

This thesis discusses the growth and development of education in Kitui District, a section of Kenyan Africans to enumerate some of the events that surrounded the development of Education in Kenya. Some studies on the history of African education have tended to suggest that it is the Europeans who were solely responsible for the development of education in Kenya, and the establishment of both missionary and government schools. But, this study has found out to the contrary that behind the success of every school during the early period was African effort.

The missionaries did introduce formal Western schooling to Kitui District by 1895, but its development was purely through the African effort. By 1909, none of the missionary schools in Kitui had developed successfully. This situation forced the government to step in and provide education to the Akamba, through the establishment of Kitui Government African School. However, this did not prove successful, as five years later, the enrolment figures remained much lower than expected, thus necessitating its closure in 1914. Real development was after the establishment of the Local Native Councils (LNCs) in 1925, which vowed to develop education in the district and establish a central primary school - a goal they achieved in 1939.

Missionary education had a strong religious bias and one of its goals was to convert Africans to Christianity. The Africans detested the condemnation of their religious and cultural practices by the missionaries and soon felt the need to have an education that would uphold their beliefs and culture.

The thesis gives a short history of the development of Kitui Government African School, the first secular government educational institution in the colony. It also shows the impact of the establishment of this school on missionary education and on the society up to 1939. The essence of this is to show that the African contribution went a long way towards improving African education in the district and colony as a whole, as well as uplifting the socio-economic, political and educational status of the Africans.

This study concludes by revealing that the Africans were indeed, the most important and powerful force behind the development of education in the colony. They provided land, labour, food, construction materials and finance for the establishment of the educational institutions, patronized these schools, and made up the bulk of the teaching force in both mission and government schools.

In addition, the study suggests other areas for further investigation. These include the contribution of Catholic missionaries to the development of education, and a full history of Kitui Government School, from 1939 to the present. If undertaken, such studies would go a long way towards supplementing the existing literature, identifying the real forces behind the development of education, and giving credit where due.