level and transplanted at the community level. The division of labour is by gender and it includes access to land and control of resources as the major means of
production such as land, forest and cattle. In many areas, women access to resources is decided by men (Ngaiza, 1995).

Patriarchy characterized most communities in Africa. This is a social political and economic system that ensures, preserves and perpetuates male supremacy in all sectors of life. Patriarchal ideology operates on the premise that men are biologically superior to women and that as a result, women are weak and have to depend on men for their survival. Within the framework of patriarchal understanding, male leadership at all levels is seen as the only legitimate leadership for protection of women. The most fundamental expression of this is in the patriarchal family, where the man is the “Natural head of the household” (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997).

All children born are perceived to belong to the husband. A man can marry several wives, name all the children who become members of his clan. The mother of the children on the contrary is seen as a breeder for the man and his clan. The family lineage is continued through the male children. This enhances the oppressive patriarchal mentality which shows a clear preference for sons to daughters. This disposition gives the impression of 'selling' daughters at marriage, an attitude that encourages the perception that a wife is her husband’s property (Waliggo, 2002). In the patriarchal mode of reproduction, males dominate and the females are supposed to depend on the males. The woman is seen as the means of human reproduction for men or male-dominated communities and the women’s sexual power is controlled and manipulated by men (Vuorella, 1987).

In relation to gender, a myth is told about a Kenyan woman (Luhya) who was responsible for making God say that human beings would work for the rest of their
lives. The woman wanted to prove that she could dig more than the hoes used to dig on their own (Kavetsa & Kabira, 1997). This is the same reflection in the Bible, the book of Genesis that Adam was cheated by Eve. Women are, therefore, to blame for all evil in the society. This is the reason why patriarchs argue they must hold the structures and the traditions created in the society for the good of all, Hence, many times the women are told; “You are only married, not born here so you cannot represent us. You are not married and when you marry, you will go with the seat we give you. You are only temporary at your home of birth. You are married, so you should not be in politics (Mineke Schipper, 1985).

According to Kabira and Muthoni (1994), the males in power control all directions of events. The women apologize to men for their education; they play down their expertise and qualities. They accept they have to know more before given leadership roles. They tell their husbands how great they are. Elite women will take loans to buy their husbands cars while they foot or use public transport to work. They buy land and houses in the name of their husbands. Women will always seek permission to go anywhere and do anything. They call their husbands “daddy”. They are mothers to their husbands; they warm water for their bath, look for their socks, polish their shoes, ask them whether they have eaten, pack for them when travelling. Everything is done to make them happy. The men then expect it, enjoy it and demand for it.

The head of the family in this patriarchal set up keeps the woman a prisoner. He expects cover, acceptance, her sacrifice and support. He feels that good wives hold family together, are not ambitious, are transparent, are always at home, are not interested in politics, above all, they obey, love and understand their husbands.
Patriarchy dictates that even when men are unfaithful, it is because their wives have neglected them (Kabira and Muthoni, 1994). At work, women should be seen and not heard, hence, rarely get promoted since women are not ambitious. Meanwhile, men decide business, economy of the land, who is the next president, change of constitution, what to be included in constitution regarding women. For centuries the world gave rise to prejudice against women. Myths were created about women’s weaknesses, docility, inferiority, weak intelligence and always in search for a male master. These myths repeated so often, were accepted by majority including women themselves.

It was not by accident that the word history was coined to mean “his-story”; man’s story at the exclusion of “her-story” or woman’s story. It is said: the lives of great men are written by others, the lives of insignificant people are written by themselves. This is quite true since from time immemorial, history has been the story of men rulers, kings and emperors. From this perspective, very few exceptional women rulers and empresses found their way in it. Until very recently, history conspired to leave out women and their contributions to the human race. This intended omission created false myths about women, their silence and their plight. The elimination of women further indicated that they could be forgotten and belittled and as a result, the rise and growth of male domination to the disadvantage of women (Waliggo, 2002). In Kigane location, there were the masculine spheres and the feminine world. The masculine world involved leadership and hunting and gathering in the precolonial period. These roles have since changed as women are now involved in leadership and performs functions that were initially reserved for men.
4.2.2 Women and Education

Education is often seen as the key to women’s empowerment. Girls’ access to schooling in many developing countries is often so low that the term empowerment is frequently used to mean mere participation in the formal system (Stromquist, 2002). This is problematic because it assumes that the experience and knowledge attained in schooling automatically prepare girls to assess their worth and envisage new possibilities. Moreover, while several governments have taken steps to modify school textbooks and provide teachers with gendersensitive training, a gendersensitive education is not the same as an empowering education. Empowering girls should mean offering them courses with content that not only dismantles current sexual stereotypes but also provides students with alternative visions of a genderequitable society. At present, women’s empowerment reaches its highest form in nonformal education programmes. The alternative spaces provided by womenled NGOs to promote systematic learning opportunities through workshops on topics such as gender subordination, reproductive health, and domestic violence, and provide the opportunity for women to discuss problems with others. The positive effects of these spaces for developing women’s confidence cannot be overstated (Stromquist, 2002).

Education has been helpful in bringing new awareness and eliminating the factors that abstracted women politically, socially and economically, particularly the factors that confined women to the homes. There is no doubt that gains achieved from better education have helped women attain better jobs that have improved their economic status, which in turn has made them become more interested in political affairs of Kenya and the World at large. There are now women lawyers, judges, magistrates,
engineers; doctors, teachers and the like. This is from the fact that education is a very powerful tool that enables them to know their democratic rights and obligations to the nations (Ogot, 2012).

Since independence, many schools and universities have been established giving thousands of Kenyan women access to education. The number of educated women has increased immensely and they are using the acquired knowledge to develop the country socially, politically and economically.

The study found that 97.4% from the male-headed households and 93.9% from the female-headed households agreed that education led to the prevalence of female-headed household. Literature reveals that on the eve of independence in 1960, the gross enrolment rate (GER) at primary level was only 47%. By the beginning of 1980s, the rate progressed to over 90%, peaking to a high of 95%. Two policy interventions, by presidential decree abolished tuition fees for pupils in classes 1-4 throughout the public schools. In 1978, another presidential decree abolished fees in primary schools in all classes and for all public schools in the republic. This measure was followed a year later in 1979 with the introduction of free school milk, also following a presidential decree. The decrees altogether resulted into significant enrolment in primary education, taking the country much closer to achieving universal primary education. It was estimated that following the 1973 presidential decree, enrolment in primary school increased by over one million (Eshiwani, 1993; Muhoro, 1975) while the 1978 and 1979 presidential decrees resulted into an increase in enrolment by 23.4% from 2.9 million to 3.7 million children (Yildiz 2000). From the findings of the study, it can be said that the free education introduced by the three
regimes gave opportunity for access to education. This in turn empowered girls by giving them chance to access education, thus they could sustain their families. According to Omwancha (2012), the new policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 that enabled teenage mothers to continue schooling after delivery. This gave them the opportunity to continue with their schooling thus empowering them.

These findings are further supported by Subbarao and Raney (1993) whose study shows that female education increases the value of women’s time in economic activities by raising labour productivity and wages, with a consequential rise in household income and reduction in poverty. It has been pointed out that female education has greater impact than male education on productivity and results into higher intergenerational benefits. In Kigane Location, education has enabled many women to get employment in the formal and informal sectors. This has enabled them to generate income to sustain their families in the absence of men. From the findings of the study, it can be said that education has led to the prevalence of female-headed households. The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Asked to explain their answers, the following were mentioned: educated women prefer having children to husbands, lowering grades for women have made them access higher education in large numbers, women have learnt to be independent in making their choices, some men do not like marrying educated women, women spend more time in school thus no time for their families hence, more separations.

These findings are in line with the findings of a study done by (Summers, 1992) who found that female education empowers women to bring about other necessary changes and helps to break through the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation. He concludes that once all the benefits are recognized, investment in the education of girls may be the highest return investment available in the developing world. (King & Hill, 1991) go even further to caution that “failure to raise women’s education to equality with men’s impacts negatively on productivity, income and quality of life. In an FGD, one woman explained that:

_Educated women consider their careers as their faithful husbands since their salaries makes them and their families to live independent and comfortable lives making them to look at men as nagging and a bother. Marriage is not meant for everybody since education gives the woman the power, the strength and authority in all levels. Hellen Kibobori, a 45 year old woman from Rwongorunene village (18th June 2014)._
2.3 Religion

Islam and Christianity, the mainstream religions in Africa and Kenya in particular are important source of external patriarchy. Both religions identify men as leaders, right from their homes to the public sector outside their homes, both religions give male leadership divine ordination, thus making it almost mandatory for all to recognize male domination and use the scriptures to justify themselves. 1st Timothy 2:11-12. “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man: she must be silent.” Most churches will use this verse to prohibit women from preaching, teaching or exercising their authority to protect the position of men. Men therefore, occupy the pulpits, while women are passive spectators, men pray while women do listen (Brown, 1993).

In the book of Genesis, God created man first. This is an assumption that God’s primary creation was the man not the woman. Since woman is believed to have been created from a man’s crooked rib, she is, therefore, secondary and inferior to man. It is also based on the assumption that man was not the primary agent of his fall from the garden of Eden. Hence, all “daughters” of Eve are regarded with a lot of hatred, suspicion and contempt. Biblically, a woman was created not only from man, but also for man, which makes her existence merely instrumental and not of any fundamental importance, Hassan, (1991). Christianity is the amplifier of male dominance and female subordination. Eve committed the original sin that brought the fall of Adam, (Genesis 2-3). It is from that, that God cursed Adam and Eve with hand labour and pain in childbirth. This narrative is often used to justify male dominance and justify female subordination.
The teachings of prominent Christians, such as St. Paul and St. Augustine, legitimize women is subordination. Paul’s teachings about women’s submission to their husbands "wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5: 22-26). Further, he writes in Colossians 3: 18 "Wives submit to your husbands as it is fitting to the Lord".

Submission has been taken to mean self-giving and sacrifice. Paul’s teaching about husband being head of the wife had been taken to mean that the man stands between his wife and God, Hence, he becomes a superior and closer to God than the woman (Getau and Ayanga 2002), the concept of submission as associated with headship is used to keep women in abusive situations such as physical violence, economic deprivation, intimidation and humiliation.

When women express their suffering to the pastors, they are often reminded of Biblical passages that emphasize wives submission to their husbands. It therefore, appears like the Bible supports women suffering under male supremacy. The Bible is also said to be patriarchal. The twelve disciples, all were men and there were no women. He is said to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, Moses but not a God of any woman.

The women are also portrayed in the Bible as having played active role in the Ministry of Jesus in the early church. Luke 8:1:3, reflects that Mary, Joanna and Susanna made preaching trips. These were not passive spectators but rendered valuable services. Romans 16:1-16 names a member of women who were Paul’s co-workers in the Roman Empire. Among them were Tryphaena, Typhosa and Peris (Johnson, 1984).
The Old Testament context is patriarchal in nature. Despite all these, many heroic women stories are told such as: In Genesis 21: 1-2, Sarah the wife of Abraham played an active role in the life of the Israelite people. She was the tender, loving mother of God’s chosen people. She manifested the virtues of fidelity, gentleness and hospitality. Further the Bible portrayed Rebekah, the wife of Isaac as an active wife and mother who continued the line of the descendants of Israel. Her preferential love for Jacob is poetically shown and accepted by God who made Jacob the father of His nation (Gen 24:60). In Exodus 2:5-6 the pharaoh’s daughter, saved the child Moses from death at the river Nile. Moses was to become the leader of Israel, the precursor (pre-figure) for Jesus Christ. Its from Deborah (Judges 4:4-9), that the whole of Israel obtained justice. Her presence in the battle was the strength and victory of the soldiers.

In the New Testament, the gospel reflect Jesus as one who favoured and promoted equality of both men and women. Mary, the wife of Joseph and mother to Jesus Christ was an example of readiness to serve and cooperate with God in the mission of redemption. The Samaritan woman in John 4:15, 19:29 was ready to listen and observe what Jesus said and did. In John 19:25 standing at Jesus cross was His mother Mary, His mother’s sister the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdaline. They followed Jesus to Calvary when the apostles (men) had ran away. From Genesis 1:27 ”male and female He created them”. From this perspective for a human community to be complete. It must have both male and female. For any balanced decision making in the community, both male and female contribution are necessary. In
fact men and women are complimentary. Womanhood expresses the "human" as much as manhood does, but in a different and complimentary way. But this cardinal principle is often ignored. The church ministries had been a preserve for men and very few for women, although women form the largest number of committed Christians. When it comes to positions of influence in the church, women are rarely found in them.

In regard to the position of women in the Muslim societies they are seen as unsuitable to performing certain tasks, or functioning in some ways in the society. Women are perceived as weak, inferior, intellectually incapable and spiritually lacking. They are provided with a system and suckling children hence, restricted to functions related to her biology (Amina, 1992).

Like Christians, Muslims believe that women are not equal to men. Men are perceived to be above women or to have a degree of advantage over them. They believe that a woman was created for man is found in Quran Sura 4: 34 and Sura 2: 288 which supports that men have authority over women. Sura 4: 34 states:

*Men are the managers of the affairs of women because Allah has made the one superior to the other and because men spend all their wealth on women. Virtous women, are therefore, obedient, as for those defiant women, admonish them and beat them. A virtous woman is one who pleases and obeys her husband all times. From that, men have authority over women because of the advantage they have over them as they spend their properties supporting women. This is an indication that men as a group are the guardians of the women and remain superior to them.*
The Muslim women should put on the veil or the al-hijab. This is from the Quranic verses 24:31, 33: 33, 33: 53 and 33: 59. According to the interpretation of these verses, women are supposed to stay at home. When they must go out, they must do so with their bodies and faces covered. The veil or al-hijab reinforces women’s inability to hold public offices and restrict access to public life because they must not mix with men in public places (Na’Im, (1997).

The man is seen as superior, more significant than a woman, a leader and provider and has the masculine ability to perform tasks that women cannot. The Quran states: "Men are the protectors and maintenance of women. Because Allah has given them one more (strength) than the others, and because they support women from their means, Quran Sura (4:34). Consequently, men are seen as more human, enjoying completely the choice of movement, employment, social-political and economic participation on the basis of human individuality and opportunity. Women should be allowed to perform all duties partaken by man since human kind is equal before Allah and each one has the ability to perform duties in the society irrespective of their biological difference (Getui & Ayanga, 2002).

In Islam, boys and girls are entitled to equal education opportunities. The Qur’an enjoins that all Muslims irrespective of sex should seek education (Engineer, 1985). The Quran states: “The search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim, males or females seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. From the above, many famous women scholars, writers, doctors and teachers among others have been natured. Therefore,
education had been used as tool to empower women in Muslim communities (Altaf, 1978).

All the same, since many African societies are patriarchal, the Muslim Community has accelerated the problem of discrimination against women as most aspects of the Quran are culturally interpreted to suit men's needs. Muslim women need to liberate themselves from the subordinate status defined by patriarchy since both genders are equal before Allah.

Cultural factors

The study found that 63.2% from the male-headed households and 42.4% from the female-headed household disagreed that cultural factors led to the prevalence of female-headed households. While 57.6% from the female-headed households and 36.8% from the male-headed households agreed that cultural factors led to the prevalence of female-headed households. The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Cultural factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural factors</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following were mentioned to explain the answer: eroded culture of male-dominated society has increased female-headed families, men misuse their powers as heads and become violent hence, more separations, male chauvinism, leads to forced marriages which later break up, women are entitled to property inheritance and ownership, stigmatization of earlier family incidences thus have children but do not marry, some cultures are dying out thus paving way for women to prove their powers, education of the girl child has awakened their relevance in the society, discouraged early marriages led to women develop themselves first, the society does not encourage wife inheritance so in case of death, the wife remains as the head, early marriages, a lot of westernization has eroded our cultural value of the family, stigmatization of female-headed households, the culture still supports male to be the head of the society in a civilized society. These findings are in line with that of Kabira and Muthoni (1994) who found that an empowered woman is not a rebellious woman, but an active person in development process, not only at family level but also at national level. She becomes aware of her capabilities to contribute constructively to development. She rightly fights for not only welfare, but also for participation and control of situations and resources, and benefits that accompany the two.

In an interview with the chief and assistant chiefs on whether cultural factors led to the prevalence of female-headed households, the following were mentioned: Female genital mutilation has been banned. Hence, girl child is performing better, poor perception in leadership and poor self-esteem. The area chief explained that:
According to the Ameru culture, women took second position and could not be consulted in major decision-making because they were taken to be equivalent to children. Women who gave birth to only daughters were looked down upon because girls were perceived to be inferior. This gave the man excuse to marry another woman who could give him sons. This is because boys were considered as security and were viewed as a continuity of the family and the entire clan. Currently, women are reacting to these cultural practices leading to the emergence of female-headed household. Alphonce Majau, A 58 year old chief from Kigane location, (20th June 2014).

Another assist chief commented that:

Women were meant for marriage and dowry had to be paid. This made women to be men's property for exchange as they moved from the male father to the male husband in this patriarchal community. Johnstone Mwereria, assistant chief aged 55 years from Kigane Location (18th June 2014).

Asked to further mention other social factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households. The following were mentioned: polygamy, alcoholism, death, unfaithfulness, domestic violence, disease, freedom and religion. In line with these findings, Nantondo (2012) on the position of women in the church, she asserted that many women were not passive but played a role in the church, liberative texts in the Bible that affirm their equal worth before God and that is why many continue to be in the church. This is a valid point and while this type of personal liberation is important, it
is, on its own, inadequate in dealing with the structures that maintain and perpetuate
gender inequality.

This strategy needs to go a step further and engage in a struggle for justice and gender
equality that will transform the face of the church so that gender equality becomes
intrinsic and visible in all aspects of church life, doctrine, practice and leadership. This
will empower women and in some cases may lead to female-headed households. In
Kigane Location, there were women who felt that God created both men and women in
His own image and made them equal custodians of his creation (Genesis 1:27-28).
Thus, women felt that it is biblical to take charge of their lives and that of their family
as single women because they are equal to men.

In an interview with the chiefs and assistant chiefs on other social factors leading to the
emergence of female-headed households the following were mentioned: Women
groups, women empowerment, children being brought up well, leadership from women,
alcohol and drug abuse by adult males and gender promotion.

4.2.4 Diseases

According to the Millennium Development Goals, goal six explains why it is necessary
to Combat HIV/AIDS. Across the globe, HIV/AIDS continue to pose a great threat to
health and living standards. An estimated 38.6 Million people worldwide were living
with HIV in 2005 (UNIDS, 2006). HIV and AIDS have fronted a multi-pronged attack,
damaging the continent’s socio-political and economic fabric. Sub-Saharan Africa
remains the region mostly affected by HIV (UNAIDS, 2009). According to (Avert,
2008), households are disintegrating as one or both parents die.
According to the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) (2010), Nyanza leads in HIV prevalence rate with 15.3 per cent testing HIV positive, followed by Nairobi (9.3%), Coast (7.7%), Rift Valley (7.0%), Eastern (4.7%), Central (3.8%) and North Eastern (1.0%).

It is at the level of the family and community that the fullest impact of HIV pandemic is felt. As one parent dies, the family struggles to cope not only emotionally but also economically. The woman left behind if it’s the husband who passed on, is left widowed to take care of her family. Kigane being in the Eastern region is not an exception when it comes to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and related deaths. In Kigane location, there are cases where the husbands die leaving behind widows who became household heads.

4.3 Influence of Economic Factors on Female-headed Households

In many developing countries, especially the patriarchal societies, men and women do not enjoy equal rights. Enjoyment of opportunities and allocation of resources are based on gender. Gender inequality involves the denial of opportunities and denial of equal rights on the basis of gender. Gender inequality is generally manifested in unequal rights for women’s access to basic social services such as education and health; unequal opportunities for participation in political and economic decision-making, nationally and at the household level; unequal rights for equal work; unequal protection under the law; preference for male children; higher poverty rates for female-headed households; violence against women and so on.
4.3.1 Women Employment in Agriculture

The majority of African women live in rural areas, largely confined to subsistence agriculture. They carry the responsibility for production and preparation of food in their households, caring for the elderly, the sick and performing a wide variety of voluntary community services.

All these contributions are not recognized or counted in national economic statistics. Poor women head many households and are more likely to take in orphaned children.

The agricultural sector in Kenya has been the mainstay of the economy, accounting for 24% of GDP, more than 50% of total export revenues and 62% of overall employment. Women are a major force in the agricultural sector (floriculture, tea, coffee, vegetables, cereals, poultry, mangoes, oranges). They constitute 70% of all agricultural workers (Feldman, 1984). In FGD with married women, one of them explained that:

*Women started the growing of bananas on wide scale. When it flourished, the men wanted to take over but most women like myself took up the courage and was adamant. When men eventually saw the point, they supported the work and supported it so well that we began to wonder whether it was just ignorance, or was it that they thought women could not think well- had no ability? or was it just that they were so filled with themselves that they could not imagine women can make it, She wondered. Annabelle Karimi, a 52 year old married woman from Mianguene village (22<sup>th</sup> June 2014).*

Another woman further explained that:

*When women think of development, they think of meeting the needs of their children and their families, that is number one. Then they think of the habitat-
where they live. They have the imagination and once the enabling factor of the income is there, they go into areas that were not women’s line in the past. Trophena Nkatha, a 44 year old married woman from Kirangano village (22th June 2014).

Women are involved in cash crop production, marketing and agro processing (Keino 1993). Women are also increasingly becoming farm managers and heads of farm households with estimates that more than 40% of all small-holder farms in Kenya are managed by women (Chengant, 1983). Yet women hold only about 1% of registered land titles in Kenya. Without title deeds, women are often unable to access co-operative membership for credit that should enable them to buy input to increase their productivity. It’s an obvious case that men control most of the land resources and the proceeds from the sector. Female-headed farmers own on average, less than half of the capital equipment owned by male-headed farms (World Bank 2001).

4.3.2 Women Employment in the Formal Sector

Although women are major actors in Kenya’s economy, particularly in Agriculture and the informal business sector, men tend to dominate the formal sector. Most women (58%) in the formal sector are employed in service industry and they typically occupy the lower paid jobs (Machaira 1998). But the labour market is changing with higher skilled women being employed in senior levels. The findings were as presented in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3: Formal Sector Employment in Kenya by Industry and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(000s)</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>(000s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Forestry</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining &amp; Quarrying</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and water</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, Restaurant Hotel</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Business Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education savings</td>
<td>188.1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>143.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of Kenya 2005

Women continue to be major actors in the informal sector of the Kenyan economy. The study found that 86.8% from the male-headed households and 81.8% from the female-headed households agreed that employment had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households, while 18.2% from the female-headed households and 13.2% from the male-headed households disagreed that employment had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households. According to Achola (1978), large number of women are involved in trade like buying wholesale and then retailing either in shops or taking goods round to homes in the neighbourhood. Many women also have small roadside hotels which cater for low income earners. Women also market their crops such as vegetables, fruits, grains, milk and fish to get income. Achola further states that
in the field of commerce, women comprise 16% of the casual workers. A good number of women are also in the rural manufacturing and service industries. Within service industry, about 72% of women work in restaurants, 37% are in tailoring, 16% in posho mill and 12% are in furniture business. One of the married women explained that:

_Economic empowerment have been promoted through professional and political action by women and men in the civil society. Women are now moving into private managed business: consulting firms, legal firms, import-export, construction, electronics and engineering. They are making it. Immaculate Kathambi, a 48 year old woman from Mbatika village (24th June 2014)._ 

These findings are also supported by Kinyanjui (2006) that in Kenya, women, comprise the vast majority of factory workers. Despite the benefits that women reap from formal employment, changing demographics in the workforce have also added stress on women’s lives. Women who work full-time in the EPZs also remain care-givers in the home – raising children and caring for the sick and elderly relatives. Double burdened and lacking support from the government and consideration from employers, female workers often find that the stress has destroyed their own health, broken up their family lives, and undermined their children’s chances of a better future. Indeed, 70% of the women are family heads either by _de jure _or _de facto _status. The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.4 below.
Table 4.3:1 Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were asked to explain their answers. The following were mentioned; more women are employed and opt to single parenthood, women spend more time working than with their families, men work far away from their homes thus women end up being heads, there were no employment opportunities before colonialism and as such these households never existed, they did not have a chance to lead the community, special vacancies only for women, employed ladies feel more powerful than their counterparts, men seek jobs outside the country thus leave their wives behind to look after their families, no more housewives.

In an interview with the chief and assistant chiefs on whether employment had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households, the following were mentioned: they are earning money hence become breadwinners and they share responsibilities with men. One of the assistant chiefs mentioned that:

*From when women were allowed to take identity card, things have changed. Now women have access to employment opportunities. This enables them to sustain their families without necessarily looking for support from the male husband figures. This has led to the increase in the number of female-headed household in Kigane*
Johnstone Mwereria, a assistant chief aged 55 years from Kigane location (18th June 2014).

In Kigane Location, over the last five years, most women have been actively participating in the business of selling banches of bananas to the Kikuyu traders almost three days in a week. The major markets are Ntharene, Mwichiune and Kanyakine. So women have generated income that have completely changed their lifestyle and meet the basic needs of the families they have.

4.3.3 Access to Land and Property

The study found that 78.8% from the female-headed households and 57.9% from the male-headed households agreed that access to land and property influenced emergence and rise of female-headed households while 34.2% from the male-headed households and 21.2% from the female-headed households disagreed that access to land and property influenced emergence and rise of female-headed households. The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to land and property</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents gave the following explanations for their answers: women can own and inherit property thus able to live alone, women have not been given or inherited land or property since culture doesn’t allow, women can now own and inherit property, only a few have access to such resources, these families existed even before women started owning property, the resources are still scarce. In support to these findings, property ownership by women has since changed. The civil law in Kenya section 3 of the Judicature Act, the married women’s property act 1882 of England (MWPA) was declared to be a statute of general application in Kenya. Section 1 of this act provides that a married woman is capable of acquiring, holding and disposing by will or otherwise any personal property as her personal property in the same manner as if she is unmarried. Under section 2 of the act, a married woman is entitled to hold her separate property and deal with it as she desires, this is the property she acquires from her wages, earnings from her employment, trade or occupation, or which she carries on separately from her husband (Gakuo, 2002).

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Act which was established in 2002 was to ensure government’s compliance with its international application of international human rights law in Kenya, which is largely in favour of women’s rights generally and the right to property in particular (KNCHR, 2002). This strengthens their economic power to singly own property and makes them competitive in the economic life. In Kigane Location, economically empowered women have acquired property like land, cars, plots because there are no legal obstacles to doing what was considered the male domain. This has worked against the tradition that the African woman’s place was
the home within the boundaries of her husbands’ territory leading to increase in female-headed households.

In interview with the chief regarding women access to land among the Ameru, he explained that:

*Perhaps the most serious setback for women came when land consolidation and settlement schemes gave title deeds to men as heads of households even when they were absent from the farms with males off-farm migration, women were the heads of households and farm managers. The result was that agriculture was left to one rather than two adults in some of the rural families.* Johnstone Mwereria, an assistant chief aged 55 years from Kigane location (18th June 2014).

The 1981 Law of Succession Act gave women and men equal rights to inherit, own and dispose of property. However, the customary settings, women did not own property such as land. As land is the most accepted form of security to acquire credit and because women generally lack land, they cannot mobilize loans to enable them to buy property in Kigane. Although the law does not distinguish between male and female heirs, in Meru and Kigane Location, culturally women did not inherit from their fathers and more so married women. Further, where a husband died, his brother and parents could disinherit the widow and claim their son had no wife or children. When the husband died, the widow could be chased away by the husband’s relatives. An 84 year-old woman had the following to say.

*When my husband passed on, I was chased from my home by my husband’s cousin. He came with a club and chased me. He said woman can’t stay in this*
homestead. He said I should go away so that he could till the land. If I had a son, he would not have chased me away. This was a disturbing experience of being driven away off my property by male relatives of my diseased husband. In addition, women who are widowed regardless of the death of the husband undergo traditional practices such as inheritance. Wife inheritance is the term used when a widow have sex with her dead husband's brother and then the brother in law is free to take the dead man's property including the widow. They take all her possessions such as farm equipments, livestock, household goods and land. Fridah Kendi, 84 year old woman from Nuugu village (22nd June, 2014)

Since 1985, there have been several important international conventions ratified by governments that confirm the rights of women, their participation and due place in socio-economic and political arena and the need for guaranteeing their safety and protection. Among these, the 1985 Forward Looking Strategies for Women held in Kenya, the Beijing Platform for Action developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in September, 1995 (itself based on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women), the Millennium Development Goals, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. For example the Beijing Conference called upon all governments to adopt “gender-sensitive multi-sectoral programmes and strategies to end social subordination of women and girls and to ensure their social-economic empowerment and equality” and the Millennium Development Goal includes targets meant to increase access to resources such as health and education for women (targets 3 and 6). In addition to these, many governments in Africa have policies and
strategies for the advancement of women and the protection of their rights (Wipper, 1984).

From mid-1970s, the government and political leaders began to actively support women. National government policy also supported the continued formation of women groups. This policy derived from a growing international interest in women's issues drawing from the UN impetus behind the international year of women and a worldwide strengthening of women's organizations (Wipper, 1975). According to Wambui (2002), during this period, there was an attempt to westernize or civilize the Africans and various statutes were enacted. In this period, succession to property largely depended on the system of marriage. For Africans who contracted civil marriage either under Marriage Act cap 150 or the African Christian Marriage and Divorce Act cap 151, only the surviving spouse and the children of such marriages could inherit from the deceased. In relation to the Africans married under customary law, the law of succession applicable was still the customary law. All these are indications that many policies passed on women were discriminative and did not give women enough space to invest in ownership of properties especially in the first two decades of independence.

Asked to explain the influence of the above policies on female-headed households, they mentioned that women did not have the ability, power, and control of anything including children. The area chief explained that:

_In Meru culture, women were not allowed to have property like land registered in their names. They only worked on land that was registered under their father's or their husband's name. Johnstone Mwereria, a assistant chief aged 55 years from Kigane location (18th June, 2014)._
In FGD with married women on access to land, one of them explained that:

*The women's right advocacy has been gaining momentum gradually from the time of our independence although in those days the struggle was just known as nationalism, gender was not so much an issue. From 1975 at the dawn of the women’s decade, we begun to make our voices be heard and from time to time the government reacted. A good example is the law on inheritance.* Florence Ncekei, 43 year old married woman from Sii village (19th June 2014).

The findings of the study shows that women access to land and property made women independent and therefore they could head their families by choice.

**4.3.4 Economic Hardships**

The study found that 69.7% from the female-headed households and 68.4% from the male-headed households agreed that economic hardships had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households, while 31.6% from the male-headed households and 30.3% from the female-headed households disagreed that economic hardships had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households.
The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: Economic hardships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic hardships</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were asked to explain their answers. The following were mentioned due to high cost of living, men cannot provide everything for their families thus separation, poverty makes women stick to the male-headed households since they have no way out, women tend to leave their husbands if they cannot provide and vice-versa and that they have acquired survival tactics. Due to high cost of living, it will be hard for single parents to support their families. These findings are in line with that of Kabira and Muthoni (1994) where they found that an empowered woman is not a rebellious woman, but an active person in development process, not only at the family level but also at the national levels. She becomes aware of her capabilities to constructively contribute to development. She rightly fights for not only her welfare, but also for participation and control of situations and resources together with the benefits that accompany the two. Economic hardship was one of the factors which was perceived to have pushed women to contribute to the economic development.
Other factors leading to the emergence of female-headed household mentioned were: high cost of medical facilities, businesses and self-employment, unemployment, banks and Saccos offering affordable loans to women, insufficient funds from unemployment, high cost of living, emergence of the business woman class, unpredictable weather patterns, unequal distribution of resources, lack of enough capital, extra marital affairs and women participation in politics.

On access to finances, a number of NGOs such as FAULU Kenya, Kenya rural enterprise programme (K-REP), and the Kenya women’s finance trust (KWFT) are lending schemes for small-scale entreprenuers who have no tangible security. The advantage of the lending policies of these organizations lies in the friendship and trust that exists among the groups which are given loans (Muteshi, 2006). This gives women opportunity to access finances which they use to carry out their businesses thus they become economically empowered. In Kigane Location, women get loans to start self-help projects such as vegetable gardening, animal husbandry, pottery, sewing and knitting and they also form saving and credit societies. These women, therefore, do not require security from their husbands or consent from them. This has enabled women to acquire property and has punctuated male domination in property ownership.

In an interview with the chief and assistant chiefs on whether economic hardships had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households the following were mentioned: They are able to manage finances and do save in groups/banks and they are more economic. Therefore, their consumption is less compared to males. One of the assistant chiefs mentioned that:
We have men who drink irresponsibly and misuse the family resources therefore, they are not able to meet their responsibilities. They are just like children in the house. In this case, some women opt to divorce and take care of the children single handedly as the family heads. In some cases, even if the women don't divorce, they remain the major decision makers of the family as the family heads. John Mugambi, assistant chief aged 49 years (18th June 2014).

In Kigane Location, most men are daily drinkers, thus they have turned to irresponsible drinking and substance abuse on daily basis. This is caused by the local illicit brew commonly found in almost every home. The children, therefore, have no father role models and the women are left as the household heads and even taking care of their irresponsible husbands.

4.3.5 Women Empowering Organizations

At the height of the 1980s, the largest women’s association in Kenya was MYWO. It involved around 5000 rural clubs and a membership of 500,000. At the 1985 decade for women, it assumed a leadership role both at the NGO forum and at governmental conferences (Nzomo, 1989). It was given a boost by the increasing attention of overseas aid agencies to women’s projects. MYWO was seen by foreign donors as a viable vehicle through which to channel resources to women at the grassroots level. For example, a Kenya news magazine reported that MYWO received several million dollars over a three-year period in the mid-1980s (Weekly Review, 1989).

As was the case in immediate postcolonial contexts across sub-Saharan Africa, the birth of the Kenyan Nation in 1963 generated wide ranging consideration of the state’s role in
defining and ensuring women's legal rights (Vaughan, 1994). Kenyan civic leaders, politicians and members of the public argued over whether national independence should entail greater autonomy and guaranteed rights for women. Women and welfare organizations held seminars at which participants discussed the “confusion” faced by single women living in the new social milieu of East Africa's towns and cities as well as the challenges posed to the institution of marriage by women who had school education and salaried employment (Cooper, 1994). As an assistant minister, B.C. Maisori-Itumbo declared in 1967, “No social institution in Kenya has come under greater strain in recent years than the institution of marriage” (McClintock, 1995). It was within this context of a perceived gender and crisis that the Affiliation Act, a law ostensibly designed to ensure the welfare of children born outside of marriage, became the subject of debate over the relative powers of men and women and the value of the “modern” and “traditional” in post colonial Kenya. While welfare and women's organizations hailed the Affiliation Act as a crucial step toward providing for children born outside marriage and protecting women from irresponsible men, many male politicians and members of the public complained that it was a “foreign imposition” that made “men (the) slaves of women” and encouraged female promiscuity and prostitution (Joshua, 1964).

At present, women empowerment reaches its highest forms in non-formal education programmes. The alternative spaces provided by women-led NGOs promote systematic learning opportunities through workshops on topics such as gender subordination, reproductive health, and domestic violence, and provide the opportunity for women to
discuss problems with others. The positive effects of these spaces for developing women's confidence cannot be overstated (Stromquist, 2002).

While in some respects the 'breakdown’ of the traditional patriarchal family has been a positive change for women, in other respects, it has exacerbated their economic and social vulnerability. Modernization may lead to increased women's labourforce participation, new possibilities for autonomy and independence, and enhancement of political rights, but it has also allowed significant reductions in males’ responsibilities and narrowed their role as family protectors and providers. The changes in female roles have not been adequately accompanied by corresponding accommodation in male roles (Folbre, 1991). Women gain freedom from the patriarchal structure but simultaneously face new obligations frequently in hostile socio-economic contexts. Males on the other hand, also gain more freedom from these new arrangements but unlike women, do not take on but instead shed or postpone family obligations.

At the height of the 1980s, the largest women's association in Kenya was MYWO. It involved around 5000 rural clubs and a membership of 500,000. At the 1985 decade for women, it assumed a leadership role both at the NGO forum and at governmental conferences (Nzomo, 1989). It was given a boost by the increasing attention of overseas aid agencies to women's projects. MYWO was seen by foreign donors as a viable vehicle through which to channel resources to women at the grassroots level. For example, a Kenya news magazine reported that MYWO received several million dollars over a three-year period in the mid 1980s (Weekly Review, 1989).

The co-option of MYWO and the defunct National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) speak of how these visible and publicly acknowledged institutions were
employed to articulate specific messages around what legitimate women’s organizing could be (Okech, 2008). This legitimacy led to defining what an authentically Kenyan women’s rights discourse was, which was essentially a discourse that would not disrupt the status quo. Their nationalistic outlook, in terms of vast membership across the country, only made it easier. The constant derision of women’s rights activists as ‘Beijing women’, or references to the trouble that was brought to the shores of Kenya after the Beijing Conference, are in response to an emergence of a fairly radical crop of activists located within various structures around the country who began to challenge and shift the dominant discourse on women’s rights that was hitherto shaped by MYWO and NCW (Okech, 2008).

4.3.6 Advocacy Institutions for Women’s Rights

The study found that 87.9% from the female-headed households and 71.1% from the male-headed households agreed that advocacy institutions led to the prevalence of female-headed households while 28.9% from the male-headed households and 12.1% from the female-headed households and disagreed advocacy institutions led to the prevalence of female-headed. The findings of the study were presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Advocacy Institutions for Women’s Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy institutions for women’s rights</th>
<th>Female Household Heads</th>
<th>Male Household Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents were asked to explain their answers. The following were mentioned:

Sensitization of women on their rights hence, they can live alone comfortably after a separation or divorce, women have been given more rights and powers like men, women have copied the western culture which has much of single parenthood, introduction of the women and youth fund, they have led to more divorces due to incitement, formation of FIDA which fights for their rights, good practice of their rights, it is more in writing than in practice. According to Muteshi (2006), FIDA is committed to the creation of a society that is free of all forms of discrimination against women. Another institution fighting for women's rights is the Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) which is a pan-African non-governmental organization founded in 1992. The main goal of the FAWE is to increase access, improve retention and enhance the quality of education for girls and women in Africa. One of the respondents explained that

*Since the initiation institutions that champion the fight for women rights, women have become very difficult, disrespect men and they feel they can live a fulfilling life without husbands. Of late, in the location, there are cases of women battering men which is un African.* Peter Kaumbuthu, *a 50 year old married from Mpuri village (23rd June, 2014).*
4.4 Women Participation in Politics

Since 1963, most obstacles placed before the Kenyan women participating fully in political affairs have been removed and women can now participate freely. There are no more inhibition based on sex, in running for political office. Consequently, women have organized themselves against all odds to struggle to contribute their own quota in national political arena (Uchendu, 1993).

Kenyan women are participating with men in the political life of this county. There are now women among the political class and many hold various political offices. Time has passed when Kenyan women believed that national issues had nothing to do with them, that they leave the affairs of the country almost entirely to men. This is to say that women today are doing away with the old school of the Victorian concept of women that allowed men to run the affairs of the country while they got on running the homes and bringing up children, that their contributions should stop at the door step (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997).

The representation of women in the Kenyan legislature has been weak, and signifies the presence of a glaring gender imbalance since independence in 1963. This table shows the gender imbalance in representation in the legislature since 1963.
Table 4.7: Members of the Kenya National Assembly by year of election and gender, 1963-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR OF ELECTION</th>
<th>NO. OF CANDIDATES</th>
<th>ELECTED MEMBERS</th>
<th>NOMINATED MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to IED Report (1997), in all the years, women have averaged 0.6% of elected MPs since 1963. In the best years when the percentage of women has improved in an election year, this was no more than 3.2%, in 1974 and 1992. Thus, it is obvious that women are grossly under-represented in the legislature. Although they constitute more than 51% of the voters, women never used their numerical strength to elect women candidates. Thus, for instance, in the 1992 general elections, a total of 70 women stood for elections but only 6 were elected to parliament. In 1997, Charity Kaluki Ngilu and Wangari Maathai became the first woman vying for the presidential position in Kenya. They however, managed to garner only 7.98% of the votes cast in comparison to the male candidates who between them captured the remaining 92.02% of the votes (IED
Currently, women even participate in the presidential elections. The current constitution also emphasizes the one third women representation in elective posts. In Meru, many women have participated in political leadership. In the 1990s, councilor Kanana and Kirumba won elective posts. They inspired other women to aspire for leadership qualities both locally and nationally.

Since women make up slightly more than half (50.1%) of the population in Kenya (Were & Kiringai, 2003), they are involved in all political parties. However, in the 1997 elections, though they made up 51.1% of voters, women comprised only 5.7% of electoral candidates and 3.6% of the National Assembly. In 2002, this made Kenya one of the countries with the lowest level of achievement in gender equality and women’s empowerment in terms of parliamentary seats in Progress of the Worlds Women (UNIFEM, 2002).

The participation of women in the civil service has been disproportionate. In 2001, only two out of 70 district commissioners were women and women held between 7 and 10% of elective positions in local authorities (GTG, 2001). Since 1991, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been a woman. However, in 1998 women made up only 26% of employees in the Foreign Services and 6.1% of ambassadors.

In the Kibaki government women hold 8% of the parliamentary seats, up from 3.6% in September 2002 (Were and Kiringai, 2003) but it should be noted that the majority are through affirmative action. Kibaki also appointed six women to his government team, three ministers and three assistant ministers (Tabriyyeh, 2003). However, there is no policy regarding the exact slots for women in the Kenyan political arena.
One would expect that in the independent Kenya, many women are participating more actively in political matters of the country, judging from their zeal during the colonial era. Available facts point to the contrary, there seems to be a general lack of interest, on the part of women, in contesting for political positions. In recent times, only a small percentage of woman, has taken active part in national politics. This can be attributed to the notion commonly held that Kenyan politics is still dirty, yet others still believe that politics is a male sphere and they are not even willing to vote for a fellow woman candidates. This indicates that women are the biggest enemies to themselves. Some also hold that most of those successful women were either single, divorced or separated (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997).

Hence, the particular principle that woman should not be at the apex. A man should always be the head and no matter how little the man is he is regarded superior to the woman, a woman acceptance of the male superiority. It appears like there is a conspiracy put in place by the political post-colonial governments to consign women to a position of political inactivity rendering them permanent supports of the male. Women were and are still most visible in the colourful entertainments they put up for male politicians whether at airports, for visiting dignitaries or Kenyan politicians. On other occasions women in the crude patriarchal styles, are only referred by male politicians when they either want to insult their opponents whose behaviour is chided as “womanish”. The language of total man, let meet man to man, mimi mwanaume promotes patriarchal images.

So, a woman starts from a position of natural weakness and in politics she is considered an intruder to be taught where she belongs. At independence, the women were referred
to as “mothers of the nation”, a position that did not translate into political power or recognition. The powerful political positions went to the male “fathers of the nation”. Although both male and female fought for the land and freedom of Kenya, women were excluded from full national participation on equal footing with men. Consequently, the “mothers of the nation” remained manifestly oppressed. Women have never formed more than 3 per cent of elected members of parliament. In 1969, there was one elected, five were elected in 1974, three in 1979, one in 1983, two in 1988 and six in 1992 (Masinjila & Kabira, 1997).

In the past, issues were viewed from a male perspective. As Kibwana states: in the past, the society was viewed and interpreted through men’s eyes. When you see society through both men and women’s eye, you logically should see more (Kibwana, 1996). Women were empowered at the individual level so that their self-esteem is raised, instilling in them the fact that they have a right to determine the shape of their future.

To some extent, there is a change from the participation that politics belongs to the public domain and therefore for me, women are able to compete in this public sphere in equal footing with men.

In an FGD, one woman explained that:

_We are part of the composition of this society we have to be part of the present and the future of this country. So we have to also to participate in the making of this modern country, we can not only leave it only to men to decide for us. We are human beings, we are all half of this society, we are half of the population, and its our right to have a say._ Easter Gakii, a 45 year old woman from Mituatine village (18th June 2014).
Women’s right to stand for and hold political office on bodies ranging from international commissions to village councils is a crucial aspect of our political rights. This is about women taking part in making decisions that affect all our lives and on an equal basis with men. Women’s marginalization from power, which is overwhelmingly in men’s hands, means that local and national priorities are defined with little contribution from women and this makes it harder to change government, actions and policies that undermine women (Shyder & Tadesse, 1995).

By right, about 50 percent of the world’s MPs should be women, but the actual proportion is only 17 per cent. If women don’t engage in politics, women issues remain invisible. Even after taking office, women often need support to operate independently from male-dominated power structures (Terry, 2007).

The gender gains provided for in the Constitution of Kenya provide a beginning point for Kenya in providing a legal backing for ensuring equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. It is important to underline that these gender provisions are just a beginning point and that more efforts and political will are needed for the laws to be fully functional in the day-to-day life of men and women.

In Article 81 (e), women are protected from acts of inequalities that tend to limit their participation in running for elective posts. The Constitution maintains a one third requirement for either gender in elective bodies giving women of Kenya at least one third minimum in elective bodies (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).
In Article 91 (f), political parties are required to respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality and equity. In the past, women who were willing to run for elective posts suffered violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption to hinder them from running for elective posts. This has partially contributed to the low representation of women in decision-making organs at the constituency or city/town council levels. The provisions of Article 81 will go a long way in creating an environment that encourages equal participation for men and women willing to run for these elective posts (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

Social, political and economic policies effected during Kibaki's regime included: women empowerment and equality, free primary education, gender equality, affirmative action where women were to form a third of all government appointments, promulgation of the new constitution, and formation of Kenya women finance trust (KWFT). Women were given rights to own land and inherit property, women could have a percentage in holding public offices, accesses to resources in the same capacity as men, women were empowered to be financially stable, women got awareness of their rights and equal education opportunities to all. These findings are supported by Were and Kiringai (2003) who found that in the Kibaki government, women held 8% of the parliamentary seats, up from 3.6% in September 2002 but it should be noted that the majority are through affirmative action. These findings are also supported by Muteshi (2006) who mentioned that in April 1997, the Kenya Women's Political Caucus was born at the foyer of Parliament by women's activist following the defeat of Hon Phobe Asiyo motion presented to Parliament on 23rd April 1997 to advance gender equity through affirmative action in national policy.
Kenyan women from diverse parts of the country were angered and infuriated by the derogatory manner in which the male-dominated Parliament dismissed the motion. The Asiyo motion called for affirmative legislation action to set aside 30% of all parliamentary positions for women to ensure gender equity at all levels of Kenyan society. The comments made on the floor reflected myriad positions on the line that divide the Kenyan society on the issue of women’s empowerment from the hostile and rigid positions of paternalistic traditionalist that would seek to ensure that the public sphere remains the preserve of male privilege. The recognition that women’s empowerment through affirmative action parallels that of the African Kenyan immediately after independence and often evident also was the mistaken position that women’s gender equity is not a party policy (Muteshi, 2006).

Kibaki also appointed six women to his government team, three ministers and three assistant ministers. However, there is no policy regarding the exact slots for women in the Kenyan political arena. The government also introduced measures to facilitate women’s labour market participation in the public sector through paid maternity leave, housing allowance and equal opportunities policies.

In an interview with the chief and assistant chiefs on the policies passed during Kibaki’s regime, 2002-2010, the following were mentioned: Women were more enlightened since they were involved in all forums and representations, there was equality, affirmative action was put in place and therefore, one third representation of female in leadership positions and in development institutions. This was initiated by the Asiyo motion of 1997 called for affirmative legislation action to set aside 30% of all parliamentary positions for women to ensure the creation of a critical mass that will lead
to ensuring gender equity at all levels of Kenyan society. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) states that “the state shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender”.

In a FGD with married women some policies passed in the post colonial period that impacted on women, one of the women mentioned that:

*The new constitution of 2010 under Kibaki regime gave women more opportunities to participate in politics and job opportunities. It is when one third of the employment opportunities and political seats are reserved for women.*

*Isabella Chauria, a 49 year old married woman from Mianguene village (19th June 2014).*

In conclusion, the socio-economic and political factors contributed to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane Location. Social factors such as women education led to their empowerment as women who acquired education could access formal employment and become independent. Economically, women who got involved into agriculture and formal employment were empowered as they could comfortably provide for their families from their income. Women could also access land and other properties thus allowing them to access credit services as they could use the title deeds as collateral. Empowering institutions like Maendeleo ya Wanawake articulated the socio-political and economic issues that affected women. Politically, the 2010 constitution allowed a third representation of female leadership position in development and political institutions. Women could now participate in politics at the same level ground with their male counterparts.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of female-headed households from 1963 to 2010 in Kigane Location, Meru County. The study was guided by the following objectives: to interrogate the importance of marriage and family among the Ameru before 1963, to assess the colonial policies and the emergence of the female-headed households in Kigane Location and to investigate the socio-economic and political factors leading to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane location. This chapter therefore presents the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study

This section presents the summary of the findings of the study according to the objectives.

5.2.1 The Ameru in the Pre-colonial Period

On the historical background of the Ameru, the community lived on an Island (Gichigiira) before they were conquered by the Nguuntune (Red people). The Ameru came from the Manda Island in the Indian Ocean. This tradition explains that the Ameru originated from Urio which literally means “North”. According to this tradition, there was no way the ancestors of the Ameru could have confused direction since from time immemorial, they were guided by the sun in determining the direction. They say the sun
moves in East-West direction, and facing the West, the direction of the setting sun, the right hand (Njara ya urio) would always point North.

Traditionally, the Ameru were conquered by the nguuntune (Red people) and were taken to captivity in the direction of the rising sun (maumo ja riuu), to mbwa. Here, the Ameru were put into captivity and their freedom infringed, dehumanized and humiliated. The Reds was a term applied to the people of semantic origin. The oral tradition traces the origin of the Ameru from the Nile basin. This is because the Ameru and the Cushites share some cultural characteristics such as: cyclic age-grade system, they did not eat fish prior to the coming of the Europeans, they drunk blood from necks of animals after piercing them with arrows and that they circumcise both males and females.

In terms of economic activities, since Meru straddles the equator, seasons were not determined by fluctuations in temperature as in the temperate lands but through variations in rainfall. A complete cycle was made of two dry seasons and two wet seasons. The rainy seasons were (uthima) from March to April, then (thano) from June to August. The second shorter rain season was (uragura) which came from late October into December. Then from January to March was the second dry season (mumyaro) (Imanyara, 1990). The Ameru settled along narrow pockets of agriculturally desirable soil. They did intensive cultivation of millet, bananas, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, peas while those near the streams grew arrowroots. In the rainy period, men had no formal agricultural obligations while women were occupied in planting and weeding. The Ameru also participated in the local trade, crafts and repairs where most of these
activities were restricted to women, although men were responsible for leatherwork and ironworking.

In terms of marriage, the Ameru women and children constituted a guarantee to real wealth, just as cattle did in the pastoral communities. Cattle were used for dowry, Hence, the more animals, the more wives and more children which made one rich and wealthy. The woman was basically expected to be a good child bearer. Properly conceived, children were much more than valued resources in meeting subsistence needs, and potentially creating wealth. Marriage is given a central place in most communities including the Ameru because it strengthens and reestablishes the community. It brings together not only the two individuals getting married but also the extensive kinship groups to which the individuals belong. It does not only concern the survival of the individual but also the community because it establishes fellowship with the living, the dead and the unborn.

5.2.2 The Impact of Colonial Policies on the Female-headed Households

The coming of the British to Kenya brought about a turning point in Meru people’s history. In 1895 Meru and the rest of Kenya came under the British colonial rule. During this period, nearly all Kenya’s indigenous governmental institutions were demolished to the onslaught of European mode of socio-economic and political systems. In 1908, AD, the British established colonial administration in Meru and posted the first district commissioner named Horne who was nicknamed Kangangi (Imanyara, 1992).
On the existence of female-headed households before 1963, the study found that 53.3% of the respondents from the male-headed households and 48.5% of the respondents from the female-headed households disagreed that the female-headed households existed before 1963. The study also found that 87.9% from the female-headed households and 84.2% from the male-headed households agreed that there has been change in the number of female-headed households from 1963. On the influence of colonial policies on female-headed households the following were mentioned: women carried the role of providing for the family and consequently became household heads, women became more enlightened through education, men migrated to urban centres to work in order to pay taxes thus leaving women as heads, enhancing leadership qualities in women, women taking influential positions in society today, families suffered very much since there were no breadwinners when men migrated in search of employment, creating awareness of women’s rights and freedoms, more women went to school, women were left to take care of the families in absence of their husbands, more separations and divorces due to women attaining higher status than men.

5.2.3 The Socio-Political and Economic Factors Leading to the Prevalence of Female-Headed Households in Kigane Location

In the Kibaki government women held 8% of the parliamentary seats, up from 3.6% in September, 2002 (Were & Kiringai, 2003) but it should be noted that the majority are through affirmative action. Kibaki also appointed six women to his government team, three ministers and three assistant ministers. However, there is no policy regarding the
exact slots for women in the Kenyan political arena. The government also introduced measures to facilitate women’s labour market participation in the public sector through paid maternity leave, housing allowance and equal opportunities policies.

The gender gains provided for in the Kenya Constitution of 2010 provided a beginning point for Kenya in providing a legal backing for ensuring equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. It is important to underline that these gender provisions are just a beginning point and that more efforts and political will are needed for the laws to be fully functional in the day-to-day life of men and women. In Article 81 (e), women are protected from acts of inequalities that tend to limit their participation in running for elective political posts. The Constitution maintains a one third requirement for either gender in elective bodies giving women of Kenya at least one third minimum in elective bodies (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

In Article 91 (f), political parties are required to respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and gender equality and equity. In the past, women who were willing to run for elective posts suffered violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption to hinder them from running for elective posts. This contributed to the low representation of women in decision-making organs at the constituency or city/town council levels. The provisions of Article 81 will go a long way in creating an environment that encourages equal participation for men and women willing to run for these elective posts (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

In Article 45 (3), parties to a marriage are entitled to equal rights at the time of the marriage, and at the dissolution of the marriage. This will ensure equal rights of women and men to jointly own property with their spouse during the duration of the marriage.
Article 43 of the new Constitution provides the right for both men and women to access basic needs such as highest attainable standard of health (which includes reproductive health care), adequate housing and reasonable standard of housing, adequate food of acceptable quality, clean and adequate water, social security, and education. These basic needs are major underlying tenets for the attainment of gender equality and empowerment (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

Policies passed during Kibaki's regime included: women empowerment and equality, free primary education, gender equality, affirmative action where women were to form a third of all government appointments, promulgation of the new constitution, and formation of Kenya women finance trust (KWFT). Women were given rights to own land and inherit property, women could have a percentage in holding public offices, accesses to resources in the same capacity as men. Women were empowered to financially stable, women got awareness of their rights and equal education opportunities to all.

On the socio-cultural factors leading to the prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane Location, the study found that 97.1% from the male-headed households and 93.9% from the female-headed households agreed that education led to the prevalence of female-headed household. The study also found that 87.9% from the female-headed households and 63.2% from the male-headed households agreed that advocacy institutions led to the prevalence of female-headed households. It was finally found that 57.6% from the female-headed households and 39.5% from the male-headed households agreed that cultural factors led to the prevalence of female-headed households.
In many of the social formations especially in Africa, patriarchal relations were the basis of women's invisible and voiceless status in written history. Under patriarchy, women are politically, economically and socially subordinated and powerless as a gender group. It is constituted at the household level with the male head of the household being a patriarch. This patriarchal ideology influences gender divisions institutionalized at the household level and transplanted at the community level. The division of labour is by gender and it includes access to land and control of resources as the major means of production such as land, forest, cattle. In many areas, women access to resources are decided by men (Ngaiza, 1995).

Regarding the influence of economic factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households from 1963 to 2010 in Kigane location, the study found that 81.8% from the female-headed households and 78.9% from the male-headed households agreed that employment had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households. The study also found that 78.8% from the female-headed households and 57.9% from the male-headed households agreed that access to land and property influenced emergence and rise of female-headed households. The study found that 69.7% from the female-headed households and 60.5% from the male-headed households agreed that economic hardships had led to the emergence and rise of female-headed households.

5.3 Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there were very few female-headed households in the pre-colonial period in Kigane. Colonial policies recruited able-bodied men to go provide labour in the settlers' plantations and do other public
work. This led to the emergence of female-headed households. The study further concluded that socio-cultural factors such as education, advocacy institutions for women rights and cultural factors influence female-headed households. It can finally be concluded that economic factors such as employment, access to land and property as well as economic hardships have led to the emergence of female-headed households.

5.4 Recommendations

i) The study recommends that women representation should be increased at both county and national levels and more affirmative action taken. Further, the state should ensure gender balance and fair representation of women in all constitutional and developmental bodies to articulate issues of concern to women.

ii) The study also recommends that many educated women should come down to the grassroot level, to bridge the gap and help grassroot women organize themselves. They should overcome the temptation of concentrating in the urban and big cities only as the real need is in the rural areas where the majority of women are still illiterate, unsensitized and poor.

iii) The study further recommends that gender equality should be realized through partnership of both men and women working together in a just environment where gender equality can be achieved and nurtured.

iv) The study also recommends that all leaders accept positive change of attitude and new ways of doing things should be positively embraced. They should re-adjust to fully accept the changes in gender dynamics.
v) The study further recommends that all women should unite. They should identify and discuss their problem because if they don’t men will not do it for them.

vi) Finally, the study recommends that the church should fully liberate women, should have church laws that are accommodative so that they can fully articulate the feminine nature, role and contribution of women.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study was carried out among the male and female household heads, married women and the relevant government officials (Chief and assistant chiefs) in the location of study. The study focused on the dynamics of female-headed households from 1963 to 2010 in Kigane Location, Meru County. The researcher recommends that a more critical case study should be done on the oppressive African patriarchal system and its overwhelming impact on the women in Kenya.

The study also recommends that another study be done on men and the vulnerabilities they face in the 21st Century.
REFERENCES


American Historical Review 99, No. 5: 1516-45


Deven, F. (1996). (Relational Patterns and Family Dynamics. The Second Sex,
Batnam, New York.


East African Protecorate {EAP} (1913). Native Labour Commission, Evidence and
Report, Nairobi.


in Elliott, edited, Global Empowerment of Women: Responses to Global and


Engineer A.A (1985). Islam and Muslim: A critical Reassessment print well publishers,
Jaipur, India.


Press.Athens.

Ohio.


Zimbabwe Women’s Resources Centre and Network. Harare.


Harris, M. (1959) ‘Labour Migration among the Mozambique Thonga: Cultural and 
Political Factors’, Africa.

the impact of religious teachings on women –Trinity Press International- 
Philadelphia.

Longman Publishers, New York

University of Winconsin.

Hay, M.J (1976). Economic change in the late 19th century, Kowe, Western Kenya; in 
Ogot B.A, Hadithi 5, Economic and social history of East Africa. Nairobi, KLB.

Nancy Haftkin and Edna Bay (eds.) Women in Africa; Studies in Socio- 
economic Change, Stanford, Calif.

Western Kenya’, in Margaret Jean Hay and Marcia Wright (eds.), African 
Women and the Law: Historical Perspectives, Boston, Mass.

York.
Hunter, Monica. (1936). Reaction to conquest: effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa. London: Oxford University Press.


Richards, A. (1939) Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia, London.


Uchendu P.K. (1993). The role of Nigerian women in politics, Published by Fourteen Dimension. Published by fourth dimension Co. Ltd Enugu Nigeria.


Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira and Patricia Ngurukie (1977) – Our Mothers’ Footsteps Published by Collaborative centre for gender and Development, Nairobi.


Journals


Unpublished Thesis


Internet sources

http://themerucounty.com

http://www.tradingeconomics.com accessed 11th August 2013

Archival Sources

KNA PC. NZA 3.48.1 DC Soult

KNA (1901). PC RVP to colonial secretary.

KNA (1919). Northey Circulars. of 23rd October.
KNA (1934). Memorandum of Taxation.
KNA (1947). Secretariat 1/12/08 labour unrest labour
KNA D.C ELGM.1.2 DAR 1937
KNA DC, NY1.1.2 DAR 1930
KNA DC. CN. 1. 4.5 DAR, 1935
KNA DC. NKU.2.1
KNA Labour 9.1889. 75. 260
KNA labour. 9.1055
KNA PC. NZA 3.17.3.PC
KNA. Labour , 3.40.
KNA: CNC filos, 10.16.A
KNA: DC MKC.21.2, labour
KNA: Labour 3.40
KNA: Labour 5.33.4 1426
KNA: Labour 9. 1798.73.258.1937
KNA: Labour 9.1723. 71. 257
KNA: labour.9.1029, 1932
KNA: labour.9.1029, 1932
KNA: PC NZA.3.21.1, DC
Dear Madam/Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR DATA

I am a post graduate student pursuing a Masters in History Degree at Kenyatta University. I am required to submit as part of my research work assessment, a project on "THE DYNAMICS OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS FROM 1963 TO 2010 IN KIGANE LOCATION, MERU COUNTY". To achieve this, you have been selected to participate in the study. I kindly request you to fill the attached questionnaire to generate data required for this study. This information will be used purely for academic purposes and will be treated in confidence and will not be used for publicity. Neither your name nor the name of your institution will be mentioned in the report. Your assistance and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Dorcas

Kenyatta University
APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR FEMALE HOUSEHOLD HEADS

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT

1. Age Bracket: 18-25 Years [ ] 26-30 Years [ ] 31-35 Years [ ]
   36-40 Years [ ] 41-50 Years [ ] Above 50 Years [ ]

2. What is your highest academic qualification?
   "O" level [ ] Diploma [ ]
   Bachelors Degree [ ] Masters Degree [ ]
   Any other (specify)__________________________

3. How many children do you have? __________________________

4. Who are other members of your family? __________________________
   __________________________

5. What is your source of income? __________________________

6. Is your income adequate to sustain you and your family? Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Briefly explain your answer? __________________________
   __________________________
7. Has there been any change in family structure in Kigane Location in terms of family headship? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your answer?

8. a) Are there female-headed households in Kigane location currently? Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If yes, how many do you know?

c) The following are some of the reasons behind the existence of female-headed households. Which one among the reasons given below has contributed to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane Location?

Divorce [ ]
Separation [ ]
Widowhood [ ]
Single Parenthood [ ]

d) What are other reasons behind the existence of the above mentioned types of families in Kigane Location?

SECTION B: IMPACT OF COLONIAL POLICIES ON THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

9. Did female-headed household exist in Kigane location before 1963?
10. Comparing the prevalence of female-headed households in the period before 1963 and to date, has there been any change in terms of numbers?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Explain your answer: ____________________________

11. What are the policies passed during the colonial period that impacted on women?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

12. How did the above mentioned policies influence on female-headed households?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

SECTION C: INFLUENCE OF THE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE THREE REGIMES IN POST INDEPENDENCE KENYA ON FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KIGANE LOCATION

13. Which policies concerning women were passed by the following regimes and how did they influence female-headed household?

a) Kenyatta’s regime, 1963-1978: ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
Influence on female-headed households

b) Moi’s regime, 1978-2002:

Influence on female-headed households

c) Kibaki’s regime, 2002-2010:

Influence on female-headed households
SECTION D: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS LEADING TO THE PREVALENCE OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KIGANE LOCATION

14. The following are some of the perceived socio-cultural factors leading to the emergence and increase in female-headed households. Please indicate whether each of the factors have led to the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane location and give your explanation for the same.

a) Education: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explanation:

b) Establishment of advocacy institutions for women rights Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explanation:
c) Cultural factor:  
Yes [ ]  
No [ ]

Explanation: 


d) What are other social factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households? 


SECTION E: INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC FACTORS LEADING TO THE EMERGENCE AND ON FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS FROM 1963 TO 2010 IN KIGANE LOCATION

15. The following are some of the perceived economic factors leading to the emergence and increase in female-headed households. Please indicate whether each of the factors has led to the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane Location and give your explanation for the same:

a) Employment:  
Yes [ ]  
No [ ]

Explanation: 


b) Access to land and property:  
Yes [ ]  
No [ ]
Explanation: 


c) Economic hardship: Yes [ ] No [ ]
Explanation: 


d) What are other economic factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households?


16. What would you suggest to be done to strengthen and empower female-headed households in Kigane Location, Meru County?
APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR MALE HOUSEHOLD HEADS

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT

1. Age Bracket: 18-25 Years [ ] 26-30 Years [ ] 31-35 Years [ ]
   36-40 Years [ ] 41-50 Years [ ] Above 50 Years [ ]

2. Marital status: Married [ ] Single [ ]
   Divorced [ ] Separated [ ]

3. What is your highest academic qualification?
   "O" level [ ] Diploma [ ]
   Bachelors Degree [ ] Masters Degree [ ]
   Any other (specify)_________________________

4. Do you have a family? Yes [ ] No [ ]
   If yes, who are the members of your family?______________________________

5. What is your source of income?_____________________________________

6. Is your income adequate to sustain you and your family? Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Explain your answer?_________________________________________________
7. Has there been any change in family structure in Kigane location in terms of family headship? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your answer: ________________________________

8. a) Are there female-headed household in Kigane location currently? Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If yes, how many do you know? ________________________________

c) The following are some of the reasons behind the existence of female-headed households. Which one among the reasons given below have contributed to the emergence and prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane location?

- Divorce [ ]
- Separation [ ]
- Widowhood [ ]
- Single Parenthood [ ]

d) What are other reasons behind the existence of the above mentioned types of families in Kigane location? ________________________________

SECTION B: IMPACT OF COLONIAL POLICIES ON THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

9. Did female-headed household exist in Kigane location before 1963? Yes [ ] No [ ]
10. Comparing the prevalence of female-headed households in the period before 1963 and to date, has there been any change in terms of numbers?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

Explain your answer?

11. What are the policies passed during the colonial period that impacted on women?

12. How did the above mentioned policies influence on female-headed households?

SECTION C: INFLUENCE OF THE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE THREE REGIMES IN POST INDEPENDENCE KENYA ON FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KIGANE LOCATION

13. Which policies concerning women were passed by the following regimes and how did they influence female-headed household?

a) Kenyatta’s regime, 1963-1978: ___________________________________________
Influence on female-headed households

b) Moi’s regime, 1978-2002:

c) Kibaki’s regime, 2002-2010:
Influence on female-headed households

SECTION D: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS LEADING TO THE PREVALENCE OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KIGANE LOCATION

14. The following are some of the perceived socio-cultural factors leading to the emergence and increase in female-headed households. Please indicate whether each of the factors have led to the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane location and give your explanation for the same.

a) Education: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explanation: ____________________________________________

b) Establishment of advocacy institutions for women rights Yes [ ] No [ ]
c) Cultural factor: Yes [ ] No [ ]
Explaination: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

d) What are other social factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households?

Explaination: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

SECTION E: INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC FACTORS LEADING TO THE EMERGENCE AND ON FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS FROM 1963 TO 2010 IN KIGANE LOCATION

15. The following are some of the perceived economic factors leading to the emergence and increase in female-headed households. Please indicate whether each of the factors have led to the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane location and give your explanation for the same.

a) Employment: Yes [ ] No [ ]
b) Access to land and property: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explanation: ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

c) Economic hardship: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explanation: ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

d) What are other economic factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households?

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

16. What would you suggest to be done to strengthen and empower female-headed households in Kigane location, Meru County? ________________________________________________
APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR CHIEFS AND ASSISTANT CHIEFS

1. For how long have you served as a government official in Kigane Location?

2. Approximately how many households in Kigane Location are headed by females?

3. Did female-headed households exist in Kigane location before 1963?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

4. Comparing the prevalence of female-headed households in the period before 1963 and from 1963 to date, has there been any change in terms of numbers?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Explain your answer?

5. Have there been changes in family structure in Kigane Location from 1963 to date?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Briefly explain your answer?

6. What are the policies passed during the colonial period that impacted on women?


7. How did the above mentioned policies influence on female-headed households?


8. Which policies concerning women were passed by the following regimes and how did they influence female-headed household?

a) Kenyatta’s regime, 1963-1978:


Influence on female-headed households


b) Moi’s regime, 1978-2002:


Influence on female-headed households
c) Kibaki's regime, 2002-2010:

Influence on female-headed households

9. How has the following social factors influenced the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane Location. Please explain?

i) Education:

ii) Cultural factors:

iii) Establishment of advocacy institutions for women rights:
What are other social factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households?


10. How has the following economic factors influenced the emergence and increase in female-headed households in Kigane location. Please explain?

i) Employment: ____________________________________________________________

ii) Access to land and Property: __________________________________________

iii) Economic hardships: _________________________________________________

11. What are other economic factors leading to the emergence of female-headed households?


12. What would you suggest to be done to strengthen and empower female-headed households in Kigane Location, Meru County? ____________________________________________
APPENDIX V: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What is the prevalence of female-headed households in Kigane Location?

2. What are some of the policies passed in the colonial period that impacted on women?

3. How did the above mentioned policies contribute to the emergence of female-headed households?

4. What are some of the policies passed in the post colonial period that impacted on women?

5. How did the above mentioned policies contribute to the emergence of female-headed households?

6. What are the social factors which contributed to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane Location?

7. What are the economic factors which contributed to the emergence of female-headed households in Kigane Location?

8. What would you suggest to be done to strengthen and empower female-headed households in Kigane Location, Meru County?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac M’ikiugu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josphat Kimathi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David kabua</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanly Ntiritu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Kirangano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kaumbuthu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Kiairia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Kiorone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samwel m Ithira</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Kamundi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel M’Magiri</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Ntuuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus Magaju</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus Mwirigi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon M’Mbui,</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Gitime</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom M’Arimi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evans Murungi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kirangano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey Mbuuria</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Murugu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Kaguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Mwebia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sospeter Aariithi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William M’Rimbere</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mituatiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Nkirote</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Kiorone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Mukiri</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela Ntinyari</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy Kanana</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacinter Kaari</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Ntuuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Kananu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi Makena</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonina Gacheri</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellen Kibobori</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Kaimurii</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella Kinaitore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Kirangango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes Kairuthi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice Mukomeru</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Kioroone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Kanini</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanina Gtiiria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Kajuju</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabitha Teei</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Gatwiri</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Ntimemukui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Mwendawa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Makena</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mituatuatine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraphine Kairuthi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter M’Inoti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy M’Mrete</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Nguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kaaria</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John M’Mugambi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mituatine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justus Mathiu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon M’Rimberia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius Kithure</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Kirangano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Kirimi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Kiruga</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Kiorone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamlick Kuubania</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Munyuugi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Kinoti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Kuungania</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezekiel Kinyua</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah Ndethiu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Ndegua</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilfred Mwirigi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Nguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Gichuru</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mbatika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnstone Mwereria</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Ntimemukui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Gikunda</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gaatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricila Murochia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn Wanja</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajesina Nkatha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poline Makandi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Mbatika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice Mugure</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Kanja</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Nguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Karimi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ntuuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Gakii</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Mituatine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Chauria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Mukomunene</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Kanyomoo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Mpuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyliaka Kananu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Kiorone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Nduru</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Nchugune</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice Kabiti</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Kathure</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladys Nkirote</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Kanyu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Gaatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgit Karwirwa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Ntimemukui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Karumba</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mbatika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Ngugi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samson Kiguchwa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter magaju</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Kiogora</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mituatine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geofrey Kathurima</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul M’itunga</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silas M’Rutere</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Mugumone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias M’Muthamia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Kirangano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah M’Aguru</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elphantus Muthee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Ntuuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinelois Muthuri</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephano M’Mugwika</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Kubania</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Miriti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Gaatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Nteere</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra Mbaabu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphonce Majau</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Ntimemukui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Mutugi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M’Ramara</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Nguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakary Koome</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Gaatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celine Kinya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Nguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaculate Kathambi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Mbatika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justina Kagwiria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mwirangara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennedy Kagendo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Naitore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridah Kendi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Nchooro</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Mituatine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Kiende</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Kiambogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puity Mwendwa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Rarambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Karuta</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Kieni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorithy Gatabi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Abombitine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trophena Nkatha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kirangano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangeline Kaburo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Rwongorunene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anastacia Kaguuri</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Ntuuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence Ncekei</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Sii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salome Kainyu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ntimemukui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Kauthu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Gaatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica Mwariumwe</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Muturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julliet Kainyu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Megene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabelle Karimi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Mianguene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ngiira</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Nuugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Gakii</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Mbatika</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH PERMIT

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471;
2241345, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacostii.go.ke
Website: www.nacostii.go.ke
When replying please quote
Ref. No.

NACOSTI/P/14/3734/4314

Mbijjiwe Dorcas Kirumba
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Thechanging dynamics of Female Headed Households in Kiguru Location, Meru County (1963 – 2010),” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Meru County for a period ending 31 January, 2015.

You are advised to report the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are required to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

Said Hussein
For: Director-General/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.

The County Director of Education
Meru County.
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. MIRJUNE OMONDE KIUMBAA
of KENVATTA UNIVERSITY, 435-60200
MERU, has been permitted to conduct
research in Meru County

on the topic: THE CHANGING DYNAMICS
OF FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN
KIGANE LOCATION, MERU COUNTY
(1962-2010)

for the period ending:
31st January, 2015

Applicant's
Signature

Permit No: NACOSTI/P/15/3734/434
Date of issue: 8th January, 2015
Fee Received: Ksh 1,000

National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

Signature

National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

Applicant's
CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before you start work. Failure to do so may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least (2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notification.