

This is a study of kilumi among the Akamba of Kitui district. It was undertaken because no in-depth study had been written on the Akamba religious dances and songs, the study investigates analyzes and interprets kilumi, a type of religious dance never systematically analyzed before. By filling this gap in research literature, this study has provided scholars of religious songs and dances elsewhere with some useful insights.

This study explicates the factors contributing to the decline of the kilumi dances. However, it should be noted that kilumi as an established cultural dance remains very much alive to the Akamba; although it's socio-religious occasions are on the decrease. Special attentions paid to kilumi song texts because through them the Akamba express deep relevance for their ancestral spirits.

The researcher participated in kilumi dances, observed and subsequently analyzed the religious significance of kilumi rituals; songs and dances-the main objective of the study. The respondents were sampled from the five divisions of Kitui District. The researcher constructed a flexible questionnaire which was used as a tool of procuring the necessary information from both traditional and church elders. The interviews were tape recorded when possible and later transcribed. These raw data which constituted the main source were augmented by information from the libraries to provide the basis for analysis and interpretation. Data collected was classified into four categories suggested by the Akamba elders themselves. Accordingly, the kilumi rituals and dances fall into four main groups namely:

- (1) Worship kilumi
- (2) Therapeutic kilumi
- (3) Cleansing kilumi
- (4) Initiation kilumi.

The songs were categorised according to the various spirits which were believed to possess individuals in kilumi dances.

One of the findings of this study is that formal education, urbanization, western technology and Christianity are the major influences which have made the kilumi rituals and dance occasions to decrease. However, it was discovered that the medicine people and the strong beliefs of the Akamba have contributed to the survival kilumi.

This thesis has been organized into five chapters. Chapter one gives the background for the whole study, both the cultural-religious background of the Akamba, and the basic research design. Chapter two reviews the literature related to this study's topic in order to show the existing information. Chapter three gives an analysis of kilumi songs and their religious interpretations. In chapter four, kilumi rituals and dances has been described and analyzed. In this chapter, also, the factors affecting these phenomena have been explicated. The chapter shows that, despite the impact of cultural flux, these phenomena continues to be a reality. Chapter five summarizes the whole thesis and gives the major findings and conclusive remarks of the study.

In it, various suggestions are made, for example, it is suggested that a kind of dialogue should exist between the indigenous Akamba and Christians for the latter to become acceptable to the former.